



Further up, Further in

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: January 2, 2022

SPEAKER: Frank/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 2:39-52

Family Dinner Table

Jesus was raised in a religious home. The faithful devotion of Mary and Joseph, outlined for us in Luke 2:41-42 as they made annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem during the feast of Passover, provides a glimpse into their family piety. The parents participated in a vibrant faith community, and on this particular trip, no doubt, took the opportunity to instruct twelve-year-old Jesus in their faith practices.

Like Mary and Joseph, centering your home on church attendance, God's Word, and his example gives children a strong foundation for flourishing as they discover their identity as God's image bearers.

In her book, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, Princeton Theological Seminary professor Kendra Creasy Dean explains how the church plays an important role in the spiritual formation of our youth:

Churches can (and must) help by plunging teenagers into Christianity's peculiar God-story, and by inviting young people to take part in practices that embody it. For centuries, these two strategies—telling God's story and enacting it—comprised the heart of Christian formation, or catechesis, the "handing on" of a faith tradition from one generation to the next. Catechesis shapes missional imaginations, which help us recognize God's activity in Jesus Christ and in us, as Christ calls us to participate in his redemptive work in the world.¹

- What is the role of the church in your family's faith formation?
- As a family, discuss ways the church has shaped your faith and love for Christ and for his people.

Luke is the only gospel that tells us about Jesus' childhood. In chapter 2, between the time when he was presented at the temple (vv. 22-38) and today's passage, twelve years have passed. Jesus is a young boy traveling with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, as was the family's practice (v. 41).

The Clear Devotion of Mary and Joseph (vv. 39-42)

Luke gives us a glimpse into Jesus' upbringing. We are told that Mary and Joseph were obedient and faithfully attended upon the means of grace given to Israel under the Mosaic law. During last week's sermon, we learned that Mary and Joseph circumcised Jesus on the eighth day, as well as presented him at the temple where they also came to be purified, according to the law of Moses (Leviticus 12: 1-4). Today we read how they traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, as was their yearly custom (v. 41).

- What is the significance of the Feast of the Passover? (cf. Exodus 12; Numbers 9:1-14; Numbers 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8)
- Participating in the life of the church requires commitment on our part. Just as we commit to healthy eating and regular exercise for our physical well-being, so we must commit to regular church participation and attendance upon the means of grace for our spiritual well-being. How has church participation impacted your spiritual growth? (see also Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42; Acts 15; Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 3:12-17.)

The Frantic Search for Jesus (vv. 43-48)

Mary and Joseph lost Jesus. They couldn't find him anywhere. They looked for him among friends and relatives who were traveling with them, and still they couldn't find him. Jesus was inexplicably absent. It took them three days of searching to finally discover him in the temple, sitting with the rabbis. Mary gently scolds twelve-year-old Jesus saying, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress" (v. 48).

- The fact that Jesus' parents didn't notice his absence for almost a full day means that Mary and Joseph must have trusted Jesus and considered him responsible. How could they have expected him to assume such responsibility at such a young age?
- What do you think makes Jesus' actions proper, when they would not have been for any other twelve-year-old?

The Mysterious Revelation of Jesus' Identity (vv. 49-52)

The response Jesus gave to Mary's question (v. 49) not only confused his parents, but has raised some important Christological questions concerning his identity as the God-Man for the church as well. In verse 49 Jesus states, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" indicating that he has another father besides Joseph to whom he owes fealty and whose authority surpasses that of his earthly parents. But even in this early revelation of his identity, we later read in verse 51 that Jesus submitted to Mary and Joseph: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them."

- The book of Hebrews is a Christological treatise in that it gives us a particularly rich understanding of Jesus being "truly God and truly man" (see the *Chalcedonian Creed*). Read the first chapter of Hebrews. How does the writer explain Jesus as both the Son of God and Son of Man?
- For further study read *Hebrews: N.T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides*

¹ Dean, Kendra Creasy. 2010. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. Oxford University Press. 62.