

Jesus as a Child Luke 2:39-52

Context:

This comes on the heels of the testimony of who Jesus is by Simeon and Anna.

Luke 2:39-52 “39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when his parents[g] saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” 49 And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?”[h] 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.”

1. V 39 – 40 “39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.”
 - a. The word WHEN has been a stumbling block because it seems to contradict the version of this story listed in Matt. Where are the wise men? Where are the dreams of Joseph? Where is the GREAT ESCAPE?
 - i. The word “when” is hos – and it can mean all kinds of things. It is a word that has a very ambiguous meaning that has been translated as when, as, how, as it were, about...and too many others to list.
 - ii. We see this in English – the word as, can mean at the same time or “because” – I was putting air in the tires as my tire was already flat.

When? I did that at the car wash, as my wife was vacuuming out the car. Same word, slightly different meaning. I work with People from non English speaking countries.

iii. If this word is more properly translated as “after” then we see that there is no contradiction, and no connotations from what we would understand from the word “when”

iv. I’m not playing games here....translation is not always an exact science, which is why I have never believed that biblical interpretation depends on knowledge of the original language alone, it depends on prayer, the Holy Spirit and knowledge of his Word as a whole. Knowledge of HIM.

b. They are careful to actually “perform everything according to the Law of the Lord.” Jesus has parents that are obedient to the commands of Scripture.

c. Notice that the child BECAME strong. Isn’t it interesting that Jesus, though God, veiled his Omnipotence and Omniscience for our sake. He made it so that He had to GROW strong and wise. Jesus doesn’t call us to something He didn’t already do himself. If Jesus was willing to grow and become strong, how much more we – if he studied the Torah, so should we study the Bible.

d. Look at the result of that growth – the favor of GOD was upon Him, as it will be for us! Don’t ever fall for this silly notion that it doesn’t matter how much you know about the Bible! That is why I try to spend time every day memorizing key Bible verses that I’ve come across in my own Bible study...this has never proven to be a waste of time and never will be.

2. V 41-45 “41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.”

a. I find this interesting that the feast here is mentioned as Passover. Why was this mentioned?

i. All of the feasts are prophetic in nature, and Passover is one that even those that know nothing about the Old Testament seem to understand as foreshadowing the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross. They took the blood of the sacrificial lamb and they painted that over the

door post and that was the act of faith which signaled the angel of death to pass over them.

- b. Note that this was their CUSTOM. They are following the law. It says in Exodus 34:23 and then again in Lev 16:16 that the adult males must appear before God three times a year. When? Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles).
- c. Mary and Joseph appear to be submissive to these laws here and we may conclude that they are good examples of parents who are obedient to God's Word.
- d. I've always thought the parenting here was a bit lax. But now that I'm a parent, I judge less harshly.
- e. Jesus had brothers and sisters aplenty **Mark 6:3** "...brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" There would have naturally been a lot of work, likely a new born or two, and lots of chaos.
- f. They make a REASONABLE ASSUMPTION: Since Jesus was a child filled with wisdom, and as a 12 year old they likely felt that they could reasonably trust Him to be with a grown up when it was time to leave.
- g. At nightfall He is not there and they return to Jerusalem looking for Him.

V 46 – 51 "46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when his parents[g] saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." 49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"[h] 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart."

- 1. They are looking for Him for three days just after Passover, and They may have been scared that we was even alive.
- 2. But look at what he is doing. Is he playing with friends, or playing with matches, or stealing bread and causing mischief with pranks?
- 3. He is sitting among the teachers. He is listening to them and asking questions. THAT is what Jesus is interested in.
- 4. "...all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers."

5. But look at how SYMBOLIC this is:
 - a. He is missing after PASSOVER, and wasn't Jesus taken from his mother and disciples on PASSOVER.
 - b. They couldn't find him for THREE DAYS, can you imagine? Leilani gone for three days? I would think she was maybe dead. But Jesus, after He died was not seen again until the third day.
6. It also says that his parents were astonished, but we can see from Mary's response that this was not an amazement of HOLY AWE.
 - a. "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."
 - b. Look at how Mary blames Jesus, isn't that how we are with our kids? Isn't that how we are with God?
7. But if Jesus did it, was it a sin? No. We know this because Jesus was tempted at all points as we were, yet without sin (**Heb 4:15**)
8. Yet, in Mary's mind, she has been victimized by Jesus. Her words imply that Jesus has mistreated his parents and through His mistreatment, subjected them to "great distress."
9. This implies that Jesus is callous, selfish, and doesn't care about them at all. It reminds me of another passage "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" **Mark 4:38.**
10. What is Jesus's response? He answers them with a question. "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know...".
 - a. Didn't they know? He seemed surprised that they would look anywhere but the TEMPLE.
 - b. This response often appeared to me to be callous and disrespectful. But how they could not know about what was actually important to Him.
 - c. But it says they did not understand this saying.
 - d. You would hope that they would realize what this meant, that He was so called by God to be so set apart, that He always wanted to be learning from the Torah and the rest of the Scriptures, learning the prophecy and doing His father's will.
 - i. Was it God's will that Jesus stay behind? Yes. How do we know this? Because it says Jesus only did the will of the father **John 5:30** "...I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me." And he only does what He sees the father doing **John 5:19** "So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only

- what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father^[e] does, that the Son does likewise.”
- ii. But even if they didn't understand that, you would at least think they would understand that Jesus was someone who belonged at the feet of Rabbi, learning from the Word of God.
 - iii. It was his father's WILL that He be there listening and answering questions. Why? We don't really know, but it's not ABOUT knowing everything, its about being with HIM and being in the center of God's will! THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE WITH HIM.
 - iv. It is interesting that some translations have “father's house” and some “about my father's business.” But we get the point...its spiritual and He is to be about the things of GOD.
- e. I think that verse 51 here makes two important notes at the end of this story.
- i. Jesus was not given to being a run away. He did not make it a pattern of not being submissive to Mary and Joseph. This was likely a one time, out of character disappearance meant to act as a sign or a reminder of the fact that Jesus, though now a pre-teen, was not ordinary boy.
 - ii. It also says that Mary treasured these things in her heart. Why? Because Jesus was her son and it was a wonderful evidence to God's calling on His life that provided the encouragement and wonder to the heart of a mother as she watched this baby grow into a boy and boy grow into a man.
 - 1. Her faith would be tested, but she always would remember these special times, and we can enter into that wonder.

Application

1. **Take Responsibility for your Kids.** As a parent, do you blame your kids for doing something that is actually not wrong?
 - a. Do you blame them for the mistakes YOU made. Mary and Joseph made and assumption. It was a reasonable assumption but it was still an assumption.
 - i. It is your responsibility as a parent to trust but verify that your kids are where you expect them to be, especially before leaving on a long and dangerous trip!
 - ii. But Mary decides to blame her 12 year old. Does she really expect an apology from the one whom angels announced? Really, they should be apologizing to Him. If you are a parent and you make a mistake, just

own it. Apologize. Not every agony that your kids put you through is their fault.

2. **Trust God with your Kids** Do you blame them for your emotional distress when they are actually just in the will of God? Are you willing to support the will of God for your Child (missionary work, remaining single, going to another country, etc..) over your own desires for their life. Maybe you always dreamed that your child would live next door to you for the rest of your life.
3. **Trust God in the Unforeseen Inconveniences.** What about for those of us who are not parents? They are not just questioning a 12 year old, they are questioning God.
 - a. Isn't this how we are when there are inconveniences that we experience that we were not expecting? Especially when we have some big goal in our heads. Even when that goal is to just get home. Joseph has to get back to his projects. Don't get in the way of a man and his projects, especially when it is his lively hood – tables and chairs that were left mid-project to go to this feast – costly. Those tables weren't going to finish themselves.
 - b. When we are inconvenienced by what GOD is doing. How do we respond to that? If Jesus, Son of God wants three more days in the temple, then maybe THAT is what is important.
 - i. But they didn't have that faith because the significance of who Jesus was may have still been something they didn't really understand. Why? Had they forgotten what was said? **Luke 1:32-33** “32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
 - c. We, however understand that the change of plans that God puts into our lives are put there by a God who has a master plan. We can trust Him! Trust Him even in the inconveniences and disappointments that come to us.
4. **Know Where to Seek God** I find it interesting how poorly they knew their son. The implication from his words were “if you knew Me, you would have come right to the house of God.”
 - a. What about us? Do we know what is important to God? Do we know where to find Him? The answer is still the same! It is the house of God, which is now His Church the Body of Christ. He lives within each one of us and He is here when we gather and really manifests when we love one another!

- b. Do we get confused as to where God is? Do we ever feel far from God or abandoned by Him and we are tempted to ask, “God, where ARE you?”
- c. He is busy loving people in the Church. If God seem far away, guess who moved?
- d. You know where I go when I’m struggling? I go to you guys. That is where God is, He is busy ministering inside the church so if I go there, then I’ll be where Jesus is. I telling you, I go to Wednesday night or men’s breakfast or something like that and Jesus is there asking me “Where did you think I’d be.”
- e. There are those that could try and sit here and say, “I don’t need that, God is everywhere and I can seek God on my own.” To that I would point you to last weeks sermon.
- f. If God seems far away, do you know where to find Him?
- g. Are you looking for God, wondering where He is, feeling like He left you? Seeking God all on your own, wondering what part of the Bible to read or how to even understand what you are reading.
- h. Maybe you, like Mary and Joseph, ran away while He was still in the temple, while He was in church.
- i. This isn’t a story about run away child, but run away parents.
 - i. I almost named the sermon “The Runaway Parents.”
 - ii. That’s the way I want us to think of this story because it is not a story about a runaway kid.
 - iii. It is a story about how we often plow ahead with our plans headless of where HE is and Where HE is going, All the while Jesus is not going to let that stop HIM from doing the will of His father.