



The Sermon

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Luke 2:39-52

"The Childhood of Christ"

January 14, 2024

TRANSCRIPT

What a joy to be back with you; and I'll be here with you for quite some time.

So, this last song that we were just singing - "Christ the Anchor," and He's also the shore - it's drawn from Hebrews chapter 6, the last two verses, verses 19 and 20. As we find ourselves in this world, we find ourselves in this swirling tempest and storm. We're tossed back and forth in the storms of life; and Christ is our forerunner and our anchor. And the imagery there is a ship that comes near to the coastline, but it cannot go all the way to the shoreline. And if they were to drop anchor where they are, it would just go into sand and it really would not hold the ship. So they would lower a small ship and put a man in that small ship, known as a forerunner, and he would rad all the way to the coast, to the shore, and he would have the anchor with him and a long rope or chain and he would anchor the ship to the shoreline. And the ship would be tossed back and forth, but it's not going to go anywhere because it's not being held by an anchor in the sand, it's actually attached to the rocks on the shoreline.

And in this imagery, we find ourselves here in this world tossed back and forth in storms of life. But Christ Himself, by His life and death, has gone before us into heaven, behind the veil, into the throne room of heaven, and you and I are anchored in glory right now. And despite the turbulence that we experience now in this world, Christ nevertheless has secured our future,

and we are literally anchored not to some sandy bottom of this world, but actually anchored to the throne of God, and we can never be removed. So that's really good news today. That's good news every day.

Well, I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to Luke chapter 2, and today we're going to look at verses 39 to the end of the chapter. And the title of this message is "The Childhood of Christ." We're going to be stepping into some deep waters in this passage.

So, I want to begin by reading, starting in verse 39 of Luke chapter 2. We read, "When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. The Child" - referring to Christ - "continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

"Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, but supposing Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

"When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.' And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?' But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in

her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

This is the reading of God's word, an incredible passage of scripture, and I'm anxious to dive into it with you. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, so much here, so much deep water even here. We pray You would take us by the hand and guide us and lead us into the truth. Give us the understanding of what is taking place here with Christ and how we should emulate and imitate many aspects of this in our lives. Father, we thank You for a Savior with whom we can relate, who became one of us so that we could join with You in heaven. So, bless now our look into Your word, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we see the childhood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are immediately introduced to the mystery, the great mystery of the incarnation, that eternal Deity took on sinless humanity, and Jesus became the God-man. And this teaches that Jesus had two natures. He had a fully divine nature and a truly human nature joined together to become one person. These two natures are unmixed. They're joined together, but they're unmixed as if there is a firewall between the two natures, such that Jesus was not 50 percent God and 50 percent man making Him 100% the God-man. No. Instead, He was 100 percent God and 100 percent man, uniquely the God-man.

Jesus never surrendered any of His deity. He voluntarily chose not to exercise all of the divine prerogatives that He retained as God, but took upon Himself sinless humanity. Think of the incarnation this way: there was not a subtraction, there was actually an addition. There was no subtraction of His deity, there was simply the addition of His humanity, and it was a sinless humanity.

Jesus was one person with two natures, and during His earthly ministry He predominantly operated in His human nature in order to identify with us, the

humans He has come to save. In His divine nature, Jesus was omniscient, knowing all things; but in His humanity, in His human nature, He was not omniscient. In His human nature, Jesus was limited, just like you and I are limited. In His human nature, Jesus did not know all things. He had to learn. He had to study. He had to grow. He had to develop. In His human nature, Jesus had to increase in knowledge and in wisdom, such that at the time of His birth Jesus was not capable of coherent thought in His human nature. He did not know all things. He did not come out of the womb in His human nature knowing the distance from the earth to the sun. At age six, He did not know the future capital of Texas. At age ten, He did not know the number of square miles in the continent of Africa. In His divine nature, He knew that, but He was operating in His human nature. And in His human nature, which was real, Jesus had to grow in what He knew, and He had to grow in wisdom just like you and I do.

There would be things that would be made known to Him beyond just a normal human growth and understanding. At His baptism, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit would give Jesus penetrating insight, but it would be in His human nature. For example, when He saw Nathanael under a tree and said, "There is an Israelite in whom there is no guile," it was actually Jesus as an anointed prophet. He was Prophet, Priest, and King. As an anointed prophet, He was given penetrating insight into Nathanael just like other prophets were given penetrating insight. Jesus knew this because the Spirit gave Him supernatural insight.

For anything beyond normal human knowledge, Jesus knew what He knew by the Spirit's anointing. That is why when we look at this chapter that we will be examining today, in verse 40 it says, "Jesus continued to grow and increase in knowledge and in wisdom." And that is why we read in verse 46, "Jesus sat in the middle of the teachers and learned in the temple, and Jesus asked questions so that He could draw more information from them," and Jesus had to connect the dots together to see the relationship between certain truths to other truths. And in verse 52, we read that "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom." That means He went from less wisdom to more wisdom in His human nature. In fact, in Hebrews 5:8, it says, "He learned obedience." And in Mark 5:30, He did not know, when He walked through the crowd, He did not know who fought through the crowd and reached and

touched the hem of His garment. He said, "Who touched Me?" And in Mark 13:32, He says that "the Son of Man does not know the hour of His return."

There is a great mystery going on here. But we need to understand just how human Jesus was. He was as human as you are and as I am, yet without sin. And this passage brings out the development of Jesus from an infant to age twelve, how He grew physically, how He grew intellectually, how He grew relationally, how He grew socially. He did not come out of the womb fully developed. He was not born an adult, He was born an infant, just like you were born an infant. And so, this is our Savior, this is the Lord, and He drew so near to us that He literally became like us. He got into the human race, He got into our skin, yet without sin. So let's look at this.

The first thing I want you to note in verse 39 is "the development of Jesus," in verses 39 and 40. In verse 39, "When they" - referring to Jesus' parents - "had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord," - that refers to Jesus' circumcision, and it refers to Him being presented on the fortieth day for purification. "When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they" - Jesus' parents and Jesus - "returned to Galilee" - Galilee is to the north, it is in the northernmost region of the Promised Land - "to their own city of Nazareth."

This is an 80-mile journey downhill. It would take at least four days to make this journey under normal circumstances. It could have taken a little bit more with younger children, a part of this journey as we will see. And in verse 40, as Jesus reaches Nazareth, "The Child continued to grow." God does not grow. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. From everlasting to everlasting, You are God. This is not referring to the divine nature of Christ, it's referring to the human nature of Christ, and He grew in every way that an infant would develop.

We read, "He became strong." This refers to His physical growth with increasing strength. Jesus developed and grew like any other baby, from laying on His back to sitting up, to crawling, to standing, to then walking, to then running, to then climbing. Jesus was like any and every other baby.

He would wake up in the middle of the night hungry and need to be fed by His mother. He needed to be nursed. He needed to be burped. He needed for us to have diapers changed. He was a real person who went through real stages of growth and development.

And then it says in verse 40, "and increasing in wisdom." This refers to His mental development like any other baby. He would have to learn how to say basic words to call out to Mary or to Joseph. He didn't come into this world linguistically savvy, He had to learn how to talk. He had to learn how to listen. And as He increased in wisdom, He went from no wisdom to some wisdom to more wisdom. Some things Jesus just did not know in His human nature, and He had to grow to acquire that knowledge, and then wisdom to know how to use this knowledge.

So, Jesus is in this developmental stage, and we read, "and the grace of God was upon Him." This does not refer to saving grace, redeeming grace. Jesus does not need to be rescued from sin by grace, for He was sinless. This refers to the favor of God was upon Him. The blessing of God was upon Him. The love of God was being lavished upon Him. And this certainly, this verse, sets an example for us for what each one of us should be.

Every one of you here today should be growing in the knowledge of the truth. You should know more about the truth today than you did this time last year, than you did two years ago. You should be growing deeper in the truth; and with that, you need to be increasing in wisdom as well. If knowledge is the truth, a body of truth, then wisdom is knowing how to apply it to your life in real-life situations. That's what wisdom is. It is the practical application of knowledge and truth to your life. You can have a lot of knowledge and not have the wisdom to go with it. You can be smart and not be wise. And if you're not wise, you're very foolish. It is a misuse to your own detriment of the knowledge that has been entrusted to you. And so, wisdom is actually choosing the best path to arrive at the best destination. Wisdom is knowing how to choose the best means to achieve the highest end.

You're not born with wisdom, you have to acquire wisdom. And for the rest of your life you need to be acquiring wisdom. Proverbs 4:5 says, "Acquire wisdom!" Verse 6, "Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you." Verse 7, "The beginning of wisdom is: acquire wisdom." Verse 8, "Prize her, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her."

Jesus acquired wisdom. Jesus grew in wisdom and discernment and insight. So must you and I grow in wisdom as well. But the second thing I want you to notice is "the disappearance of Jesus." That's in verse 41. We read, "Now His parents" - that's obviously Joseph and Mary - "went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover."

This tells us a lot about Joseph and Mary, how devoted they were to the word of God and being loyal believers in the Lord Himself, in God. And every year they would go to the Passover. There were three great feasts every year that Jewish men had to come travel to Jerusalem to attend. It was Passover, it was Pentecost, and it was the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. The law did not require women to come.

But here we read that "His parents," plural. So that would include not just Joseph, but Mary. Mary also came every year to Jerusalem, and it shows what a spiritually mature woman she was. She wanted to be where the word of God was being taught and where God's people were gathering together, and so she came as well, even though she didn't have to. Passover, as you recall, was a celebration of the exodus, some 1,400 plus years earlier, when Moses led the people of God out of Egyptian bondage. And so look at it again. "Now" - verse 41 - "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover." So again, this 80-mile difficult journey, at least four-day trip, which they did annually.

And verse 42 tells us, "And when He became twelve," when Jesus became twelve. He has now reached an age of maturity. He has reached an age of responsibility, an age of accountability. "When He became twelve, they went up there." They went up, in the topography, in the elevation of the

land. They went up, really, 1,600 feet into the hill country where Jerusalem is located. And as they traveled there, they did not travel by themselves, they traveled in what the next verse will tell us is a caravan. And a caravan was a large group of people who lived in Nazareth, and maybe even on the outskirts in a few little, tiny little dots on the map. They all traveled together. So you would have family, you would have neighbors, you would have friends, and we all come in together to travel up to Jerusalem. And the custom was - it's not stated here - but the custom was for the women and the younger children to be at the head of the caravan and the fathers and the young men to be near the rear of the caravan.

And so we read in verse 43, "and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days." What that means is they had been there for eight days. They stayed the whole time. And again, this is an indication of how committed they were spiritually. They didn't just go for two days or three days, they were all in, Joseph and Mary. They stayed the whole time. And so now they are returning back to Nazareth together in this large caravan.

There have been hundreds of thousands of people descending upon Jerusalem for these feasts. And so as they return, they return in a caravan. They can help one another. There's mutual fellowship along the way, it'll make the journey seem shorter. And there would be robbers along the way, and so there's strength and numbers and there's a protection for them to all travel together. That's what's taking place here.

And we read, "and the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem." We're not told why, but it's, I think, reasonable that we assume He stayed because He wanted to learn more. He doesn't know it all in His human nature. He is acquiring wisdom. He is acquiring knowledge of the Scripture. He wants to stay in Jerusalem. He's drawn like a magnet to those teachers of the word and of the law so that He can build up His body of knowledge of the truth.

"But His parents were unaware of it." You may ask, "How is this possible that His parents don't know that He is a part of the caravan?" Well, there have been several times when Anne and I have left church over the last



years and four kids and we've gotten home with two of the four, three of the four. "I thought you had him." "No, I thought you had him." And it's easy to do, especially given this arrangement, that if the women are at the head and the men are at the back of the caravan, and the younger babies and infants, and then really young ones would be with the women at the head, and the young men would be in the rear with their fathers, it's entirely possible that you wouldn't know if Jesus was with the mother or with the father because He's twelve years old. He's right on the dividing line. Does He go with mom, because He's been going with mom every year? Or now has He reached an age where He should be with Joseph? And so it's reasonable to assume that the one thought Jesus was with the other.

And so we read at the end of verse 43, "His parents were unaware of it," - verse 44 - "but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey." So they would have traveled north towards Nazareth for an entire day, and they would come to what would be like a campground or a camp place. And there they would reshuffle the deck, and families would all reassemble back together.

And it says in verse 44, "They began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances." They're all in this caravan. So the relatives are extended family. It would be aunts and uncles and nephews and nieces and maybe grandparents, and who knows all of the extended family. And then acquaintances. This this would be neighbors in Nazareth and friends and people that they have gotten to know who are in other tiny little towns around Nazareth. And so they're all together in this milieu and they're searching for Jesus and they can't find Him.

And so verse 45 says that: "When they did not find Him," - as any good parent would, you almost panic, or you do panic: "We've got to go back. And He's in town somewhere. We've got to go back where we last saw Him and find Him." And so in the middle of verse 45 it says - "they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him." So it was one day out, and now it's one day back, "It's been two days since we've seen Jesus."

And before I go on, just to make this point, this shows that even good and godly parents can make a mistake in trying to keep up with their kids. Joseph and Mary are exemplary, but here they fumble the ball and they lose the ball. And we learn here that there are good parents, there are godly parents, there just are no perfect parents. So that should be an encouragement to some parents here today. Okay, I got an amen. And that actually came from a grandmother, not from a mother, okay. You know, once you figure it out, you're out of business. You know, once you figure out how to be a parent, they've left home and they're off on their own. Well, that's what's going on here.

So, in verse 46 we see "the discovery of Jesus." In verse 46, "Then after three days," - okay, this does not mean they were looking for Jesus for three days in Jerusalem, it means it's one day out, one day back, and then on the third day they search through Jerusalem and they find Him. So, we read in verse 46, "After three days, they" - Joseph and Mary after looking everywhere in Jerusalem. And remember, there's been hundreds of thousands of people. This is a complex situation, and most of them have now left town, but there's still some chaos in the city - "they found Him in the temple."

Now, when it says "in the temple" it's referring to the larger temple complex. And surrounding the actual second temple that was rebuilt after Solomon's temple had been destroyed there are porches and porticos and large open areas. In fact, the early church in the book of Acts would actually meet in these larger areas surrounding the actual building of the temple itself. And teachers would come and sit, and students would gather around them, and they would teach the law and teach the word of God. They found Jesus in the temple, probably in this larger temple area.

Now, note this, verse 46, "sitting in the midst of the teachers," right smack dab in the middle of the teachers. And that's an indication of the strong desire in Jesus at age twelve to acquire more knowledge that would lead to more wisdom, that He can have more insight into the word of God because He had to learn the Bible just like you have to learn the Bible. He didn't come out of the womb with a full body of knowledge in His humanity. He

had to grow. He had to develop. And so this is a golden opportunity for Jesus. He's been in Nazareth. That's Nowheresville. He's been removed from the hub of the religious activity in Jerusalem, and now He's in Jerusalem. This is almost like He's in a seminary. And He has an opportunity now to sit at the feet of teachers and hear them give instruction.

Now, the nation is an apostate nation at this time. We don't know how well these teachers are teaching, but there is always a remnant, and there are always those who are teaching the truth. And here is Jesus in the midst of the teachers. He's drawn to them like a moth to the flame. He's not sitting in the periphery. He's not sitting in the distant outskirts. I mean, He is right at their feet. And it's an indication of the hunger for truth that is in the Lord Jesus Christ to draw near to those who are disseminating the truth. This is where He is. That's where you need to be, as close to where the word of God is being taught as you can possibly be.

You know, there are people who have moved to Dallas from other parts of the country just so they can be in this church and be as close to where the truth is being taught as they possibly can. We have people who have moved here from the East Coast, from the West Coast, from up north. They just want to be as close to the truth as they possibly can. And there are people here today who have driven from far away in the Metroplex, and outside the Metroplex. And I've met some after the early service this morning standing out there who have driven from another state. They just want to be as close to the truth as they can possibly be. It's an indication of an inner hunger that is driving them.

I know when I was called into the ministry, I was in Memphis, Tennessee, in a huge church, Belleview Baptist Church. The sanctuary held about 4,000 members. You want to know where I sat? Front row, center seat. And they would give a public invitation at the end of the sermon for people to walk forward. I would have to get up out of my seat and go find another seat because that's where the counselors sat, and that's where they would sit people when they would walk forward. And if they had put a up here on the platform, I think I would have put up a reserve sign and wrote my name on it. I just want to be where the truth is being preached.

And when I was in seminary, my first three years I spent so much time writing magazines and whatever to put myself through school. But my last year, I moved from the back row up to the front row because I didn't want any distractions between me and the man who had the truth and who was teaching the truth. You know, there's a real psychology about where people sit in church. And it doesn't mean that everyone on the back row is a backslider necessarily. And I think, Kent, if we put a row of chairs out on Central Expressway there would be people seated out there, put their Bible down and want to sit out on Central Expressway, kind of keeping it at arm's length.

Jesus is in the midst of the teachers. He's like a sponge. He needs to know more. He needs to know more of the truth. And in verse 46, notice it says, "both listening" - in other words, listening, absorbing, in order to comprehend the truth and processing it internally; and notice next - "and asking them questions," asking the teachers questions because He wants to get beneath the surface. He wants to go down a little bit deeper in the truth and get to the next level of acquired knowledge.

And in verse 47, "And all who heard Him" - that would include all the teachers, and that would include all those within a sound of His voice who were in this larger group listening to these teachers - "all who heard Him were amazed." They were amazed at His questions. They were amazed at His intense desire to know more. And this word "amazed" literally means they were driven out of their senses. It was it was like they were out of their mind as they observe. This little 12-year-old boy in the middle of these esteemed teachers on their level almost, acquiring knowledge.

"They were amazed" - it says, verse 47 - "at His understanding." It's more than just taking notes, He was grasping the magnitude of what was being stated and said. And this word "understanding," I looked it up. It means, literally, a running or flowing together. And so what this means is He was assimilating all of the bits and pieces of knowledge that He is acquiring from these teachers and from the Scripture. He's piecing it all together into one master body of divinity. He is exercising stunning

brilliance with penetrating insight. He knows more than just the names and the dates, He's seeing the big picture of redemptive history. He is seeing the big picture of theology. He's meaning a strategic grasp, not just individual pieces, a strategic grasp of the whole big picture. And He, no doubt, is seeing Himself in this big picture; for all the Scripture points to Him.

Now, we continue in verse 47. They were amazed, not only at His understanding: "and His answers." Do you see that in your Bible? You know what that means? Everything's flipped, and they're now asking Him questions, and He is teaching the teachers, and He is giving them the answers beyond which they were able to teach themselves. You see, Jesus is not only the King of kings and the Lord of lords, He is the Teacher of teachers. This is unbelievable.

And so Jesus now who's sitting in the midst of the teachers, He suddenly is the center of attention, a mere boy barely 12 years old in the midst of His elders, teaching them, rightly handling the word of truth, expositing the law. Everyone else has stopped talking and they're listening to the boy Jesus, who within His human nature is growing in His understanding of Scripture, of truth, of wisdom.

Verse 48, "When they saw Him," - when they (Joseph and Mary) saw Him (Jesus), when they saw Him dominating this scene and putting everyone else into a state of perplexity, it says - "they were astonished." The word "astonished" means they were struck out of their mind. They were knocked out of their mind. They were stunned. They were shocked. "This is our boy, and He's taking over the teaching in the temple."

"And His mother said to Him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been looking for You." She spoke out of frustration. And this is somewhat of a mild rebuke, a mild correction, which would be normal for any mother. But it is entirely misdirected here; and this shows that even a good mother can be disappointed with a perfect child, that sometimes the mother misreads the situation.

So, fourth, in verse 49, we come to "the deity of Christ." Verse 49, "And He" - Jesus - "said to them," - Joseph and Mary = 'Why is it that you are looking for Me? Did you not know?' And the implication is, "You should have known where I would have been. You know who I am. Gabriel told you before the conception that I am the Son of God. You should have known that this day was coming, that this day would appear in full reality. This day is now here."

"Did you not know" - verse 49, now watch this - "that I had to be, had to be." That is a word of obligation, a word of necessity. "This day had to be. Not could be, should be, would be; it had to be, that I had to be in My Father's house." The word "house" is not in the original language. I remember the King James I think is, "I had to be about My Father's business." Business, house - it's not in the original. It's reasonably assumed you have to finish the sentence somehow. "I had to be in My Father's work."

And what is astonishing about this, for the first time we read that Jesus was consciously aware of who He is within His human nature. For the first time, Jesus is consciously aware of His unique relationship with God the Father. He couldn't have known that while He was in the womb. He couldn't have known that as soon as He came out of the womb. He couldn't have known that until He could understand human language and be able to hear and learn and read and ask questions. It may have happened before this, but this is the first statement in the bible where Jesus now is consciously aware that "God is My Father, I am His Son."

This is the first time any individual has said, "God is my Father." Previous to this, God was a Father to the nation of Israel. And previous to this, God was a Father of creation. But this is the first time we read of one person saying that "God is personally My Father." We're taught to pray, "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God is our Father because we have been born again and because we have been adopted into the family of God, but not like this, not like this. Because Jesus is the Son of God, He possesses all of the divine nature and the divine attributes of the Father,

that the Father and the Son are of the very same essence and attributes; and Jesus is now aware that God is His Father. Or at least now for the first time, we read of it like this. As an infant, He could not have known. An infant doesn't know. He's operating in His human nature. Yes, divine nature, He knows all things. But He has voluntarily laid aside the operation and the use of His divine nature and He's operating in His human nature. These two natures are not merged into one nature, these are two natures.

As Jesus was born, He could not understand human language. He couldn't understand Aramaic words that His parents were speaking or Hebrew words. But now at age 12, He understands. He's grown up. He has matured. He's developed. He can speak. He can read. He can think. He can ask questions. He can learn. He can know more today than He did yesterday in His human nature. He can now comprehend the Scripture in a way that He could not earlier comprehend it. Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh.

It's hard for us to get our arms around this. And I have more questions than I have answers. But this is what the text is saying. He's increasing in wisdom with a wisdom He did not have previous, and He's asking questions of the teachers, and He's understanding in a way that He had not previously understood, and He now is answering their questions, when previously they were answering His questions.

So, verse 50, "But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them." They knew He was the Son of God. They knew He was the promised Messiah, the son of David. Gabriel had laid this out. What they did not understand was that God is His Father. And now this is made known to them, with Joseph, His earthly, legal father, standing right here, and Mary, who gave birth to Him as a virgin. Now it's God who is His Father. Jesus is coming of age He's the Ancient of Days coming of age. It was necessary for Jesus to go through all of these stages of development so that He can relate to you and relate to me as we live here and go through the stages of development and as we grow in knowledge and in wisdom. That's right where He was. He knows.

Finally, in verse 51, "the dedication of Christ." Verse 51, "And He" - Jesus - "went down with them" meaning down from Jerusalem to Nazareth once they have found Him - "and came to Nazareth" - in other words, returned home - "and He continued in subjection to them." Jesus is living in obedience to the Ten Commandments. He's living in obedience to the fifth of the Ten Commandments. He is honoring father and mother, and He is obeying father and mother.

This word "subjection" is a compound word in the original language, and it's a military term, and it means to line up, like, to line up, get in a line and find your place. And then the prefix is "under," to line up under. And the idea is that a soldier would line up in his ranks under a commanding officer and carry out his orders with complete obedience. That's how Jesus is living as a teenager. He continued in subjection to them. And, parents, this is what you must influence your children's heart to do and require of their actions is to obey your father and mother, and if you do not, you are living in sin and in rank rebellion against God, not just your parents.

And then we read at the end of verse 51, "and His mother treasured all these things in her heart," all the things that she had seen and observed in Jerusalem as she sees her own son in the midst of the teachers, and now, in essence, taking over and answering their questions. She treasures this in her heart like her heart as a treasure vault and all of this information she preserves on the inside. And it may well be that as Luke wrote this gospel account he had to come interview Mary, because Luke wasn't here. Luke didn't see this. Luke didn't hear this.

And Luke tells us at the beginning of chapter 1 that he had to go investigate and research and interview and talk to people to piece this all together. Who better to have passed on to Luke who has passed on to us what I just read than Mary herself who has treasured this as only a mother can do in her own heart. There are many things I can't even remember about our children's upbringing, and my wife just knows them with lightning-fast detail exactly all of that. It's a part of a maternal instinct, I believe. And so Mary, I think, as she's treasured these things up, is the conduit for Luke to record this for us.



And now, verse 52, the last verse, "And Jesus kept increasing." He kept increasing. He kept increasing, from age 13 to age 14 to age 15 to age 16. "Jesus kept increasing" - that verb "kept increasing," it means kept moving forward and kept advancing, four things - "in wisdom" - that's intellectually - "and stature," - that's physically - "and in favor with God" - that's spiritually - "and men" - that's socially. Now, this is like north, south, east, west. It's a comprehensive understanding of someone becoming who they must be. And I want you to know that as Luke writes this gospel, he paints a picture of Jesus that's different from Matthew, Mark, and John.

Matthew is painting the picture of Jesus. He's addressing the Jewish people and he's presenting Jesus as the King of Israel, okay, the long-awaited Messiah. Mark is writing to a whole different audience. He is writing to the Romans, and the Romans, Mark is presenting Jesus as the Servant, the Servant of Jehovah who can get the job done, who's hardworking, who is a servant of all, who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many, Mark 10:45. And John writes to the whole world that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

But Luke, as Luke has his paintbrush and as he is painting on the canvas of his gospel, he's writing to a different audience and to present Jesus in a different way. He's writing to a Greek audience to show that Jesus is the perfect Man. And here are the categories, here are the silos: He's the perfect man intellectually, He's the perfect man physically, He's the perfect man spiritually, and He's the perfect man socially. This is Luke's intent in writing this gospel as he presents Jesus as the Savior of sinners and the Lord of heaven and earth.

But He is the one who kept increasing in wisdom, with a wisdom He did not previously have. Correct? If you already know it all, you can't increase in it. The mere fact that He's increasing in it means that He's going deeper, and it's wider, and it's sharper than what He previously understood. And He's growing in stature. He now is going from a boy to a teenager, to become a man and in favor with God. He's learning obedience through the

things that He is suffering. And with men, He is learning how to interface with people, how to be gracious with those who have been trodden down by the blows of this world, but also how to rebuke the Pharisees and the scribes, and to rebuke those who need to be rebuked and to encourage those who need to be encouraged. Oh, He's growing and maturing. And just as Jesus kept increasing in His manhood, so you need to grow up as well, and you need to be continually growing.

I said to Kent before this service began, I'm 72 years old. I said, "I don't know if you would have liked my preaching when I was 32. I don't know if you would have liked me when I was 42. But you're catching me at a place in life where certain rough edges have had to be knocked off and certain restraints have had to be learned by me, and a depth of wisdom and a depth of knowledge that would surpass what I had as a younger man in my 30s and 40s. And, oh, I would have to live 10,000 lifetimes to finally get to where I need to be. I have such a long way to go, just like you have such a long way to go. But you need to keep increasing in wisdom and in stature. You need to keep increasing in favor with God and with man. You cannot be content with where you are right now in your spiritual life, you've got to be growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 3:18.

This is an incredible passage of scripture that we've looked at today. If you're like me, I feel like I'm standing on the edge of the shoreline of the Pacific Ocean, and I can't see the bottom and I can't see the other side, I can only see just what's in front of me. And here is, just pulling back the veil a little bit into the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, with a fully human nature and a fully divine nature, together, yet not mixed, to be one person. What a Savior we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as you find yourself here today, Jesus came into this world and entered the human race so that He could become like us, so that He could redeem us. He had to become a man because God cannot die. God is immortal. He had to become a man so that He could die. And the wages of your sin and my sin is death. And because of your sin, you will die, and you will die eternally, unless someone else dies in your place who did not need to die, who had no sin of his own that would condemn him. You needed someone to

come into this world and to enter the human race in order to live the life that you could never live, to live a sinless life, and to go to the cross and to die in your place. That's why Jesus had to come as He did. He couldn't stay in heaven and just snap His fingers and say, "Be saved." Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. He had to come and to lay down His life a ransom for many, and He did it at the cross for everyone who would come to Him and believe in Him.

So my question for you is, "Have you ever believed in Jesus Christ? Have you ever come to the point where you have realized that you have sinned, you've fallen short of the glory of God, you have no hope of heaven, you've been cut off from eternal life and you're on the broad path headed for destruction?" Do you understand that? Do you know that? This is not a time for me to spray perfume on you and tell you little pretties that you want to hear. If you are without Christ today, you are in a massive state of trouble, and there is only one way for you to be made right with God.

He has only sent one Savior into this world. He has only one Son that He has sent. He has sent Jesus Christ. He is the only Savior. And if you do not believe in Him, you have no hope. And, in fact, the Lord will point back to this day when you stand before Him on the last day and will say, "You heard the truth, you heard it loud and clear, and you chose to put your fingers in your ear. You'll be held accountable. Your blood is on your hands."

So if you have never believed in Jesus Christ, this is the moment, this is the time. You must exercise your will. No one else can make this decision for you. Have you made the all-important decision to believe in Jesus Christ? If you never have, do so right now. You don't have to raise a hand. You don't have to walk forward. You don't have to repeat a prayer after me. In your heart of hearts, you simply must turn from your sin and turn to God's only provision for salvation, His Son Jesus Christ and to believe in Him.

He's being offered to you this moment, this day, right now. Will you receive His Son, or will you walk out of here trampling underfoot the precious

blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you receive Christ now, or will you insult the Spirit of grace? May you make the right choice. May you make the right decision today. May you enter through the narrow gate that leads to life. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, thank You for sending Your Son into this world on a mission of salvation to become one of us, to become like us. What an assignment You gave to Him. How difficult, how demanding, that He had to take upon Himself our limitations, take upon Himself our restrictions and go through the whole life process of development that we go through. Lord, thank You for giving us Your Son. And this whole plan of redemption is it leaves us like Joseph and Mary, astonished and amazed at the brilliance of the plan that You have designed. We stand in awe of you, in Christ's name. Amen. [End]

"The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine on you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace." God bless you.