



“The Extraordinary Pre-Teen Jesus”

Luke 2:41-52

I. INTRODUCTION

Imagine being tasked with taking care of the most important person ever... then losing Him for three days.

II. THE TEXT

Luke 2:41-52 – “Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³and 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, ⁴⁴but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day’s journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸When 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.” ⁴⁹And 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?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. ⁵¹And 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. ⁵²And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Three memorable features of this passage:

- **As literature:** it uses dramatic irony to emphasize Jesus’ divine identity.

Luke 1:32-33 – “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

Luke 2:11 – “for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

- **As history:** it is the only inspired story of Jesus’ life between His birth and His earthly ministry.

The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* makes up some crazy stories about young Jesus.

- **As theology:** it affirms that Jesus was both an ordinary human and the extraordinary Son of God.

III. THE ORDINARY JESUS

1. Jesus was a “church kid” (vv. 41-43)

Deuteronomy 16:16: “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.”

2. Jesus had a friend group (v. 44)

3. Jesus had trouble with His parents (v. 48)

1 Peter 2:22 – “He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.”

4. Jesus was misunderstood (v. 50)

5. Jesus grew and developed (v. 52)

Hebrews 4:15 – “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

IV. THE EXTRAORDINARY JESUS

1. Jesus obeyed His parents (v. 51)

Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

2. Jesus had unusual priorities (v. 46)

3. Jesus loved His Bible (vv. 46-47)

2 Timothy 3:15 – “and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

4. Jesus understood His identity (v. 49)

Romans 8:15 – “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”

5. Jesus understood his purpose (v. 49)

John 6:38 – “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

V. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Obey your parents.

Colossians 3:20 – “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.”

Make your spiritual growth your highest priority.

Matthew 6:33 – “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Find your identity and purpose in Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. Why do you think the story of Luke 2:41-52 is the only inspired account we have of Jesus’ life between His birth and earthly ministry?
2. Because Jesus went through the full human experience, He can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15). What “weaknesses”—trials, struggles, temptations, difficulties—do you need to share with Jesus this week in prayer?
3. Jesus said He had to be “about His Father’s business.” What are some of the things that distract us from being about God’s business—that tempt us to “spiritual moonlighting?”
4. The boy Jesus spent three days learning God’s Word in the temple. If someone followed YOU for three days, what might they conclude about your priorities?
5. What are some ways that you can share your God-given identity and purpose with others this week?