

FBC POWELL, 2-19-17 PM NOTES
"The Childhood of Jesus"
Luke 2:21-52
#6 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

Matthew 3:13-15 "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he permitted Him."

"The gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell us little about the childhood of Jesus. We know only a handful of events: the family's escape to Egypt (Matthew 2:14) and return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39); His increasing wisdom (Luke 2:40-52); and His visit to the Temple in Jerusalem at age 12 and obedience to His parents (Luke 2:41-51). It should be noted that further accounts of Christ's childhood were included in the so called *apocryphal gospels*, written much later by those seeking to fill in the 'gaps'. However these 'gospels' present a child who is sullen and uses miracles for entertainment rather than doing the will of God. Neither of these attributes fits with the character of Christ."

- Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*

I. The Baby (vv. 21-38)

A. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (vv. 21-24)

Galatians 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

Matthew 5:17-18 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

"They [Mary and Joseph] had to pay five shekels to redeem the Redeemer who would one day redeem us with His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Their humble sacrifice would suggest that they were too poor to bring a lamb (2 Corinthians 8:9). But He was the Lamb! Our Lord's relationship to the law is an important part of His saving ministry. He was made under the law (Galatians 4:4); and though He rejected man's religious traditions, He obeyed God's law perfectly (John 8:46). He bore the curse of the law for us (Galatians 3:13) and set us free from bondage (Galatians 5:1)."

- Warren Weirsbe

B. The Proclamations about Jesus in the Temple (vv. 25-38)

1. The Proclamation by Simeon (vv. 25-35)

"He was a man who was led by the Spirit of God, taught by the Word of God, and obedient to the will of God; and therefore was privileged to see the salvation of God. How important it is for people to see God's salvation, Jesus Christ, before they see death."

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John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and **the truth**, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

2. The Proclamation by Anna (vv. 36-38)

II. The Boy (vv. 39-52)

John 2:11(KJV) “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

A. Where He Lived (vv. 39-40)

B. What He Loved (vv. 41-50)

John 8:46a “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?”

John 8:29b “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

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.”

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

1 John 3:5b “in Him there is no sin.”

2 Corinthians 5:21b “...Him who knew no sin...”

“The explanation for Jesus’ behavior here rests, I believe, in the genuineness of His incarnation and His growing awareness of who He was. Accepting the incarnation at face value means that Jesus was genuinely a twelve-year-old. Though fully God, He was also human. Choosing not to avail Himself of all the prerogatives of deity, He learned in the same way we do. As a child, He had to learn that two plus two equals four, and as a twelve-year-old He was still learning about every part of life – including faith and relationships... The point is, he was capable of *unknowingly* causing His parents distress; but as a sinless being, He was incapable of *knowingly* doing it.” - R. Kent Hughes

C. What He Learned (vv. 51-52)

First Baptist Church Powell 02 19 2017 PM
Sermon 6: The Childhood of Jesus
Luke 2:21-52

The four Gospels give us very little information about the childhood of Jesus Christ. Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus and then gives a few verses that deal with His miraculous conception and His birth. Matthew 2 gives details about the visit by the magi and then the flight into Egypt to escape the attempt of Herod to kill him. Matthew contains nothing relating to what Jesus said and did as a child. The first time we actually hear from Jesus in Matthew is Matthew 3:13-15: “Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?’ But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him.” In Mark, we get no information as to the childhood of Jesus.

The first time we see Jesus is when He, as an adult, is baptized by John. In the Gospel of John, we hear directly from Jesus the first time when in John 1:39 He (as an adult) speaks to some disciples of John who desire to follow Him. The most information about the childhood of Jesus comes from the Gospel of Luke, and it is that information we will be examining in this message.

When it comes to the times during which Jesus walked on this earth, Alfred Edersheim’s massive work entitled, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, gives us the most information. Edersheim says this about the childhood of Jesus.

The gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell us little about the childhood of Jesus. We know only a handful of events: the family’s escape to Egypt (Matthew 2:14) and return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39); His increasing wisdom (Luke 2:40-52); and His visit to the Temple in Jerusalem at age twelve and obedience to His parents (Luke 2:41-51). It should be noted that further accounts of Christ’s childhood were included in the so called *apocryphal gospels*, written much later by those seeking to fill in the ‘gaps.’ However these ‘gospels’ present a child who is sullen and uses miracles for entertainment rather than doing the will of God. Neither of these attributes fits with the character of Christ.

When it comes to the childhood of Christ, we are better off just sticking with the Scriptures and foregoing speculation. In reality we will never know the answers to such questions as what age He was when He fully comprehended exactly who He was or at what age He comprehended that He would die for the sins of the world. Our approach in this message is simply to stick with what we find in the Scriptures. Luke gives us more about the childhood of Jesus than the other three Gospels put together.

I. The Baby (vv. 21-38)

In these verses, Luke tells us most of what we know about the infancy of Jesus. We see Jesus’ encounter with the Law of Moses and then we see His encounter with two very special people that most know very little about – a man named Simeon and a woman named Anna.

A. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (vv. 21-24)

The word “law” is used five times in Luke 2:21-40. Jesus did not come to do away with the law of God; He came to fulfill the law. We read in Galatians 4:4: “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.” Jesus did not ignore the law; He fulfilled the law. Matthew 5:17-18: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

Mary and Joseph obeyed the law by having Jesus circumcised when He was eight days old. Circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant that God made with Abraham in Genesis 17. Circumcision was the physical symbol of the spiritual cleansing of the heart that takes place at salvation. It is sad that it had become an empty ritual with many by the time of Christ’s birth.

Circumcision was only the beginning of fulfilling the law. When the child was forty days old, Mary and Joseph had to go to the temple for the purification rights described in Leviticus 12. They also had to

“redeem” their son since He was Mary’s firstborn. The offering they presented in verses 23-24 indicate that they were too poor to bring a lamb. Warren Weirsbe gives a great explanation of how Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses.

They [Mary and Joseph] had to pay five shekels to redeem the Redeemer who would one day redeem us with His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Their humble sacrifice would suggest that they were too poor to bring a lamb (2 Corinthians 8:9). But He was the Lamb! Our Lord’s relationship to the law is an important part of His saving ministry. He was made under the law (Galatians 4:4); and though He rejected man’s religious traditions, He obeyed God’s law perfectly (John 8:46). He bore the curse of the law for us (Galatians 3:13) and set us free from bondage (Galatians 5:1).

[Warren Weirsbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 1*, page 177]

B. The Proclamations about Jesus in the Temple (vv. 25-38)

In verses 25-38, we meet two people that, though we know very little about them, I look forward to meeting them in Heaven.

1. The Proclamation by Simeon (vv. 25-35)

Simeon and Anna were a part of the faithful Jewish remnant that loved God, believed His Word, and waited for the promised Messiah. In verse 25 Jesus Christ is called, “the consolation of Israel.” That means the messianic hope that the faithful longed and looked for. One of the traditional Jewish prayers was, “May I see the consolation of Israel.” Simeon now saw the one he had waited for so long. Though the New Testament gives only a few lines about Simeon, I wonder if perhaps He is one of the godliest characters in Scripture. One commentator said of Simeon, “He was a man who was led by the Spirit of God, taught by the Word of God, and obedient to the will of God; and therefore was privileged to see the salvation of God. How important it is for people to see God’s salvation, Jesus Christ, before they see death.” [Warren Weirsbe, page 177]

Verses 29-32 are a song (though it is not obvious in the English translations). It is hard for us to imagine the joy of this man who was now seeing the fulfillment of what His heart had so long longed for. Now, he was content to die because he had seen, with his own eyes, the promised Messiah, the consolation of Israel. When we read of Simeon, we are reminded that God always has His people even in the darkest of times and when there seems to be little hope. In the midst of a Judaism that had been perverted and taken captive by evil legalists, God has His remnant. Not only does Simeon see the Jewish Messiah, he sees a Messiah who is “A light of revelation to the Gentiles” (verse 32).

The response of Mary and Joseph to Simeon was one of amazement (v. 33). What an affirmation this was to the young couple who had doubtlessly experienced rejection, misunderstanding and ridicule.

In verses 34-35 Simeon stopped praising and started prophesying. In his prophesy, he speaks of a sign and a sword. The word “sign” speaks of God’s revelation of divine truth. Jesus did not just speak truth; He was the personification of truth. John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” The sword was for Mary and spoke of the suffering she would experience as the Messiah, her Son, would be rejected, beaten, mocked, and crucified.

From the example of Simeon, we are reminded that God always has a believing people in the darkest of times. Visible Judaism was a seemingly hopeless mess. The evil religious leaders seemed to be in control. Yet, there is a Simeon, and an Anna. God never leaves Himself without a witness! There was a Jeremiah in Judah and a Daniel in Babylon. There is always a remnant.

2. The Proclamation by Anna (vv. 36-38)

“Anna” means grace. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Hannah*. Anna’s life was characterized by prayer and fasting. When she is described as a *prophetess*, it doesn’t mean that she was able to predict the future; it means that she clearly spoke forth God’s Word in a day of darkness and drought from the proclamation of truth. While Simeon’s old age is inferred, Anna’s old age is clearly stated. After just seven years of marriage, her husband died and she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. It seems that she

had a room in the temple complex and spent her days in periodic fasting and continual praying. Anna received a reward for her faithful looking and longing for the promised Messiah. Her faith turned to sight as she was allowed to see the one for whom she had prayed for so long.

When I get to heaven, I long most to see Jesus, but I want to meet Simeon and Anna. What an example of serving God and believing His promises when there was no outward evidence, no outward reason for hope. Yet they longed, they watched, they fasted and prayed. They were rewarded.

II. The Boy (vv. 39-52)

Luke now fast forwards about twelve years. All that we know of His childhood is what we are told in verse 40. These are often called “the hidden years.” There were no miracles performed. The reason we know that is because in John 2:11(KJV), when He turned the water to wine as an adult, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

A. Where He Lived (vv. 39-40)

What did Jesus do in those “hidden years” in Nazareth? Luke tells us in Luke 2:40: “The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” In Luke 2:52: “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” That’s really all that we know from those “hidden years.” We know that Nazareth was a busy border city with a “not so great” reputation. We know that as a boy, Jesus would have been exposed to the world of fallen men and would have seen sin all around Him.

B. What He Loved (vv. 41-50)

The greatest insight that we see into Jesus childhood takes place when He was twelve. Joseph and Mary, as devout Jews, celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem every year. This was no small expense, but it was always the highlight of the year. The Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem three times a year to worship (Deuteronomy 16:16), but the very poor could not do that (it was about seventy-five miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem). If the poor could only afford to go to one of the feasts, it was most always the Passover. They tried to take their family with them and so for the poor, this was the highlight of the year.

Allow me to describe what they would have encountered in Jerusalem. Some 200,000 pilgrims packed out the walled city of Jerusalem. Every available space was rented and merchants lined the streets selling their wares. Beggars were plentiful as they sought to take advantage of the generosity of the pilgrims.

Traditionally the people traveled together in caravans to Jerusalem and this was not only the main event of the year for families; it has a highlight for the whole community. In these caravans, the children would stay together and the parents looked after one another’s children. As the Passover was finished, the caravan made their way back to Nazareth. It is easy to understand that Mary thought Jesus was with Joseph, or one of the other families, and Joseph would have thought the same. They had gone about a day’s journey from Jerusalem when they discovered that Jesus was missing. It took a day to return to Jerusalem and another day to find Jesus. We read in Luke 2:48 that Mary and Joseph had been “anxiously looking” for Jesus. When they found Jesus, He was in the Temple, verses 46-47 say, “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.”

Surprisingly, there have been many debates about whether Jesus was disobedient in this episode. It does seem that in verse 48 Mary gives Him a mild rebuke, but a rebuke nevertheless. It is clear that He did not (indeed could not) sin. He was without sin and that includes even in His childhood. As an adult, Jesus asked His detractors in John 8:46a: “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” He claimed in John 8:29b: “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus in 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.” Jesus is described in 1 Peter 2:22: “who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.” John

categorically said in 1 John 3:5b: “in Him there is no sin.” Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21b: “...Him who knew no sin...”

So how do we explain this incident where the twelve-year-old Jesus seems to have, at best, disappointed His parents? Allow me to quote Kent Hughes.

The explanation for Jesus’ behavior here rests, I believe, in the genuineness of His incarnation and His growing awareness of who He was. Accepting the incarnation at face value means that Jesus was genuinely a twelve-year-old. Though fully God, He was also human. Choosing not to avail Himself of all the prerogatives of deity, He learned in the same way we do. As a child, He had to learn that two plus two equals four, and as a twelve-year-old He was still learning about every part of life – including faith and relationships... The point is, he was capable of *unknowingly* causing His parents distress; but as a sinless being, He was incapable of *knowingly* doing it.

[R. Kent Hughes, *Luke Volume One*, pages 101-102]

One thing that we must not overlook was His love for His Father’s house and His Father’s Word. Actually, verse 49 gives us the earliest words of Jesus in the Scripture. However, I think we must be cautious about trying to figure out all the details about how much He understood and how much He needed to learn. When it comes to this one who was fully God and fully man, I warn you that there is no end to the speculation. Suffice it to say that He was sinless and that He loved the Father, the Father’s House, and the Father’s Word.

C. What He Learned (vv. 51-52)

I believe that there is a wealth of truth and application in parenting in verse 52. When our children were young, I took this verse and used it to develop a comprehensive approach to training up children in the way they should go.

1. Wisdom – God’s Word, God’s truth, God’s precepts – Wisdom is seeing everything from God’s perspective.
2. Stature – Physical growth, body care, fitness, etc.
3. Favor with God – How to walk with God and please Him, spiritual growth.
4. Favor with Man – Godly relationships, friendships

Conclusion

Luke has given us a foundation in chapters 1 and 2 that the rest of the book is built upon. Jesus grew in a balanced way. He is so much more than our example – Savior, Lord, and sovereign. But don’t forget that He is our example.