

## What a Trip Luke 2:41-52

I find it amazing when it comes to childhood memories that some folks can recall people, places, events and experiences with vivid clarity. My Mom was like that. She could tell you dates when things happened, even what someone else wore to certain events.

Not me. As I am fond of saying, “my memory is as long as my hair.” Oh, I can remember some things, like Dad teaching us how to cast with our new Zebco 77 fishing pole. It had a little lead sinker on the end to help you learn the art of casting. Mine ended up over the power line. I can remember him taking us fishing, getting caught in a rain storm and spending time in a large culvert until the storm passed. And then there was the time in Jr. Church that I got in trouble for pulling a chair out when a kid went to sit down making him fall to the ground.

There were also a few trips I can remember. I can remember riding the train to New York to visit my Mom’s family at Christmas and the guy with the transistor radio in his boot, the cab ride from the train station and being awed at how much snow there was. In the summer when we went to New York our aunts would take us across the Black River to catch tadpoles. Dad built a camper that we would take on other trips to New York. It was fun to ride in the back. We would lie on the bed that hung out over the cab and look out the window as we traveled those many miles through Canada into New York. Then there was the trip to Virginia to visit relatives. Dad had to pull over in a parking lot to give us boys a lesson because we couldn’t get along, but that’s enough about me and a trip down memory lane. Many are just vague recollections.

**Do you remember anything about your growing up years? Were there any special trips you took?**

Our passage is about such a time in the life of Jesus.

Some believe this was an embellished story added after the first century to try and fill in the gap between his birth and the beginning of His ministry. Employers look at a resume and try to determine gaps in work history.

Many legends surfaced over time about Jesus. A legend you know, is a story handed down among people and popularly believed to be based on historical fact. Here are a couple legends about Jesus that you may have heard.

There is the story about Jesus when He was little playing one day with some friends out in the yard. They were all digging around in the mud, making mud pies, that is all except Jesus. He formed His mud into pigeons and made them come alive.

There is another story of a mischievous nature where one day Jesus and some friends were running by the shop of a dyer. His shop was filled with cloth that had been dyed. As the story goes, Jesus went in and took all the cloth and threw them into a cauldron full of indigo. When the shop owner saw what Jesus had done he cried out loud that all his cloth was spoiled. He told Jesus that his reputation as a dyer would be ruined among the town’s people. Jesus told the man not to worry and as He pulled out the cloth one at a time He made it the color the owner wanted.

Another story is of a more sinister nature. As Jesus was walking through town another boy bumped into him. Jesus turned to the boy and told him he would go no further and right there the boy died.

Legends attempt to fill in the gaps about His childhood. What we have recorded in Scripture for us by Luke is the only story about Jesus as a boy. As a whole, His childhood isn’t essential to the story of redemption, yet this one story sums up the essence of His childhood and gives us a wonderful picture of what He was like growing up. It also reveals for us a transition that occurs in the life of

Jesus. We see this in the dialogue between He and Mary and Joseph.

We don't know why none of the Gospel writers include any information about the growing up years of Jesus except for this one account. It's not because they were ordinary or unassuming days. We would like to know about His home life and his brothers and sisters and what happened to Joseph. We're curious to know about the life of Jesus. As it is our text is the only description of a single event in the life of Jesus growing up. It is the last mention of Joseph in the Gospels. The important points related to Jesus surround His birth and His ministry years: how He came to be here and why He came. Yet this snap shot of Jesus at age 12 is important none the less. Truth be told, this one event tells us volumes about the desire of Jesus, even at an early age.

This story is about a trip and what a trip it was. But it was more than a trip because through this experience Jesus gives us some things to pause and ponder about our own spiritual journey.

It was a time to go

It was a time to know

It was a time to grow

## I. IT WAS A TIME TO GO – v. 41-42

The age of 12 was a very important time in the life of a boy growing up in Palestine. Luke tells us early on before Jesus' birth that Joseph and Mary were devout in their faith. In many respects they were an anomaly in a culture that was steeped in the observance of religious rituals. It's not unlike our own culture and times. There are a lot of people going to church but rather than being devoted in what they believe they attend for any variety of reasons.

Some attend out of tradition or habit.

Some attend out of convenience.

Some attend out of guilt.

Some attend because it's the social thing to do.

Some attend because they believe it will gain some merit with God.

Some attend because they are seeking, what they do not know, but it seems like the right place to be.

**Do you know anyone like that?** And because it's just a religion to them they won't stick around.

**How do I know?** Because Scripture tells us that in the last days there will be a great falling away.

Mary and Joseph had set a wonderful example in the home about the importance of living out their faith. They weren't devoted because the Son of God was living in their home, which by the way would be a good incentive; they were devoted well before this. It was their practice.

We read that every year they went up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. According to the Law (**Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16**), every male was required to attend three festivals in Jerusalem. There was the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles and Pentecost. Because of the dispersion that began with the Assyrian invasion in 722BC which took people from the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom and spread them out and then the Babylonian invasion in 586 BC that dispersed many from Judah throughout the territory and then with the Roman occupation Jews were spread out all over and it was impossible for many to adhere to the law. But those living in Palestine made the trip. Many couldn't afford three trips and only came at Passover, the most important of the three.

While the males were required to go, many wives joined them on the trip and took their children as a time for the family to worship together.

What a great lesson for us today, families, led by the father, attending church together. Dad's, husbands, you have the greater responsibility to lead the family in worship. However important attending church is to you, will set an example for

the rest of your family. Before moving to Barakel, my Dad was faithful in attending Sunday and Wednesday and made sure we were there too. He led by quiet example in daily devotions.

When it comes to our devotion in worship, what kind of example are we giving our spouse, our children or grandchildren? Joseph and Mary faithfully went to Passover and were devoted to the Lord. Here's the example they set.

### Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Because they were devoted in their worship, we assume that their home had the commands of God attached to the doorframe of their house. Many Jews took this command literally and made a small wooden or metal box called a Mezuzot and placed Scriptures inside the box. This would be a reminder to them when they left the house or returned to always be mindful of God's commands.

Joseph may have had a phylactery that he wore for the same purpose. It was a small box attached to the back of the hand or the forehead by a leather strap and also had Scriptures inside, that God's commands would always be before him to guide his steps and guard his ways.

The other day David was sitting next to me and he was feeling my pocket and wondered what I had in there. I pulled out my memory packet that has the verses I'm learning. I want David to learn from me that Scripture memory is important not just to say I have memorized X number of verses, but to see that hiding God's Word in the heart can help keep us from sin, it can help in a conversation when someone asks a question about our faith, it can encourage us in times of trouble or trial.

By this brief statement I believe this couple set a wonderful example for parents to follow and showed Jesus how important worship was.

The age of 12 in the life of a Jewish boy was also

important because it was the year that prepared him for bar-mitzvah. Bar-mitzvah means to become a son of the law or covenant. It was at this age that he would become accountable for keeping the law. Actor Kirk Douglas had two Bar-Mitzvahs, one at age 13 and a second at age 83 believing that if a man's life is 70, and since he turned 83 that was like beginning a second life.

This was the age of maturity and responsibility when He would take his place in the religious community. From birth to age 10 Jesus would have been taught the Old Testament. From 10-15 He would have been taught the Mishna. This was the oral law or traditions of the Elders. It would be during His ministry years that He would challenge the Religious leaders regarding some of their traditions.

Alfred Edersheim in his masterful work *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah* writes "From the first days of its existence, a religious atmosphere surrounded the child of Jewish parents."

What kind of example are you setting in your home? At the age of 12, it was a time for Jesus to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

## II. IT WAS A TIME TO KNOW – v. 43-50

It's unclear from the text exactly how long they remained in Jerusalem. The Passover lasted eight days and included not only the Passover itself, but was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Because of the expense to stay for the entire time some individuals/families only stayed for the actual Passover and then returned to their homes. Whatever the case, it was time to head home. Typically an entire village or sometimes neighboring villages would travel together to and from Jerusalem. There were a couple of reasons for this. One was for fellowship. As the group traveled, the women and children were in the front and set the traveling pace and the men would follow

behind. A designated stopping point would be agreed on either to rest or spend the night.

Another reason to travel in a large group would be to discourage and fend off any would be robbers that may be lurking along the road. There were some lonely and desolate stretches of road where a robber bent on not good could easily hide.

The group set out for home and at the end of the day when they reached the night's destination, Joseph and Mary found out that Jesus was not with the group. Each thinking He was with the other or with friends. I'm sure that just about that time panic began to set in.

**Have you ever lost anything?** Even the littlest thing can cause panic and worry.

If you have been to Barakel on the West Side camp, you will know where the dining hall is located. There is a little circle drive that sends you back the way you came. If you didn't take the circle and kept driving straight you would end up down the hill and in the lake. As you come around the circle drive there is a building. It's the bath house. At one end of the bath house closest to the dining hall is the laundry room. When I was growing up at camp, just inside the door of the laundry room was a large box. It was the lost and found box. Inside the box was a collection of this and that. At the end of the week after all the campers had loaded buses and headed back to various points around the State, the dorms would be cleaned and any remaining items were brought to the laundry room. Clothes were washed, dried, folded and placed in the box. The box had beach towels and swimming trunks, baseball gloves, baseball hats, sunglasses, plastic soap cases, fishing poles, leftover crafts, someone's Bible and camper handbook, T shirts and jeans, socks and hair brushes.

Occasionally Johnnie or Susie's Mom would call to ask about an item and how it could be reconnected

with the owner. Sometimes a brother or sister was coming up to Camp later or could it be sent on the bus the following week. At the end of the summer all the unclaimed items were put out on the table in the laundry room and the staff could sift through to see if there was anything they might want. It was our Good Will.

I don't know about you but I don't like losing things. Maybe you've lost something of value in the past. **How did you feel both in the losing and the finding?** It doesn't happen very often but when it does and depending on what it is, there can be a sense of frantic worry, like the time Thomas was three years old and he came up missing at camp. Talk about panic. I spent an hour running through camp looking in buildings, by the lake and through the woods. With some 20,000 acres of woods around camp, well you think all kinds of crazy things.

For three days Joseph and Mary were on the hunt for their missing son. Worry turns to panic. Panic turns to fear. Fear is the breeding ground of all sorts of worst possible scenarios that ravage the mind. Kidnapped. Abused. Violent death. You name it and our minds conceive of all sorts of horrific possibilities. Losing a child is a parent's worst nightmare. I imagine them running through the streets looking in buildings, probing through the market place, visiting familiar neighborhoods frantically asking if anyone had seen a lost boy. Finally their search ends when they find Jesus in the Temple. As a parent we can understand Mary's response. **Who among us wouldn't have reacted the same way?** "Your father and I have been worried sick about you." The idea conveyed is that she was greatly distressed, sorrowing over his whereabouts. It's the same word used by Paul in **Romans 9:2** when he speaks about his concern for the lost of Israel or in **Luke 16:24-25** for the pain and anguish experienced by those who are in.

Jesus was not disobedient in His actions here. He was not being intentionally defiant. He was curious and wanted to learn more about the Law so He stayed behind to interact with the Religious teachers. Because it was Passover, the gifted teachers would have been present. That's where they found Him, among the scholars asking and answering questions to the amazement of everyone including the teachers. They were astonished at His insight. **Chuck Swindoll offers this thought. "The Greek term suggests that Jesus was able to put things together and come up with insights that should have been far beyond His grasp at the age of twelve."**

There was Jesus listening to these scholars and answering questions amazing them with His insight, asking probing questions. His mind was alive with interest. It is possible that even at such a young age Jesus saw through their legalism. They probably thought "what a cute kid." Unlike Simeon and Anna, these teachers did not realize He was the Messiah. They thought He was just a gifted child with unusual insight. But it would be some of these very same things that later on Jesus would openly challenge them about, perhaps even some of the very same people.

It was a frantic search for Jesus ending in their finding Him at the Temple among the teachers. Jesus's response was not a sarcastic reaction like "Duh, you should have known where I would be." Instead I want you to look closely at something. Listen to what He reveals.

Mary: **"Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."**

Jesus: **"Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?"**

Mary acknowledged the legal right of Joseph as His earthly father.

Jesus acknowledged understanding of who His real Father was. At some point the Spirit of God revealed this and He began to comprehend His mission. **He had what Greek scholar A.T. Robertson calls a "Messianic consciousness."** Jesus makes a distinction between His earthly father and God. He must be in His Father's house.

**When my youngest brother was old enough he started hanging out at the garage spending time with Dad under the hood of buses or lying on a creeper underneath them. He would ask Dad questions about engines and it was there that he learned his way around vehicles and how to drink coffee. Al had to be in his father's house, to learn from him.**

It is in Jesus' response that we see the beginning of His divine musts.

**v. 49 "I must be in My Father's house."**

**Luke 4:43 "I must preach the good news"**

**Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer."**

**Luke 13:33 "I must keep going."**

**Luke 19:5 "Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house."**

**Luke 22:37; 24:26** speak of Him being delivered up, crucified, and then to rise again.

**Luke 24:44 "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."**

How sad to think that these religious teachers had the Messiah in their midst talking with them and yet they did not recognize Him or respond like the disciples on the road to Emmaus whose hearts burned within them because of being in the presence of Jesus even though they did not recognize Him.

Jesus genuinely thought His parents should have known where He was. But as the text states they didn't understand what He meant. They were part of the miracle of His birth, had heard the testimony of the angel, heard the praise of the shepherds and the Magi, the confessions of Simeon and Anna and

yet did not have spiritual insight to see His divine purpose coming into fruition. Whether it was a sermon or a reading of Scripture from the Old Testament or the stories that His mother told Him, it began to click, rousing that sense of His unique relationship with God and what His mission was.

As I think about where we are today, yes, Jesus was a special child, but never underestimate the curiosity of the mind of a child in regard to spiritual matters. We are instructed to teach them when they sit down and when they rise up. Make sure we bring them to church so they can learn about God. Integrate the spiritual with the daily events of life. Show them how Scripture guides daily living. Let's not "dumb down" the gospel because they are children. God's Spirit is able to help them comprehend His Word so that they understand.

We also need to remind ourselves that because of Christ we now have a unique relationship with God. He is our Father and we too have been given a task on earth to accomplish for Him. **Do we desire to be in His house to interact with His Word?** Like Jesus, for us it is also a time to know.

It was a time to go

It was a time to know

It was a time to grow

### III. IT WAS A TIME TO GROW – v. 51-52

Jesus understood His relationship with God and the unfolding of His mission, yet we find that until it was time for Him to go public, He remained in His parents' home, obedient to them. At some point Joseph died and Jesus took up the family business as a carpenter.

Even though He was God, our text states that He still grew mentally, physically, and spiritually.  
He grew in wisdom – mentally.  
He grew in stature – physically.  
He grew in favor with God and man – spiritually.

The word "grow" means to cut one's way forward. It reminds me of the effort required to work your way through the jungle. Growth can be difficult, but Jesus kept at it.

I'm not suggesting that growing up was difficult for Jesus. I'm suggesting that like any other child, He had to continue to learn, continue to apply Himself, continue to grow in body, mind and spirit. Everything He did found favor with God. One author suggested that He lived beneath His Father's smile. As God He knew everything, yet as man He chose to learn and grow in wisdom, stature and favor. It was a time to grow.

Author William Hendriksen writes "He continued to experience increasingly the lovingkindness of His Father and also the friendliness of the people around Him."

From an early age Jesus knew and loved the Law. He interacted with the religious teachers of His day who were amazed at His discernment and understanding and application. At this point as a child they could write Him off as a cute kid who was beyond His years in understanding. At twelve He was no threat to them and besides they were learned scholars with degrees. But we will see that in 18 years their amazement will turn to anger as He openly confronts them about their hypocrisy.

He sought out teachers and sat in their midst.

He listened.

He asked questions.

He gave answers.

He grew.

Here's the thing. If the Son of God understood how important it was to act in this way how much more should we seek out others to listen, ask questions and respond by answering. **II Timothy 2:15 to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."**

Do you desire to be in God's House?

Do you desire to know God?

Do you desire to grow mentally, physically and spiritually?

There are plenty of opportunities around us to do that. In the day and age in which we live there is no excuse to say we can't. It's more likely we won't because we don't. Be faithful to attend Sunday school and church each week. I'd love to see more people come out to Prayer meeting. Get involved in a Bible study group either here or elsewhere. If the ones offered are inconvenient start one yourself. If you are looking for an in-depth Bible study, there is Bible Study Fellowship. The internet makes it easy to access some very gifted Bible teachers and scholars.

This transitory passage sets the stage now for Jesus' ministry. His life, even as a boy gives us a remarkable example to follow.

In closing I want to make this final point. For three days Mary and Joseph thought they had lost Jesus. They searched all over till they found Him. There are many who think that Jesus is with them only to find out that He is not. We may take for granted that we are in fellowship with Him because we go to church or read our Bible, even pray, but in reality we have drifted away from Him. Remember when Sampson was enticed by Delilah and she cried out that the Philistines were coming and Scripture says he rose up to go fight them not knowing the Spirit had left him. We can be religious but not right with God, just as these religious teachers. Don't wait until the end of your life only to find out that He wasn't with you. Look for Him now. Scripture says that those who look for Him will find Him.

Let me close with the words of the Apostle Peter as he concludes his second epistle:

**“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” (II Peter 3:18)**