

Luke 2:41-52 Let us Walk with Jesus! Christmas 1 Dec. 27, 2015

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Grace & peace to you from God our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, with whom we walk by faith!

God's words of wisdom to keep us close to Jesus are in Luke 2:41-52.

These are Your words heavenly Father. Set us apart to follow Jesus through life and into heaven. Amen.

Dear Followers of Christ,

Are there things that you would like to know about Jesus? What was His childhood like? God's Word tells us that He didn't perform miracles until the wedding of Cana. (John 2) So, He did not use His miraculous powers as a child. Also, our verses tell us that Jesus grew in wisdom, so He did not use His full knowledge as a child. But, what would it mean to have Jesus as a neighbor or friend? What would it be like to have Jesus use His carpenter skills to make furniture for you? We only get a glimpse of Jesus' childhood from this one lesson about Him going to the Jerusalem. But there is much that we can learn in this lesson for our lives! Today, we'll join Jesus in the courtyard buildings of the temple and, as we hear God's Word,

Let us walk with Jesus!

First, God has a plan for us to follow. From the time Jesus was a baby until age 12 He had been a perfect child in every way, helping with chores, obedient to Mary and Joseph, and showing God's love to others. Jesus must have had an earlier education at a synagogue school in Nazareth. Now at age 12 He was expected to prepare become "a son of the law" and take an active part in the local synagogue. So, He went along with His parents to the temple to attend the "Feast of Passover." (v.42) At the feast for the first time He would eat the Passover meal and also worship at the temple during the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread that followed the Passover. As Jesus ate the Passover meal the lesson was reminded how God rescued His people from Egypt. He sent the plague through a destroying angel to kill all the first-born males in each household. But, God's people escaped the plague of death through the sacrifice of the year-old lamb whose blood was placed on the doorposts. God used this festival to prepare Jesus for the death that lay ahead for Him when He would be the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" by His death. (John 1:29) His blood was placed on the wood of the cross so that we are set free from our sins; and our lives are spared from eternal judgment.

Jesus also prepared for His future work by staying in Jerusalem after the crowds returned home. The synagogue in Nazareth would not have highly trained teachers in God's Word like in Jerusalem. His time at the temple gave Jesus an opportunity to really grow in understanding God's Word. He was extremely interested, not just for information, but because God's Word would guide His future life and He wanted to be absolutely clear in the direction God wanted Him to go.

Jesus' mother and step-father were also going to be led by God's plan, but it wasn't going to be easy. Our verses tell us that they left Jerusalem after the festival. They expected Jesus to be among the relatives in their caravan back to Nazareth. After a day's journey, imagine the shock of not finding Jesus among the other young men! It would be terrible for any parent to lose a child. But, Mary and Joseph had been entrusted by God to care for the Savior of the world. They must have been frantic as they searched for Him on the return trip to Jerusalem. And what relief and astonishment they had when they found Jesus in the temple! Mary said, "*Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously (painfully) searching for you!*" (v.48)

We might feel much like Mary and Joseph wondering why God allowed events to happen to us. We too have times when we question why God sets us on a path of life that hurts. He allows us to be confused about God's directions for us. Or He doesn't let us know why we need surgery or have sickness in our lives. He doesn't let us know why we can make detailed plans and then have to change them. But, God reminds us

through Isaiah, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.... As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Isaiah 55:8-9) If we are going to walk with Jesus, we will need to seek to understand God’s ways just like Jesus did at His young age. The sooner in life we take that journey with Jesus in God’s Word the better we will be! It won’t mean less trouble, but a firmer foundation to stand on as Christians. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”* (Luke 11:28)

Second, we walk with Jesus by trusting His guidance. Jesus showed His trust in God by His answer to Mary’s troubled question. He said, *“Why were you searching for Me? Didn’t you know that I had to be in My Father’s house?”* (v.49) Mary had asked if Jesus understood how she and Joseph felt, since they had never had a problem with Him before. Jesus’ reply was to remind them that He wasn’t just their son. He was God’s Son. God had sent Him into the world to live a perfect life in thought, word and action. He was completely devoted to God. His mission first was to live in perfect obedience to His heavenly Father, and then to His earthly parents. Whenever there was a conflict between following God or Mary, God was going to win! Jesus already had a perfect confidence in God even at age 12 and that was going to continue to increase during His humble years on earth.

After His time in the temple, Jesus returned to His role as a son and as an earthly carpenter. Luke wrote, *“Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.... And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”* (Luke 2:51-52) God, Jesus’ parents, and others were pleased with Jesus’ life. And God used those following 18 years to prepare Jesus for His ministry on earth. We would speak and show His authority as the Son of God so people would trust in Him to save them. The Bible states, *When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ... to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”* (Galatians 4:4-5) Paul wrote that Christ Jesus *“made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.... He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.”* (Philippians 2:7-8) He trusted God to accomplish His good purpose!

We too can trust in God in all situations. His wisdom is far greater than ours. His plan for us is from eternity and was powerfully revealed to us through the Gospel to lead us to eternity with Him. The teachers that heard Jesus in the courts of the temple were amazed at His understanding and answers. At first, Mary did not understand. But, *“[she] treasured these things in her heart.”* (v.51) And eventually, the Holy Spirit led her to understand the purpose for her Son, to give His life to pay for all sins. Mary later believed in Jesus as her Savior just as so many others have down to our day. Now, is our time to study God’s Word and let it give us peace as we trust in Jesus! There will be questions we can’t answer. In time God will make things clear. For now, we trust Jesus who said, *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”* (John 5:24)

There are many more things that we would like to know about Jesus. But, the best use of our time is to remember what His Word has revealed about Him:, *“Jesus did many other miraculous signs..., which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* (John 20:30-31) God help us to fill our thoughts with His Word so we know God’s plan for us and prayerfully trust in Christ as He leads in God’s way to life! Amen.