

39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. 40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; 43 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, 44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. 46 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. 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. 48 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." 49 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?" 50 But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. 51 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.

52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Once again, I have approached a passage of scripture thinking to myself, is there anything here that is important to us and can I fill 30 or 35 minutes speaking and teaching about this passage, or should I include the first section of chapter 3?

And once again I am bowled over with the astonishing truths, the rich vein of gold resting just below the surface. There is so MUCH here that now I fear the other problem. Can I do this justice. Can I successfully relay what God has showed me here, to you.

I hope so, and pray so, because there is foundational fundamental truth for us to understand in these first ever words of Jesus recorded for us, long before His public ministry began. Just a couple of sentences from when He was only 12 years old, and they are world changing.

41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

This actually speaks volumes about the quality of parents God selected for His Son.

There were three feasts every year in Jerusalem that God instituted in order for His people to not forget who they were and where they had come from.

There was the Passover, and the feast of Pentecost, and also the feast of tabernacles, spread out over the year. According to Exodus 23:17, Exodus 34:22 and 23, and Deuteronomy 16:16, Jewish men were to attend all three feasts every year.

But by the time Jesus was born, the jews were spread out all over everywhere and most couldn't come to every feast.

It would have been unusual and considered unnecessary for young parents to do this every year. Often, women didn't go at all. And from Nazareth this was a 3 or 4 day journey.

And further, most who went just took in the 2 day Passover and didn't stay for the feast of the loaves. That would have been more like 8 days, and with 8 more traveling. Plus by the time Jesus was 12, there were half brothers and half sisters to bring. That's a big commitment, and they did it every year. A sweet picture of love for God and spiritual commitment.

So, Jesus is twelve, and let's talk about that for a minute. Because we're about a million miles removed from what was considered normal in Israel in 12 AD.

Normal marrying age for boys in Israel was young teens. That means boys had to grow up much faster there than what we are used to.

Even in my lifetime, there has been an enormous shift. And perhaps not a good one. In fact I know it's not a good one at all, but this morning may not be the time or place to discuss all that I'm seeing regarding young manhood.

Our society, our culture has become incredibly effeminate in what it considers correct and normal. Masculinity is discouraged and looked down on as something akin to knuckle dragging apes.

Jesus is 12 years old in this passage, and when he is 13, he is considered a man, a son of the law, equal to the other men under the law.

No, 13 year old boys were not sages of wisdom. Their culture recognized that wisdom came with age and life long study, but they were to be trained in God's law and they were no longer children. They were responsible to understand and obey God's law.

Bar Mitzvah means son of the law. But Jesus is exceptional. We take notice of child prodigy's. Jesus is fully formed, in his mental capacity at this time. At 12 He is perhaps the wisest person on earth.

Now the Canon of scripture, our Holy Bible's new testament and old have a gap between vss. 39 and 52; *39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. 40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

That would be his toddler and growing up childhood years, and after our story today it simply says in vs. 52 about adult Jesus;

52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

And that's it until we meet Him in chapter 3 when He begins His ministry at age 30. This little story this morning is all we have in that gap from infancy after His parents return from Egypt, until John the baptizer introduces Him as Messiah.

The apocryphal books have flights of fancy, some guy's imagination; These picture Jesus as being omniscient and almighty. They have the lions and leopards worshiping Him. One writer says the infant Jesus says to a palm, '*Bend down and refresh My mother with your fruit.*' And it does so immediately. One writer says, '*At five years of age He modeled twelve sparrows out of soft clay, clapped His hands and they flew away,*' Stories about Jesus picking up a bird with a broken wing and healing it.

Those all become silly compared to the one truth that Luke is going to reveal for us in this passage this morning when Jesus is 12.

43 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, 44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey;

God gave Jesus beautiful, godly, wise parents. Joseph is adoptive dad, and Mary is God's choice for mom. And I absolutely love this passage of scripture as a model for parenting.

This is the opposite of helicopter parents. Jesus will be a man in their society next year. He is where he is, and they assume it's with other young people His age, or perhaps he's with an older group of men soaking in wisdom, they are unconcerned.

They traveled in a caravan, for lots of good reasons, the history books tell us. They would pick up other folks from other villages along the way and it was for social exchange and also safety of numbers that they moved in a large group. A caravan.

And the history books tell us that the women and children set the pace up front. Men might go too fast or press too hard, so the little ones set the pace and that's how they went.

There would be a group of children up front, enjoying each other, and the women would all walk together and enjoy their stuff, their talk, and the men would bring up the rear.

And they walked out of their way to avoid the region of Samaria. It was longer to go down the Jordan river valley and then climb up the steep road to Jerusalem, but that's what they did. They were unwelcome in Samaria and considered it unclean.

Joseph and Mary and whoever else is in their family by this time,

half brothers and sisters, are unconcerned about who Jesus is hanging with during the walking phase on day one going home. But; *the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.*

and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.

So at the end of day one when the family reconnoiters, where's Jesus? Did any of you notice who He was traveling with? No. Don't recall seeing Him with anyone. And they take it up a chain to their relatives and other acquaintances. Anybody seen Jesus? No, no. We thought He was with you. We thought He was with them.

No Jesus to be found, so in the morning, they wouldn't travel at night, but next day, they walk back a days walk to Jerusalem.

46 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.

The three days mentioned could be day one walking towards Nazareth, day two walking back to Jerusalem, and day three searching in Jerusalem and finding Him in the temple.

Jesus is found sitting in the middle of a confluence of teachers. Let me say something about that.

You've probably heard someone say that if you wanted to take out the most number of important politicians in the country at one place at one time, it would be at the Army Navy football game.

And I've likewise thought that if the devil wanted to take out the

cream of the crop of Godly teachers and leaders of real christianity in one place at one time, it would be that conference I go to every year in early spring.

The Shepherd's conference at Grace Community Church is like no other, anywhere. And christian conferences are big business these days. That one is different from all the rest. It is the best of God's teachers coming to a single summit each year.

I'm like a fly on the wall at that conference. Nobody see's me, nobody knows me, I'm just a fly on the wall, happy to even be in that confluence of men. You just sit and take it in. It's amazing.

And something similar is going on in the Temple. Passover is finished. The feast of loaves is finished. But all the great teachers from everywhere on the known earth, are in Jerusalem, at one place at one time. It would have been a noble confluence of the best jewish teachers in all the earth. Together in one place.

And Jesus is in the middle of them. And *they're* listening to Him. Amazed at what a 12 year old is saying. But this isn't any 12 year old. This is God of very God, in a 12 year old human body.

Does He know that? Does He realize who He is. Luke is about to answer that question for us.

Notice also Jesus method with the teachers. A method I don't do well. He's engaging these teachers with questions. It's a two way conversation with the author of the book. He's taking their answers and re-directing with questions.

I wish I was better at that. It would be more fun for you. Listening to me just teach up here for 35 minutes must be difficult. Sorry, it's the best I've got. For now.

Jesus is controlling the conversation, asking them questions, then giving them answers; *47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.*

Amazed is one of Luke's favorite words. And with Jesus, you almost have to wear it out. Because people are always amazed with Jesus.

And perhaps I should add; Jesus isn't finished speaking. He's still speaking to people through His Holy Spirit indwelt believers. And if we're doing that right; People should be amazed. I managed to amaze my brother in law Tony during his visit.

He's a top climate change scientist with NOAA. And I gave him an alternative view. God owns every molecule, ever atomic particle on this planet, and indeed in all the universes, and He is sovereign over climate change.

We are actually arrogant if we think we could control climate change. He will use whatever it is He's doing, for His purposes. And I don't rule out judgement. We're way beyond due. Tony was amazed. Appalled, but amazed. That's to be expected when we show people God's truths. The teachers of Israel are amazed.

Mary and Joseph show up; *vs. 48 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."*

Mary and Joseph are amazed. Everywhere people are with Jesus, they're amazed. Astonished.

And then Mary throws a big old guilt trip at Him. It's hard to make

the sinless Son of God guilty, but Mary's going to give it a shot, and Jesus answer tells us everything we need to know about who He thinks He is . . . at 12 years old.

“Son, why have You treated us this way? How could you be so horrid to us. It's implied, how could you cause me this pain.

Remember what Simeon said to Mary. Her heart would be pierced. And this is the first little pin prick.

I'm sure Jesus was incredible to have around as a child. A sinless kid. Little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. Always where He's supposed to be doing what He's supposed to be doing. That would be easy to get used to. No sin nature. No combat. No control tantrums. No dis-obedience.

But Mary, as special as she is, chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, she's in her mid twenties at this point, and she's a godly, godly woman, but still, her bottom lip goes out in a pout and she says, "how could you do this to me and dad!"

Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” You've caused us inconvenience and worry. Dad was supposed to be back at work by today. And we were worried about you. And we had to come find you. How could you cause us this pain??

OK, get ready for 12 year old Jesus' answer. This is the whole point of this story, and it is astonishing. Get ready to be amazed. Jesus is in the room.

*49 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?”*

Jesus is loving but firm. He's 12, but He has to remind Mary about

what all the angels and Zacharius and Simeon said all those years ago.

Why is it that you were looking for Me

The construction is very similar to what Jesus told Mary in John 2:4 at the wedding at Cana. Mary is hinting that more wine for the wedding would be nice. They ran out of wine, Son, can you do anything about that?

And Jesus says; *Woman, what have I to do with thee? .*

It's an authority issue. Does Mary have any rights to make any claims on Jesus? Does Jesus have to obey His mother?

It's a sticky issue. Because the law says, children obey your parents. But at 12 years old, Jesus is going to gently let Mary, and by extension Joseph, know that days are coming when His duty to obey them as parents, are closing.

And there's a reason for that, and this is very subtle. So subtle that in the next verse it's going to tell us, Joseph and Mary didn't understand. Not yet.

*Did you not know that I had to be in **My** Father's house?"*

First of all, in the greek, the word house is not there. What is there is a designation of authority. He has to be under the direct control of His Father. Doing His Father's business. Where His Father wants Him to be.

And it's almost a gentle rebuke. Because what did Mary say in her try at a guilt trip? *Behold, Your **father** and **I** have been anxiously looking for You.*

And even though they didn't immediately get what He's saying, He plays on her words. Your father. Small 'f'. In other words, Joseph. And Jesus says My Father, capital 'F'.

He uses a different form of the word. She says your father, pater, the usual ordinary word for dad. And Jesus replies My (possessive personal pronoun) My Father, and the word is Patros which is the word for referring to God as Father, which the Jews did not do.

Mary says you've caused your father and I trouble. And Jesus gently lets her know; Joseph is my adoptive father, but I have a Father, Patros, different from Joseph that trumps you and Joseph.

Now we need to dig in our heels just here for a minute or two, because what Jesus has just announced is, well, astonishing!

Let's begin with how the Jews thought of God, because their view of God was not; Father.

We can't take time to develop this, but just one verse that gives the Jewish mindset about God.

Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

God wanted to be Father to them, but a plan must unfold first to take away sin. Because God cannot be Father to sinful persons.

Isa. 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save;

Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

God is not Father to sinful people. And we're so far on the other side of the cross that we've forgotten that. The jews understood. God is a great and terrible King. Unapproachable!

We watch people on TV who are 180 degrees out from what the jews understood. Abomination people, dreadful horrible sinful people who do not have Christ, and they want to talk about Father God.

The jewish people understood; God is in unapproachable light, and we are sinners. He is not Father to sinful people.

So when Jesus, in the temple says; I must be doing the will of my Father. He calls God, Father, that's something the jews cannot tolerate.

Because if God is your Father, who are you? Son, heir, equal in majesty and authority with God. Ultimately, that was what they murdered Him for. Claiming He was the Son of God. Claiming equal being, equal everything with God.

When Jesus tells Mary and Joseph, He has to answer to His Patros, He is claiming to be deity, the Son of God.

To the jews that was tantamount to blasphemy. Claiming God as your Father. Incredible blasphemy, claiming to be equal with the God of heaven.

For anyone else, that is blasphemy, but He is in fact who He claims to be. God is my Father. I am the Son. He knew that at age 12.

He understood that the slaughter of tens of thousands of sheep, the river of blood going out the back of the temple was a picture of what He had come to accomplish.

We are guilty of throwing that name around rather casually. Father. We don't give near enough thought to just how lofty that claim actually is. So lofty that the jews would stone you for blasphemy if you claimed God was your Father. It is an enormous claim.

Do we blaspheme when we call God, Father? The jews in Jesus day would have thought so. Can we call Him Father?

Yes. John 1:11 - 13 *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. Born of God. Sons and heirs through Christ, of God. He came to share His Father . . with us!*

Do not call God your Father if you have a lifestyle of sin. He is not Father to sinful men. But He is Father to all those who have received Jesus as saviour. Jesus took our sins to the cross and cancelled the debt.

Through the blood of Jesus, believing in Him, we are in Christ, born of God. Vs. 12, we have the right, the privilege to call God what Jesus called God. Father. Father.

But God is only Father to those who are in Christ. We are in Christ, adopted sons and daughters. We call Him Father, and He is. And that is an awesome privilege. Awsome.

Peter speaks to this magnificent privilege; 1 Peter 1:14 - 19

*14 As obedient **children**, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”*

*17 If you address as **Father** the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

If you address as Father . . . act like a son. Peter never quite got over being able to address the God of creation as Father. We have lost the awe of this. To the jews, blasphemy, to christians in 2018, apparently, almost nothing.

Jesus claimed to be deity when He called God His Father. That's what the jews understood about Him and why they killed Him.

Jesus, however, told us who believe to address God when we pray as; *Our **Father**, Who art in heaven . . .* He told us to say that. That's amazing.

Are we claiming to be deity when we say that? No, no, but what I am claiming is that I can say that because my life is hidden with Christ in God. I am hidden inside the one who *can* claim that. Only In Christ, is God my Father. Because only In Christ, am I sinless, even now only positionally, like He is.

Jesus was 12 when He said that. When He claimed that His real

Father was the God of creation.

But it wasn't in the timing or will of God for Jesus to be crucified at 12 years old. Or at 15. It was God's will for Him to continue in subjection to Mary and Joseph. To go back to Nazareth and work with Joseph in the family business. As a carpenter.

How many doorframes and window frames and roofs did Jesus build during the next 18 years?

50 But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. 51 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.