

**Luke 2:41-52 (NIV)**

41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.

43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

49 “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”

50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

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

42-02-02-The Trouble with Jesus...

spiritual growth, epiphany, knowing Christ

Luke 2:41-52

As we grow, we may lose the Jesus we know, only to know Him better.

**INTRODUCTION:**

–I grew up with a *supernatural idea of Jesus*, thinking He went around reading minds, healing people at will, and doing miracles all the time. Such ideas led some to make up *weird stories*, like the one in [the **Gospel of Thomas** Chapter 4, where it says the 5-year-old Jesus gathered rain into a pool, told the muddy water to clear up, and made 12 sparrows from the mud. Since it was the Sabbath, some Jewish kids told on Him. But when Joseph got there to scold Him, He sent the sparrows flying off, singing praises to God. When a Pharisee’s son tried to empty and dry up the pool with an olive branch, Jesus made the boy dry up, so that he died. Carrying the body off, his parents reviled Joseph and said, “Behold what your son has done: teach him to pray and not blaspheme.”] This tale, of Jesus with a *supernaturally overactive childhood*, came from somebody’s warped imagination. It portrayed Jesus as a **real problem child**.

– Part of understanding the Incarnation is realizing that Jesus *grew up*, He *learned*. He didn’t start out looking up at Mary saying, “*Hi there, Momma! Did you know I’m God’s Son?*” It was an *epiphany* to me to learn that most of Jesus’ life was ordinary and *down-to-earth*. But this **text** shows that Mary and Joseph did have some Trouble with Jesus... He wasn’t acting like the child they knew. Sometimes, **HOM.idea**.

- I. As His Parent Did, We Can Also Lose the Jesus We Know, v.41-44,** *Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.*
- A. Jesus sensed He had a new schedule at “twelve years old” [**barmitzvah** age meant He was now a ‘son of the law’ with new spiritual responsibility].
- B. His parents took Him along with them, but “*Jesus stayed behind,*” feeling called to a new mission. [Some people used to take **a plastic Jesus** on their car’s dashboard to protect us; but *the real Jesus* wants to guide us: “*Pull over here... I’ve got some of my Father’s business to attend to.*”]
- C. In a very real sense, **we can leave the real Jesus “behind...”**
1. **by failing to take Him home with us**: “*his parents were returning*

home” without Him [**Amer. Express motto**: “Don’t leave home without it!”— **a good Jesus motto** would be: “Don’t leave church without Him!”]

2. **by failing to practice His presence**: “they were unaware of” His absence. (How can we have a constant awareness of Christ’s presence? [**Brother Lawrence**’s little booklet might be a good start.])
3. **by failing to make Christ personal**: “thinking he was in their company” [**Family faith**—“My grandpa was a preacher.”—isn’t a ticket to Heaven.]
4. **by failing to search properly**: they were “looking for him among their relatives and friends” (We often get too cozy with the familiar—we like to stay in our comfort zone [Imagine how **Ananias** felt being asked to go visit and pray for his enemy Saul.... “What are you thinking of, Lord?”])

**TRANS**: Losing Jesus wasn’t part of Mary and Joseph’s comfort zone! It took a 3-day search to find Him. Although He impressed the temple teachers so much that they gave Him 3 days of hospitality, it did not impress Joseph and Mary! **But they had to lose the Jesus they knew, so they could know Him better**, upon finding Him again.

## II. We, Too, May Find Jesus Different Than We Expected, v.45-50,

*When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

- A. Mary & Joseph had both been told who Jesus really was, but they got used to Him *as a growing boy*. (We can get used to a Jesus in Bible stories; but, if He’s in our lives, He’s there for one reason: to lead us in God’s will—to make our story into part of His story.)
- B. This temple episode gives us a peek at Christ’s own self-discovery:
  1. In “*sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions*,” He was living out His *barmitzvah*. [**My early idea of this story** had a boy sitting there *teaching*; but the real Jesus was seating there as a disciple’!]
  2. He was learning a new confidence in speaking what He felt led to share, and that confidence was confirmed: “*Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers*.”
  3. Christ’s epiphany about being God’s Son led Him to see it as the

*debut* of His ministry: “*Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?*” [lit. “*Don’t you know that I must be in the things of the Father of me?*”]—He was intent on doing the ministry His identity implied. (As His followers, we should be intent on doing what our identity in Christ implies.)

- C. Everyone grew in knowledge through this event (including Jesus!)
  1. For his parents and for us, **growing in our knowledge of Jesus...**
    - a. **can be painful** (it was for Mary): “*Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.*” [lit. *in torment* [like that of Hell], as it is for those today with ‘missing children.’]
    - b. **can expose our lack of spiritual insight**: “*Why were you searching for me?*” Who do you think I am? (He answered by contrasting Mary’s words “*Your father and I*” with His words “*my Father.*”)
    - c. **can leave us with questions**: “*But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*” (“**When do we finally get all the answers?**” When we no longer “see through a glass darkly, but face to face.”)
  2. But Jesus also grew in knowledge through this event:
    - a. He had heard the Spirit right: Yes, He was God’s Son, *sent* to do His Father’s will; but He still had to learn about timing. (The Holy Spirit evidently let Him know this, because— v.51a, *Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.*)
    - b. Jesus continued this learning process until His baptism— v.52, *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*
      - (1) Ongoing *listening prayer* helped Him grow in “*wisdom.*”
      - (2) Ongoing *labor in carpentry* helped Him grow in “*stature.*”
      - (3) Ongoing *obedience to the Spirit* won Him “*favor with God.*”
      - (4) Ongoing *personal development* won Him “*favor with... men.*”

## **CONCLUSION**:

—Jesus tells us, “Follow me.” He **grew in spirituality** and calls us to grow. He was **a learner** and expects us to be learners. I lost my *comfortable, miraculous Jesus*, **so I could better know the truly human Jesus** who was God in the flesh. It’s *not easy* to let go of our old ideas, especially ideas about Christ. But Jesus wants us to grow in our knowledge of Him. And afterwards, when we know Him better, we will be better able to follow Mary’s example— v.51b, *But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.*