

Luke 2:40-52

NIV Harmony 40-41; Compassionate 40-44

Introduction

1. What are your fondest memories growing up?
2. In the past, we have experienced fun times of travel with our family members to the beach, camping, and to Washington D.C. to see the sights there.
3. In this passage, we get a glimpse into a festive family trip that the holy family took to Jerusalem, their capital city, for the Feast of Unleavened Bread at Passover.
4. This trip reveals more to us than just a childhood trip of Jesus. It reveals that Jesus had a sense of His divine origin and mission early in life.
5. **Read Luke 2:40-52.**

A. Jesus Grew (40)

1. Physical Growth – Jesus “grew and became strong.”
2. Intellectual Growth – Jesus was “filled with wisdom (Gk. *sophia*)”
3. Spiritual Growth – “the grace (Gk., *charis*) of God was on him”
4. Luke chose the word “grew” (Gk., *euksanen*) carefully and intentionally.
 - a. This Greek word describes the normal course of human physical, mental, and spiritual development experienced in early childhood.
 - b. Jesus gained basic motor skills, learned language, and experienced the faith practices of His family.

B. Jesus Went to the Temple in Jerusalem (41-52)

1. Going Up to Jerusalem (41-42)
 - a. Traditionally, each Jewish man was to go up to Jerusalem three times each year at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Tabernacles (cf., Dt 16:16).
 - b. Women and children would usually accompany the men on the journey as they travelled in caravans.
 - c. Young boys would usually travel with their mothers at the head of the caravan, setting the pace, while the men and boys who had reached the age of 13, their *Bar Mitzvah* (“son of the covenant”), would travel at the back of the caravan with the men.
2. After the feast was completed, Mary and Joseph started back to Nazareth. (43-46)
 - a. One day into their journey back home, they discovered Jesus was missing.
 - b. Warren Wiersbe writes, “Relatives and whole villages often traveled together and kept an eye on each other’s children. At the age of twelve, Jesus could easily have gone from one group to another and not been missed. Joseph would think Jesus was with Mary and the other children, while Mary would suppose He was with Joseph and the men, or perhaps with one of their relatives” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Compassionate*, 41).
 - c. After discovering that Jesus was missing, Mary and Joseph travelled a day back to Jerusalem and spent another day searching the city for Him before they found Him in the Temple.
 - d. Jesus was “. . . sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.” (46)
 - 1) Wouldn’t it have been interesting to have heard their discussion and Jesus’ questions?
 - 2) This may have been Jesus’ *Bar Mitzvah*, if he hadn’t already had one at the synagogue in Nazareth.
3. Jesus Responded to His Parents’ Concern (47-50)
 - a. The teachers and others gathered in the Temple were “amazed” (Gk., *eksistanto* – “out of their minds”) at his “understanding and answers” (47).
 - b. Joseph and Mary were “astonished” (Gk., *ekseplagesan* – sorrowing, distressed, lit. “from the bowels,” sick to their stomachs) about Him being missing.
 - c. If you have ever had a lost child experience, then you know how they felt both while looking for Jesus and when they found him.
 - d. Mary confronted Jesus about His unexplained absence: “. . . Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” (48b)

- e. Jesus answered, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house” (lit. “Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in the (places/things) of my father?”) These are the first words of Jesus recorded in any of the Gospels.
- f. Joseph and Mary did not understand the powerful word (Gk., *rama*) that Jesus spoke to them. (50)
- g. Wiersbe concludes, “Jesus was affirming His divine sonship and His mission to do the will of the Father. . . . Even at the age of twelve, Jesus was moved by a divine compulsion to do the Father’s will” (Wiersbe, 42).

C. Jesus Grew Up (51-52)

1. Jesus left the Temple with Mary and Joseph for the trip back to Nazareth (51a)
 - a. Jesus was “obedient” (Gk., *hupotassomenos*) to His earthly parents.
 - b. He was not a disobedient or willful child. He was a child, soon to be a man, with a mission that His earthly parents did not yet fully comprehend.
2. This is the only childhood story that is recorded in the four Gospels about Jesus’ childhood years.
3. Other writers have attempted to provide additional accounts of Jesus’ childhood and adolescence.
 - a. The NT Apocrypha contains other accounts of Jesus’ childhood such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Protoevangelium of James.
 - b. These accounts were written to provide interesting stories to fill in gaps in the storyline found in the canonical Gospels and are not considered to be accurate or truthful accounts.
 - c. Many of the stories in them simply do not match what we know about the nature and actions of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. (See for example Thomas 2:1-20).
 - d. They should not be taken as gospel. That is why they are not part of our Bible.
4. Mary “treasured all these things in her heart” (Gk., *dieterai panta ta remata en te kardia autas*) (51b).
 - a. Mary again did what she had done concerning the experiences of Jesus’ birth (cf., Lk 2:19).
 - b. Wiersbe notes, “This was a part of the pain from ‘the sword’ that Simeon had promised her (Luke 2:35), and no doubt it happened again and again as the boy matured. Years later, during His ministry, our Lord’s family didn’t understand Him (Luke 8:19-2; John 7:1-5)” (Wiersbe, 42).
5. Jesus Continued to Grow (52)
 - a. Again, Luke recorded that “Jesus grew”
 - 1) Earlier in Lk 2:40, Luke had stated that Jesus “grew” (Gk., *euksanen*) and used a word describing the normal course of human physical, mental, and spiritual development in early childhood.
 - 2) Here Luke used a different, meaning-filled word for “grew” (Gk., *proekopten* – advanced; moved forward).
 - 3) G. Campbell Morgan insightfully shares, “This is an entirely different word from the one used of the first twelve years—‘He grew.’ Dean Farrar says of this word: ‘The word used here is derived from pioneers, cutting down trees in the pathway of an advancing army.’ Thayer, that great master of words and phrases, says Prokopto ‘means to lengthen out by hammering as a smith forges metals.’ If we examine the make-up of the word, it means to chop forward, to beat forward, to hack on. The idea of the word, then, is that of strenuous activity rather than passive development. The Child grew for twelve years, passive development, no volitional responsibility; but He was now a Son of the law, and had to hack His own way on. Life now became responsible. For the future, development must be not merely the passive growth that answers life, but the bringing of all life under control. ‘He advanced’” (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 46).
 - b. Jesus grew “in wisdom and stature” (52a).
 - 1) “wisdom” (Gk., *sophia*) – Jesus grew intellectually in both knowledge and understanding, which is the application of knowledge, true wisdom.
 - 2) “stature” (Gk., *elkia*) – He grew physically in size and strength as He worked in the carpenter shop.
 - c. He grew “in favor with God and man” (52b).
 - 1) Jesus experienced emotional growth and understanding as He interacted with people.
 - 2) He grew relationally both horizontally with other humans and vertically with God, His Father.

d. Wiersbe concludes, “Jesus is a wonderful example for all young people to follow. He grew in a balanced way (Luke 2:52) without neglecting any part of life, and His priority was to do the will of His Father (see Matt. 6:33). He knew how to listen (Luke 2:46) and how to ask the right questions. He learned how to work, and He was obedient to His parents” (Wiersbe, 42).

D. Reflections

1. Where are you searching for God in life? He will be found when you look for Him in His things—His word, the communion of prayer, and wholehearted followership in action.
2. Are you still amazed at the powerful words of Jesus in scripture? Do you understand them?
3. Are you listening to God and His messengers carefully? Are you asking good questions of God and about your walk with Him each day?
4. Are you obedient to the Father in all areas of your life?
5. Are you continuing to grow in your relationships with God and with others in healthy, God-honoring ways?