

SERMON TEXT:

Intro:

I've titled my sermon this morning "Growing up in the church"

And for some of you, you're already curious how this is all going to play out...

Because the main reason is— **I didn't grow up in the church.**

The first time I ever willingly walked into a church (other than for a funeral or wedding wasn't until I was 16 years old).

But as I poured over our text this week, there was a question that I couldn't quite shake.

Q: Are we growing up in the church?

* I know that there are many here, who if I asked, would say:

YES, THAT'S MY STORY--I'VE GROWN UP IN "THE CHURCH"

BUT

That's not my question.

My Question Is:

ARE WE GROWING UP IN THE CHURCH?

Let's look at our text this morning:

Luke 2:41-52: The Boy Jesus at the Temple

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

⁴³ After the festival 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 man.

Point #1: GOING TO CHURCH (vs. 41-45)

* Mary & Joseph were very committed to their faith.

* Their journey to Jerusalem shows us that.

* The book of Exodus taught that all the males of Israel were expected in Jerusalem three times a year for Passover, The Feast of Firstfruits, and the Feast of Ingathering at harvest (Ex. 34:22-23)

- * But this was not an easy process to travel to Jerusalem. In fact it was quite a costly one.
 - * For Joseph, a self-employed carpenter, it was not easy to abandon his trade. For a day, let alone a week or more, leaving homes and livestock unattended would have been hard.
 - * Yet God promised protection of their property.
 - * And so regardless of how great the cost was...Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem Passover (vs.41)
 - * Now it's not said in our text but this could possibly have been the first time Jesus, himself, was given the opportunity to travel along with his family up to Jerusalem.
 - * Young Jewish boys at the age of 13 would celebrate their entrance into man-hood with their Bar-Mitzvah and be given the title of "son of the law"
 - * Some commentators feel this could have been Mary & Joseph's way of giving Jesus a taste of this yearly journey to Jerusalem. To give him a taste of what was to come since boys near this age were marked to begin their intense rabbinical apprenticeship.
 - * Jewish customs in Jesus' time were quite rigorous.
- According to Judah ben Tema, "At five years, the age is reached for studying the Bible, at ten, for studying the Mishnah, at thirteen, for fulfilling the mitzvot, at fifteen, for studying the Talmud." (Avot 5:21).

Though to some extent I am thankful that as Christians we do not have such a rigorous expectancy placed upon us...I do marvel at how serious Jews in the time of Jesus took their faith!

HOLD ON: Let's take a look at that quote again.

At 5 years old...they have reached the age to study the Bible. Not simply read a pop-up book of the story of Noah's ark with pretty pictures of rainbows, sheep, and birds. BUT STUDY THE BIBLE!

We'd much rather read our kids' pop-up book of the Noah's ark story wouldn't we? Or at best stick to the nice stories about Jesus, but when it comes to the tough stuff...we'll leave that to the experts...to somebody else.

WHY?

BECAUSE TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES REQUIRES RIGOROUS ROUTINE & COMMITMENT.

Jesus' parents would know that this was something that took great commitment...after all that's what is communicated in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (the concluding part of what in Hebrew is called "the *Shema*")

⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

→ And there are many Orthodox Jews who still practice this—the Shema—to this day. Reciting this prayer from memory morning & night. Literally binding this prayer in a small ornamental box on their foreheads, tying them on their hands.

* Theirs was a significant intellectual pursuit of God—even at such a young age.

* It's what Donovan challenged us with last week with the words of Jesus found in Mark 12:30

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all **your mind** and with all your strength" (ESV)

* These words spoken by Jesus are taken right from the Deuteronomy Chapter 6 passage we just looked at.

Q: Are we intellectually pursuing Jesus?

Q: Do we place value and significance on the whole verse of Mark 12:30?

Story:

I remember when Charity and I were dating at Briercrest I created a spreadsheet with every significant piece of information about her & us together as a couple. I had EVERYTHING on that sheet. Where we met. Her likes & dislikes. Where we had our first kiss. When and where we first said "I love you." Her favourite activities. Her personality traits. ETC.

Why would I do something like this? Well, other than it maybe being a bit creepy...I wanted to KNOW everything about her! Nothing was too trivial to be included on that sheet.

* Do we approach our pursuit of Jesus with that same dedication and commitment?

* Do we truly want to KNOW HIM?

Like I said at the beginning of my message this morning I didn't grow up in the church.

To be honest with you, there are certain days where I really wrestle with whether or not I would have rather grown up in the church.

I sometimes see the lack of zeal and passion in individuals' lives who have had almost their whole lives to spend under the instruction and wisdom of pastors and elders...and who seem to have squandered it all away.

Instead some have spent their years counting the number of knots that are in the wood pieces on the ceiling, or how many blank spaces there are on the front walls between each wood line.

My brothers and sisters...this is not why we come to church!

Hebrews 6:1 reminds us:

"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings...and go on to maturity." NIV

VERSES 43-45

* We're not going to spend too much time in verses 43-45 this morning.

But it's important to know (because I was confused when I first read this passage) that it was only a total of 3 days that Jesus parents' could not find him.

Day 1: As they travelled away from Jerusalem

Day 2: As they travelled back to Jerusalem

Day 3: Finding Jesus in the temple

You wonder how could his parents be so oblivious?

When families made the journey to Jerusalem they often travelled in very large groups. The women would travel with the children, and the men would travel on ahead in their own group.

It's likely that Joseph assumed Jesus was with Mary, and that Mary believed Jesus was with Joseph.

So a quick "what's the moral of the story???"

NEVER ASSUME

→ especially with it involves the whereabouts of your child!

Point #2: GROWING UP IN THE CHURCH (vs.46-52)

I still remember the day I called my friend Mike and told him that I needed to go to church.

I had just become a Christian days before at Camp Firwood, and I knew—even at the age of 16—that what I needed to do as soon as possible was to go to church.

Needless to say he was a bit shocked—probably at the fact that this punk kid that he knew from the year before in High School now wanted to go to church with him.

But I knew something...I realized something.

I wasn't all too sure what to expect...but I knew I needed to be in Church. And it needed to happen that coming Sunday.

So we read in verse 46:

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

* While Mary & Joseph have been out searching for their son, he's made his way over to the temple.

* I think it's important for us to take a look at the posture of Jesus here in verse 46:

SITTING

LISTENING

ASKING

*What amazes me perhaps the most is that this is the posture of a 12 YEAR OLD!

*You say... “YES BUT THIS IS JESUS”

But we must remember that Jesus was fully God and FULLY MAN.

He wasn't some super-12 years old.

He was 12.

But what Jesus demonstrates for us here in this passage is a deep desire to learn. A deep desire to sit amongst the teachers and to listen to them, to ask them questions: TO LEARN.

We've looked at Jesus' physical posture as one that we should immitate.

Q: BUT what about our heart's posture?

Q: How is your heart's posture this morning?

Is it one of humility?

Is it one of teach-ability?

**Psalm 51:7 says "You will not reject a broken and repentant heart,
O God." (NLT)**

Are our hearts broken this morning?

Broken enough to recognize that the only way to be put back together is by the mighty & healing hand of Jesus? The only remedy is Jesus. We cannot fix ourselves.

Found in verse 49 are the first words of Jesus that Luke records in his Gospel.

"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

* This shows that Jesus knew something of His origin and purpose, even at this early age.

* Jesus was affirming His divine sonship and His mission to do the will of the Father.

→ For whatever lied before him—Jesus knew—that where he needed to be, was in His Father's house.

* Is that our attitude towards the church?

This church?

* That for our journey ahead...we know that our best place for teaching, wisdom, and an overwhelming presence of the God is right here in the church?

Point #3: WHY I LOVE THE CHURCH

* It's been almost 8 years since I took my first position as Pastor at the age of 23.

* Naïve

* Green

* Rookie

Whatever label you want to throw at me I've felt them all.

→ However in these 8 years I have come to one profound realization.

I LOVE THE CHURCH.

* Before I came here to Coaldale I had the privilege of being friends with another pastor in Coquitlam, BC. He and I would often get together at Starbucks to share stories of what Christ was doing in our ministries and in our own lives.

* He wrote a posting on his blog a few months ago that I wanted to share with you this morning, because I really feel he did an incredible job at capturing where my heart is at as well.

In his "5 Reasons Why I Love The Church"...this was number #3

The church is the hope of the world. Governments can make laws but cannot change hearts. Businesses can make money but cannot absolve the human's tendency towards greed. Social programs can babysit children but cannot make a dad love his kids and be faithful to his wife. Education can change a mind but cannot transform a heart. Social justice can feed the poor but cannot forgive men of their sin. The only one who can do all those things is Jesus and the message of Jesus is trusted within his church. Therefore, the church is the hope of the world.

→ WOW WHAT HOPE!

BUT:

* C.H. Spurgeon gave a great warning to his hearers: ““The great curse of the church—that which brings more dishonor upon the Lord than all the ribald jests of scoffing atheists—is the lukewarmness of its members.”

* When you LOVE something, lukewarmness isn't often the attitude associated with that.

* If you were to claim to love your spouse...and then simply treat them with lukewarmness, you're not likely gonna feel the love back. The same goes in our friendships, etc.

And isn't it our call as brothers and sisters in Christ to be constantly **growing up** in the church?

Paul encouraged the Ephesians with these words:

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Eph. 4:15)

We never see in the life of Paul a settling for the status-quo.

James, the brother of Jesus calls us “to persevere, so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:4)

* And we see that even Jesus himself, as recorded for us in verse 52:

“grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God.”

CONCLUSION:

Truthfully I'm not all too concerned whether or not you grew up in the church.

And I don't think Jesus is either.

But what I am concerned about this morning is **“ARE WE GROWING UP IN THE CHURCH?”**

The author of Hebrews said it best:

Hebrews 10:22-25

²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

THIS IS CHURCH

THIS IS WHAT THE CHURCH SHOULD LOOK LIKE—ACT LIKE

THIS IS WHAT OUR CHURCH SHOULD LOOK LIKE—ACT LIKE

Let's us not forget that the church is very valuable to Jesus. He bought it with his life.

AND THE CHURCH IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD!

LET'S PRAY

Benediction:

2 Corinthians 13:11

“Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to **maturity**. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.” (NLT)