

2014\_01\_04 Christmas 2  
Ascension Lutheran Church, IL  
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## Grow Up With the Boy Jesus

Luke 2:40-52

INI

The grace which brings salvation has appeared and peace with God has come to earth for all who believe. Greetings in this grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for today is just a blip on the radar. It is just a small blip, basically unnoticed by the world, hardly even noticed in all the Scriptures. From His birth to His adult ministry, we get just one small glimpse into the life of Jesus as a child.

### *Luke 2:40–52*

*<sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

*<sup>41</sup> His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup> When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; <sup>44</sup> but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. <sup>45</sup> So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. <sup>46</sup> Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup> So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."*

*<sup>49</sup> And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.*

*<sup>51</sup> Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

In the name of Jesus, in whom dwells all the riches of wisdom and knowledge, dear fellow students of the Word,

For those of you that are old enough, can you remember what it was like to be 12 years old? What were you up when you were 12?

It was about that age when I began attending Catechism Class. There I was, 12 years old, me and the other kids, spending three hours a week in a classroom with the pastor learning the catechism. But why? Was it because I recognized the importance of learning the 10 commandments. Or was it because it was just what I was supposed to do? It was the place my parents told me to be. If given the choice of whether to be there, memorizing the commandments, or to be at the mall with my friends – what would I have chosen? Catechism Class kind of seems like just a blip on the radar.

This is the typical immaturity of a 12 year old. Not yet spiritually mature. And it isn't just catechism class. In so many more ways in my life I have demonstrated a lack of wisdom. I need to grow up. We all need to grow up. There is a need for more wisdom in every phase of our lives, as 12 year olds, as 24 year olds, as 84 year olds. We need to grow up day by day into the wisdom that comes from Christ.

And so today, we grow up with the boy Jesus. Here he is, just a 12 year old boy, him and his family, making the long journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem to attend the annual Passover festival.

But Jesus was no typical 12 year old. He grew up fast. He grew up much faster than any boy his age. When given the choice whether to head home with his family or stay in the Temple to learn more, what would he choose? And He grew in wisdom, beyond that of his parents, beyond that of his teachers, beyond that of even King Solomon. And he did it by learning that the commandments of God have application far beyond the classroom. So Jesus grows up. And in Him we grow up too. Firstly, in the wisdom of the 3rd commandment, Jesus is subject to His heavenly father; and secondly, in the wisdom of the 4th commandment, Jesus is subject to His earthly parents.

### **1. In the wisdom of the 3rd commandment – Jesus is subject to His heavenly Father**

Why go to church? It is the thing we do on Sundays, right? But on Monday, we head back to real life on Monday, right? Church is once a week, one hour out of an already busy week. Or maybe its just once a month. Or maybe only twice a year. Its like catechism class – just a blip on the radar.

So we go to church on Sunday, and return to our real life and our real problems on Monday. Church is nice – it lets us escape reality and have a moment to rest, to think, to get a boost before we head back home with the crowds. Or maybe its just what we've always done. Its the place where our parents want us to be. And when we are here we just follow along with our lips, but our minds are elsewhere. We figure that being here

is the most important part. Its tradition; we go to church on Sundays. Well, its time to grow up.

And that's just what Jesus was doing. Church was over, and it was time to head back to real life. The days of the Passover feast were finished and the company of pilgrims headed north toward their homes in large groups. His parents expect to find him among the crowds of friends and relatives. But where was He?

They searched diligently, among the crowds, among friends and relatives, but they can't find him. For three days they searched, making their way back to Jerusalem, until finally, they reached the Temple. Finally they find him. There he was in the Temple, sitting among the Rabbis, listening and asking questions. Didn't he know that church was over? Didn't he know they needed to get back to real life in Nazareth? His father had work to do. And His mother says to him, "Why have you done this to us? We were worried sick about you."

But they didn't understand that Jesus was growing up. At 12 years of age, He was already beginning to understand things that are beyond the wisdom of even his own parents. Things that impacted His divine calling as the Messiah. So he responds, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

For Jesus, the Temple is more than just a one time event. For Jesus, the third commandment was something to be kept at all times; to be thought about not just on holy days, but every day. And so he was drawn here, to the place of His father.

As we learn in Luther's catechism:

*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*

*What does this mean?*

*We should fear and love God that we do not despise His Word and the preaching of it; but we should regard God's Word as holy and gladly hear and learn it.*

Jesus sought out the Word of God as diligently as his parents were seeking him. Although He was God, he gave up His divine knowledge to grow like you and me. He grew in wisdom far beyond any of us. He asked question and listened for answers. And his questions were so insightful that even the teachers marveled at his wisdom. And all this he did for us. He was the 12 year old we have failed to be, being subject to his heavenly father in all things.

Yes, we all need to grow up. And this is how we do it. By believing in Jesus. In Jesus we discover true wisdom. We discover how the Word of God is more than a once and a while sort of thing. Church is more than one hour out of a busy week, its every hour of our lives. With Jesus, our thoughts should never really leave the Temple. Our thoughts continue to be about our heavenly Father's business.

There are opportunities to keep the third commandment every day – by reflecting on the sermon later in the day, asking each other questions about it on the way home, talking about our faith around the dinner table, having family devotions and personal time for prayer, by reading your Bible before bed. Catechism class is not something to be left behind for better things. It is where we gain the wisdom of Christ, something to be treasured our whole lives. This is the wisdom of the third commandment – that we would be subject to our heavenly Father.

## **2. In the wisdom of the 4th commandment – subject to His earthly parents**

Despite how he had grown, Jesus was still a boy. He still lived under the roof of his parents and still relied on them for clothing and food. And because of this, Jesus still recognized that God had given him a calling, even as a 12 year old. His call was not only to keep the third commandment, but also to keep the fourth. His time had not yet come.

*51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.*

The fourth commandment addresses the vocation of parent and child. It reminds us that God has given to each a specific role and responsibility in life. This is the call to honor and respect our parents and superiors.

As we learn in the 4th commandment,

*You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*

*What does this mean?*

*We should fear and love God that we do not despise nor anger our parents or superiors; but we should honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.*

It often happens around the age of 12 when a child starts to get a sense of empowerment. For many children, there comes a point where they begin to think that they are no longer a child. Mom and dad can't tell me what to do. Susie's parents don't make her go to church on Sundays. They don't tell her when to go to bed. They don't

tell her what to watch on TV or how to dress. Its time I was allowed to make my own decisions. However, this only reveals how much growing up we still need to do.

Jesus understood this. The need to grow up. Who among us all could claim such a right to empowerment more than Jesus? He was God's own Son, the royal heir to all that God owns. Who are Mary and Joseph to tell him what to do? He was of a divine nature, possessing the inherent right to rule over all creation. But He gave it up. He gave up the status of divine, with all its rights and privileges. So even when he was right to be about His father's business in the Temple, He gave it up. Even when his own wisdom was surpassing that of his parents, he gave it up and kept the 4th commandment.

Wisdom is knowing how God blesses us through his representatives. Wisdom is knowing that God has given us parents to care for us as children, to make rules, and to limit us, to humble us. At age 12, who in our culture is ready to be an adult and take on those responsibilities? So God has given us parents.

But this commandment goes the other way too. The 4th commandment has its place not only for children, but also for parents. It reminds us of how God has entrusted a great responsibility to parents.

And it is in parenting above all, that we truly need to grow up in wisdom. Proper discipline is among the greatest arts known to man. Who has mastered it? So easily we respond to our children in all the wrong ways – we punish out of anger or resentment or revenge; we discipline out of impatience, and we leave our children confused and perhaps even resentful.

Parenting is a confusing time of life – for grown ups especially. Mary and Joseph were confused. They didn't understand what God was up to and how to deal with it. But they made their best judgment. They knew they were responsible for Jesus and so they brought him back to Nazareth where they continue to watch over him. But all the while, Mary keeps these things in her heart.

So we seek wisdom from God like Mary. We make our best judgment and we reflect on what God is doing. We think about what our children are going through. We pray for God's wisdom and blessing. We seek the Lord's forgiveness, knowing that none of us are truly fit for this great responsibility. And with that forgiveness, comes wisdom.

It is easy to discipline when you're angry, but what is hard is disciplining when you are calm. You might rather just let it go. What is hard is taking the time to understand why

you must discipline them, and explaining that this is not for your pleasure or anger, but according to God's commandment. This is the discipline that will lead the child to appreciate the 4th commandment and to love and respect their parents as God's representatives. In this a child is subject to his earthly parents, and the parents are subject to God.

But in the end, for all the wisdom we might gain in life, it is never enough. We will still continue to break the 3rd commandment and the 4th commandment. We will still fall short of God's glory. But that is why we need to continue to grow. To grow in repentance. To grow in God's forgiveness. To grow in Jesus, learning to understanding how God's commandments apply to every day of our life.

I hope you can see now that Catechism Class is not just a blip on the radar. The commandments that we learn in Catechism Class involve us all and impact our every day callings. Once you begin to understand and take this to heart, you will grow up with the boy Jesus.

Let us pray, O Holy God, grant us such wisdom that in our Lord Jesus we would grow up in all things good. Forgive us for those times we have failed to do so and strengthen us to rightly apply your commandments to our lives as Christians. Amen.