

WD January 6, 2024

“Being About the Father’s Business”

Text: Luke 2:40-52

Luke 2:40-52 takes us to a rare place in Jesus’ life in His youth. Every year for Passover Joseph and Mary made the 65-mile trip from Nazareth to Jerusalem with a twelve-year-old Jesus. After the eight days of Passover the Nazareth caravan begins to head home. It was common in a caravan of pilgrims for the ladies to travel in a group with the children while the men traveled with other men. Jesus being 12 could have naturally walked with either group. After traveling about a day Mary and Joseph start looking among their relatives and friends but cannot find twelve-year-old Jesus. As a parent you know that if you cannot find your child for even one minute panic and fear sets in—the welfare of your child begins to naturally consume every ounce of energy and attention. I’d be willing to bet the walk back to Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph was brisk and anxious.

By the time they find Jesus He is at the Temple, His Father’s house, sitting with the Seminary professors asking questions and talking with them about the scriptures. This a noteworthy event for Jesus. First of all, the Talmud of Jewish thought defines a twelve year old, as the time where through a special ceremony was acknowledged to be “son of the Law.” At this age Jesus is supposed to have learned enough to be sufficiently mature enough for following the mandates of the Law of God. This is significant because Jesus responsible to the Law for Himself. This makes him responsible to make his own offerings and gifts whereas before Joseph acting as Jesus’ step-father, had to make these on behalf of Jesus. By staying behind Jesus may have been fulfilling His responsibility before God at the Temple to learn and grow in the Law.

He is in the Father’s house (New International Version). King James has Father’s business. Literally it could be translated “In My Father’s things.” When Mary and Joseph find Jesus at the Temple they are astonished (literally blown away) to see Him immersed with the professors of the Law. This astonishment quickly fades, I can imagine, because Mary and Joseph are at the same time relieved and maybe a little ticked. Mary speaks up, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father (Joseph) and I have been anxiously searching for you.” Never mind that Mary nor Joseph bothered to make sure Jesus was with them on the way home. Jesus, however, answers, “Why were searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” “Father’s business?” Both translations are fine when you consider that at the Temple was the presence of God not in a cloud or fire, not in a room hidden by a heavy curtain, but in the flesh mixing it up with the people. “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” And the business of the Father was that the Jesus would become obedient unto death on a cross for the salvation of the world. Put all of the pieces together, Jesus is assuming His role as a Son of the Law to be about the Father’s business.

To be about the Father’s business or things is our calling as well. The goal is that we end up in the Father’s house in heaven where His work is fulfilled. Luke 2:52 closes where verse 40 started us off, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Wisdom, stature, and grace are all winning elements of a Christian lifestyle and the way one pursues the Father’s work.

Wisdom comes with knowledge and experience. And that always starts with learning. Being about the Father’s business requires one to teach and one to learn. Consider Deuteronomy 6:6-9 which emphasizes teaching our children in the way of the Father. Verse 7 says, “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. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

The Hebrew word for “Impress” is “shinan” which means “to sharpen” or “to engrave,” signifying the idea of an engraver etching words onto stone making them more permanent with each pass of his chisel. Likewise, a knife does not become sharp with one pass. An engraving gets deeper with many passes. If you want wisdom to get sharper keep sharpening. If one is to make an engraving last, it must be run deep. Otherwise, the knife remains dull, and the engraving will fade. The golden rule of teaching anything is that which is repeated is what is remembered and learned. Whatever is repeated in our own lives is what will shape character and move it toward faith or away from it. God makes wisdom a priority and it always centers on knowing the Word first. Impressing the Word upon a child according to Deuteronomy 6 is to make it a part of every day, and everything; at the table, at Sunday School, on the way to vacation, to and from school, in every corner of life. It is a repeated training, discipling, and continued learning on our part too as parents.

Consider then the final dynamic duo in Luke; “favor with God and with men.” Favor with God and with men takes grace. James Emery White, author of *Christ Among the dragons* makes this point. “The deep spiritual truth (wisdom) that must mark our faith, and our lives is this, “Grace by its very definition, is to be applied directly to someone else’s sin.” If we turn every difference into a kind of aggressive competition, then all that is highlight is a feeling of “one strike and you’re out.” If, however, differences are met with grace the message focuses on Jesus. Grace invites us into life. He then quotes Fyodor Dostoevsky, “Grace heals our vision, letting us love people by seeing them as God intended them to be.” Acting in grace and in wisdom brings smiles to God and new friendships. Jesus was about the Father’s business. Grace is the Father’s business, grace that came through a cross and the resurrection. Grace is our Business too.

In truth the Father’s house is indistinguishable from the Father’s business of salvation. Jesus is preparing a place for us, but Jesus is also preparing us to be in the Father’s house by teaching us the Father’s Business. John 14:9-11 emphasizes to His disciples that to know Jesus is to know the Father. To know Jesus’ teachings is to know the Father’s Business. The more we are familiar with Jesus the more we will know the Father and His business. Perhaps this can be our primary goal as we begin 2025. And then we too will grow in wisdom and in favor with God and with others. Lord willing. Blessings on our new year.

Pastor Matt Woods
John 3:30