

Luke 2:41-52 Left Behind

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Preacher: Rev Trevor Kane

[0 : 0 0] to Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 2. And we're going to finish Luke chapter 2 today, verse 41, down to verse 52. Luke chapter 2, and verses 41 through 52.

Luke chapter 2, I'm beginning to read, at verse 41. This is the Word of God. Now his, that is Jesus' parents, went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. But supposing him to be in the group, they went to day's journey.

But then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us so?

[1 : 2 1] Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress. And he said to them, Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?

And they didn't understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

Amen. This is a reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Let's turn in our Bibles now, please, to Deuteronomy chapter 16.

Deuteronomy chapter 16. It's towards the front of our Bibles, towards the front of the Old Testament. Deuteronomy, of course, is the second giving of the law.

The second giving of the law. The second recording of the law. As we find it in the Bible. Deuteronomy chapter 16. And we're going to read the whole chapter. It reminds us why Mary and Joseph did what they did.

[2 : 2 6] Why Mary and Joseph went to all the bother of taking Jesus to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Why they made it their annual pilgrimage, if you like. Why they made it their annual custom.

Because the Lord's word commands it here in Deuteronomy 16. Deuteronomy 16. I'm beginning to read it. Verse 1 again. We'll read the whole of the chapter together.

Observe the month of Aviv. And keep the Passover to the Lord your God. For in the month of Aviv, the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord your God from the flock of the herd.

At the place that the Lord will choose to make his name dwell there. You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread. The bread of affliction.

For you came out of the land of Egypt in haste. That all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days.

[3 : 27] Nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice in the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you.

But at the place that the Lord your God will choose to make his name dwell in it. There you shall offer the Passover sacrifice. In the evening at sunset at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord your God will choose.

And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. For six days you shall eat unleavened bread. And on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it.

You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a free will offering from your hand.

Which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. And shall rejoice before the Lord your God. You and your son and your daughter. Your male servant and your female servant. The Levite who is within your towns.

[4 : 30] The sojourner, the fatherless and the widow who are among you. At the place that the Lord your God will choose to make his name dwell there. You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt.

And you shall be careful to observe these statutes. You shall keep the feast of booths seven days. When you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your wine press.

You shall rejoice in your feast. And you and your son and your daughter. Your male servant and your female servant. The Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow who are within your towns. For seven days you shall keep the feast to the Lord your God.

At the place that the Lord will choose. Because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands. So that you will be altogether joyful. Three times a year all your meals shall appear before the Lord your God.

At the place that he will choose. At the feast of unleavened bread. At the feast of weeks. And at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty handed. Every man shall give as he is able.

[5 : 31] According to the blessing of the Lord your God. That he has given you. You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns. That the Lord your God is giving you. According to your tribes.

And they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality. And you shall not accept a bribe. For a bribe blinds the eye of the wise.

And subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice. And only justice you shall follow. That you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not plant any trees as an Asherah beside the altar of the Lord your God. That you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar. Which the Lord your God.

Hates. Amen. This is a reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Well let us. Let's have our Bibles open please.

[6 : 30] At Luke chapter 2. Luke chapter 2. And we're going to read these verses. 41 through 52. We're going to think about these verses. 41 through 52.

During last summer I spent a lot of time listening to Test Match Special on the radio. It was of course a summer for the ashes. The contest between England and Australia to be played.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Test Match Special. It's kind of hard to describe. It's a radio program that shares all the cricket with you. But really the cricket is a secondary matter to the kind of banter that happens between the presenters.

One of the segments somehow they got on to talking about. Have you ever met a famous person and not realised it? A woman emailed into the program recounting a story about how she'd once been in a hotel in Manchester.

She was there for the evening and a group of men came into the dining room. They sat down and started eating and the woman started chatting to them. She said, you know, well, where have you come from?

[7 : 37] And they said, oh well, we've come from Australia. She said, alright, well, what are you doing in the UK? They said, oh well, we're here on a cricket tour. She said, boys, that's a long way to come.

Are you any good? And to the credit the guy said, yeah, we're okay. It was only the next day as she picked up a newspaper that she realised she'd been chatting to the Australian national cricket team.

She was in the presence of at least relative greatness and didn't even know it. She was talking to those who were world famous in their field and didn't even know it.

And as we come to Luke chapter 2 this morning, as we come to these closing verses of Luke chapter 2, I think we see something similar. The religious leaders here as they come to the temple, the religious leaders as they converse with this young boy at the temple are in the presence of greatness.

They're in the presence of the Son of God. They're in the presence of the second person of the Trinity. And they don't really realise it. They're amazed at the questions he's asked.

[8 : 44] They're amazed at the way that he speaks. But they don't realise who he is. They don't understand fully who he is.

We want to think about three things this morning and see three things from this passage. Firstly, we want to think about a faithful family. You see, as we consider Mary, Joseph and Jesus, we see that they were faithful to the law of God.

They were faithful to the promises of God. Secondly then, we want to think about how the religious leaders are flabbergasted by the questions that Jesus asks.

They're flabbergasted at such understanding in a 12-year-old boy. And then thirdly, finally, we want to see how Jesus is favoured by God. That he continues to grow in favour, in wisdom, in stature, with man and with God.

So firstly then, we want to think about a faithful family. We want to see this faithful family. And we see that in verses 41-45. Verses 41-45, a faithful family.

[9 : 52] As we left Luke's Gospel last week, as we thought about Luke's Gospel last week, we thought about how Jesus was presented at the temple. How both Simeon and Anna recognised who Jesus was.

We remember Simeon's words that now you're letting your servant depart in peace. We remember that promise made to Simeon that he would see the Lord's anointed. We remember, of course, Simeon's ultimate vision of what lay ahead for the Christ, don't we?

We remember Simeon's words that what lay ahead was pain and suffering. But as we thought about Luke chapter 2 last week, we also noticed how Mary and Joseph were careful in how they raised Jesus.

They were a couple who were faithful to the law of God. When Jesus was eight days old, he was circumcised. When the time for their purification came, they were there with the right sacrifices.

And we see that spill over again this morning as we come into verse 41, don't we? Because what are we told in verse 41 about Mary and Joseph? Verse 41. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover.

[11 : 03] We read in Deuteronomy chapter 16 that there were these three great feasts that the people of God were expected to attend. The Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Passover.

If you were a poor couple without much kind of disposable income, heading to Jerusalem for these three feasts was obviously a bit inconvenient. If you were poor, it was considered enough that you attended for the one great feast, for the Feast of Passover.

But we notice that they did this every year. It was their practice. It was their way of life. When Passover came, they went to Jerusalem.

When the time came for Passover to be celebrated, they were there. There was no discussion about it. There was no, well what do you think Mary, should we go this year or not?

There was no, well, the carpentry business is quite busy now. No. It was their way of life. It was their custom to observe the commands of God faithfully.

[12 : 12] And what an impression this devout observance of the law of God must have made on Jesus as a boy. I say that reverentially. But he was raised in a home where the law of God was observed.

Where the things of God were important. Obedience to the commands of God was common. Not perfect by any stretch. But common.

And as we see Mary and Joseph here, they provide a blueprint for us, don't they? They provide a plan for us. It should be our common goal to be observing the commands of God in our home.

To be showing and modeling godliness to our children. To show them what it means to repent. To show them what it means to trust God. To show them what it means to be gracious.

As we see here with Mary and Joseph, when Sunday comes around, there should be no question about whether we're going to church or not. When the prayer meeting comes around, there shouldn't be any discussion about if we're attending or not.

[13 : 19] It should be our pattern. Our way of life. When we model our life like that, when we show our children that our relationship with God is a real thing.

When we show our genuine trust and worship of God. It's a good model to leave to our children. If we're half-hearted about church attendance.

If we're half-hearted about attending the prayer meeting. Can we really expect our children's attitude to rise above our own? Mary and Joseph were faithful to obey the commands of God.

So verse 41 we have, if you like, their general principle. Verse 41 we have their kind of guidance and direction in life.

They went every year to the Passover. Then verse 42 we're introduced to this very specific episode. Verse 41's the general. And then verse 42, this very specific episode.

[14 : 19] And when Jesus, we're told, was 12 years old, they went up according to custom. Presumably Jesus had been before. Presumably if Mary and Joseph were going to Jerusalem every year for the Passover.

That Jesus went with them. But the significant thing that Luke records for us here. Is that when Jesus was 12 years old. This is the point at which Jesus stands on the cusp of being a man.

We're all familiar today with the concept of a bar mitzvah. A point where a Jewish boy takes on the promises of the God for himself. It usually happens around 13 years of age.

And it's at that point that the boy is sort of considered to be responsible for himself. And that's going to be significant in a few moments time. So here is Jesus, 12 years old. Standing on the cusp of manhood.

Standing on the cusp of being responsible for himself, if you like. He's going to be responsible for his own actions. He's going to be responsible for the law of God for himself.

[15 : 19] And they go to Jerusalem. Now the feast seems to pass off without incident. They set off for home, verse 43. But Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem.

And his parents don't know about it. Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem without telling anyone about it. You probably remember the story in the newspaper a few years ago about David Cameron.

It was a good few years ago now. It was when David Cameron was Prime Minister. He and his family went out one day for a lunch in a local pub. And in the clamour of trying to get everyone back in the car and all the security detail and everything that needed to be attended to as Prime Minister, David Cameron left one of his children behind to fend for themselves.

Now this isn't what happens here. It's not that Mary and Joseph kind of forgot to take Jesus home. It's not that Mary and Joseph were red and everything up and said, have we got everything? No, Jesus himself stays behind.

Jesus waits behind in Jerusalem. Now we need to try and unpack that a little bit, don't we? Because what's really going on here?

[16 : 30] Is Jesus dishonouring his father and his mother with his actions? By not sort of doing what they expect him to do? Some people see that and that's what they argue here.

That Jesus is being disobedient to his parents. The problem with that is that that has implications for us on the sinlessness of Christ, doesn't it? Because if we say that Jesus is dishonouring his parents here in Luke chapter 2, then one of the commands of God is to obey your father and mother.

So if we say that Jesus here is disobeying his parents, is not honouring his father and mother, then he's broken the commands of God and is therefore not sinless. But it comes back to what we said a few moments ago, why this fact that Luke records for us that he's 12 years old is significant.

Jesus here stands on the verge of being a man. Jesus here stands on the verge of being responsible for his own actions. Whilst it may have been worrying for Mary and Joseph, whilst it may have been troubling for them, I don't think it is in and of itself sinful.

He's debating the law of God. He's talking with the religious leaders about the things of God. He is in a very real sense obeying his father.

[17 : 51] And this is why I just love scripture because it's so real. Because you can imagine it happening to yourself, of course, without the sinless son of God.

Verse 44, they've gone, they've gathered everything up, they've gone on the trip. Mary would have walked at the front with the rest of the women, Joseph would have walked at the back with the rest of the men, and they kind of come together and, you know, they have that discussion.

Well, where's Jesus? I thought he was with you. I thought he was with you. Where is he? Where's he gone? The blind panic that would have ensued as they frantically searched for the boy.

Going around all the people they're traveling with. Look, you haven't seen Jesus, have you? You don't know where he is. He isn't knocking around with your Isaac, is he? And when they can't find him, they return to Jerusalem looking for him.

So this faithful family then, careful to do all that the law of God commanded them, to be obedient to the law of God. Secondly then, we want to consider how Jesus flabbergasts these religious leaders, how they are left flabbergasted by what they hear from Jesus.

[19 : 12] And we see that in verses 46 through 51. Verses 46 through 51. So Mary and Joseph are frantically searching for Christ, for Jesus.

As we come to verse 46, I think it creates a problem for us, or it can create a problem for us, a misunderstanding for us. Because what do we read there? After three days, they found him in the temple.

Now, if you're looking for someone in Dumfries, I don't think it would take you three days to find them, really. Certainly not if you were talking to the right people. Jerusalem wasn't a big city, even allowing for the fact that the population had been swelled by the Passover.

However, it wouldn't have taken three days to find him. Rather, Mary and Joseph have set off day one. They've travelled a day's journey away before they realise that Jesus is missing. So they have to get that day back, day two, and then eventually day three.

Day three of Jesus being missing, of course. They find him. And you can imagine the sense of panic that they would have had, can't you? There wouldn't have been much sleep had for those three days.

[20 : 21] There wouldn't have been too many stops for comfort or for food in those days as they were journeying around Jerusalem looking for him. But rather, they put everything they had into looking for Jesus.

We have a new neighbour directly across the street from us. She's a very nice lady. She has a little dog, a little cockapoo called Bella. I think it's a cockapoo anyway.

And one day, Bella went missing. You know, the lady didn't sit in her house wasting time. Rather, she got in the car and drove around Dumfries looking for Bella.

Now, it all ended well. But you could sense the relief when she got home and Bella was in her dog crate. The sense of relief that she felt when that which she was looking for had been found was palpable.

We know what it is, as we thought about with the boys and girls. We know what it is to lose something. We know what it is to frantically search for something. And we know that sense of relief to find something that was lost.

[21 : 25] And they finally find Jesus in the temple, sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them, asking questions.

Jesus had stayed behind to discuss the law. And what do we read about in verse 47? And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Where did a young man get such wisdom? Where did a young man get such learning, such understanding from? They were in the presence of greatness. But they didn't realize it.

They didn't see Jesus for who he really was. You see, to them, Jesus was just a young man.

A young man who had great understanding. A young man who had great potential. A young man who had obviously done great studying. But that's all he was. Just a young man.

[22 : 33] Questioning life. Questioning the things of God. Understanding the things of God. And that's the question for each one of us this morning.

Is have we seen Jesus for who he truly is? Do we know him as the son of God? Do we know him as the Messiah? Do we know him as the Savior?

You see, too often we can allow the things that we know about Jesus to cloud who he really is. The things that we think we know about Jesus to cloud who he really is.

We see it time and time again with the religious leaders. They say, is this not Joseph's son? Do we not know his brothers and sisters?

Do we not know his family? Is this not the carpenter? They didn't see him for who he really was. He's the sinless son of God. He is the Savior.

[23 : 34] He is the son of God. To see him as less than that. Is to miss who he is. So they found him. They found him sitting in the temple.

They found him discussing the law with the teachers. All who are amazed at him. And then verse 48. Notice what Luke records for us. And when his parents saw him.

When his parents saw him. Joseph may not have been his father in earthly terms. But he raised him.

To the people watching. Joseph was his parent. But notice what Mary says to him.

It almost looks like she's gently sort of chiding him. Doesn't it? Chastising him. Verse 48. No, they said to him. Son. Why have you treated us so? Behold your father and I have been searching for you.

[24 : 40] In great distress. Didn't you know we'd be worried? Didn't you think that we might miss you?

Didn't you think that we might wonder where you were? Didn't you know that we've been looking about you? We've been worried sick about you. And Jesus' response, if we're honest.

Causes probably people as many problems. Verse 49. Jesus said to them. Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my father's house?

Jesus almost says to his mother and father. Who are worried sick. His mother who has been searching Jerusalem for him. Well. What's the problem? What are you so worried about?

What are you so wound up about? Didn't you know where I would be? Didn't you know that I'd be in my father's house? Given the chance now. Most 12 year old boys probably wouldn't have ended up in the temple.

[25 : 42] But Jesus was no ordinary 12 year old. I was always going to be here. Jesus said. I was always going to be in my father's house.

I was always going to be about my father's business. I was always going to be talking about the law of God. And that should be the goal of our lives. That we're always about our father's business.

That we would always be taken up in the study of God and his word. That we'd always be asking these questions. That we'd always be searching for the truth of God and his word. His parents didn't understand.

His parents I don't think really quite knew what he was getting at. Verse 50. They didn't understand the saying that he spoke to them. But notice verse 51.

Notice how Jesus behaves. His parents have said. Where were you? We're worried sick. Why have you treated us so? Jesus says. Well it was always going to be in God's house. And then verse 51.

[26 : 43] What did we read? He went down with them. And came to Nazareth. And was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things. In her heart.

He listened to them. He was obedient to them. He did what they told him to do. This is why it isn't a sinful episode of disobedience as such.

Jesus staying behind in Jerusalem isn't in itself sinful. Jesus always perfectly obeyed his mother and father. He always did what they told him to do. But he also always obeyed his heavenly father.

And did what he told him to do. So we've seen a faithful family. We've seen Jesus flabbergast through religious authorities with his answers.

Then thirdly and finally this morning. We want to see how Jesus is favoured. And we see that in verse 52. The faithful family have performed their religious duties. The religious leaders have been astonished at what Jesus says.

[27 : 53] And we see him favoured in verse 52. It's the same thing that we saw in verse 40 almost. Verse 40 of chapter 2. Child grew and became strong.

Filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him. Verse 52 here. Again Luke records for us. That Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.

And in favour with God. And with man. Despite being the son of God. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.

And favour. Despite being the second person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is also fully man. He has to go through all of the things that a normal 12 year old boy has to go through.

He has to learn and grow. All of course with the caveat of being sinless. He has to mature the way that all young men do.

[28 : 55] And he did it perfectly. How did he do it? By knowing God. And knowing his law. By implementing the things that we've just seen him do.

By implementing the study of God's word. By implementing talking to people. To the religious leaders. About God. And his word. If we want to grow in wisdom and favour with God.

Then we must know God. And know his law. It may not lead to favour in the eyes of man. In this life anymore. But it will lead to favour in the eyes of God.

Amen. And as Christians. As those who follow Jesus Christ. We must always be about our father's business. We should be seeking to grow in favour.

In wisdom. And in stature with God. But also with man. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.