

A Boy

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Preacher: Derek Lamont

[0 : 00] I just want to speak for a few minutes to everyone as well as the children. Again, about this passage that we have in Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2, the end of the chapter, we've been going through the early years of Jesus.

We've kind of passed the nativity a little bit, but we're still in the pre-public ministry of Jesus. We're going to look at that.

Then next Sunday morning, Corey will look at the baptism of Jesus and bring that early stage look at Jesus to an end. I just want to say a few things as we move forward from the nativity to the young Jesus.

I've said this before in St. Columbus that the Gospels present an unusual biography, don't they? They're very different from ordinary biographies because there's virtually nothing about Jesus between the ages of nothing and 30.

In fact, apart from the birth story, this is the only story about him growing up, really, that we have certainly in any detail. And then from age 30 to 33, and especially the last week of his life, takes almost a third of some of the Gospels.

[1 : 13] And that's significant, isn't it? That's important for us because we're remembering it's not an ordinary biography, biographical account we're being given here. And so sometimes you might look at this story and you might just pass over it as a wee story and maybe with a nice moral message about neglectful parents or a precocious child or something like that and pass it over rather quickly.

But we mustn't do that because if this is the only story that we have of Jesus' childhood of any significance, then obviously it's of great importance and it's significant enough for God to have put it in the Bible for us.

And what it does teach us, it teaches us about the developing incarnation, that is the way Jesus has been born as a baby, that we take for granted that Jesus, God, comes in the flesh and is a baby, a normal baby yet without sin, and grows.

He's flesh and blood, he's a child, he's a teenager, he's a 12 year old. And we learn in this passage, something very important, that Jesus is growing and learning and relationally developing with his parents and with others, yet without sin.

And that is a great mystery. So I've got a cover all today that I can say, there's lots of things I don't understand. There's lots of mystery about God becoming flesh and the omnipotent and omniscient one, they all seeing, all knowing one, somehow emptying himself of that and growing and learning as a person and as a saviour.

[2 : 59] Amazing. So I want to say just one or two things about this before we finish today. The first is that what is happening here? Jesus is acknowledging or assuming responsibility here.

He's a 12 year old. At the age of 13, 12 or 13, Jewish boys became men. Okay? Now there's a thought.

Jewish boys became men. At 13 they assumed legal responsibility. They were responsible for obeying the law of God from that age, they couldn't rely on their parents and it was their own responsibility to be under God's law and to obey God's law.

They were men at that young age. And it's a reminder to us that Jesus has come to fulfill God's law, to be obedient to God's law in the way that none of us can be, to love God perfectly and to love his neighbour perfectly.

And he is taking that responsibility on his shoulders and remembering that and acknowledging that at this time. So the law giver, God, the law giver becomes the law keeper.

[4 : 15] In our place, can you see how significant that is? The law giver becomes the law keeper and he's acknowledging and God is acknowledging that Jesus has come to do something very special, to take responsibility and that's partly why this story is told.

But I think this story is also told because Jesus is already beginning to discern the cost. He's learning as a 12 year old boy what it's going to mean for him to be the saviour.

Do you think he knew that when he was one or two? Do you think that two, he had the knowledge of God? I don't think so. The Bible doesn't give that impression. The Bible gives the impression that Jesus grew into that knowledge as a man, albeit a perfect man and he is in his humanity at this point.

Where is he? He's in the temple, isn't he? What are they there to celebrate? The Passover. So Jesus is at the Passover and he's asking lots of questions about the blood on the lentils and about the lamb, the perfect lamb that would come and about God's redemption and God's rescue and he is beginning surely to understand that he is to be the Lamb of God and so he's beginning to discern the cost already in his consciousness, his young 12 year old consciousness.

He's understanding about the sacrificial lamb. He's understanding about the promises of God and he's beginning to realise that he's the embodiment of that that is going to come through him as Lord and God.

[5 : 49] Now there's great mystery I know in all of that. But we're told twice in this passage and the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom and the favour of God was upon him or in verse 52, Jesus increased in wisdom and stature in favour with God and men.

He was growing in this knowledge. Okay, that's the second thing. Third thing is that Luke, the Gospel writer here, is teaching us how to read the Old Testament.

Luke is teaching us here how to read the Old Testament. This isn't just a kind of by the way little story about neglectful parents. Luke is giving us this under the Holy Spirit's guidance to remind us of the great links between Jesus and the Old Testament.

Everything in the Old Testament points forward, doesn't it, to the coming of Jesus Christ, being fulfilled in Christ. And so here we have the Passover, Old Testament celebration.

We have the temple, the Old Testament building where God is represented as being present among his people. And especially here, we have these two physical things, but there's something else here that if we read the Bible and know the Bible, then we would think about it.

[7 : 05] And especially here, if you look back with me, if you've got your Bibles to, and I hope sometimes I write down references too quickly and I get them wrong. I hope this is the right one.

First Samuel chapter 1 and verse 28, 26, sorry. Listen to this, see if you can link where it comes from.

This is about Samuel, the boy Samuel, the early prophet. Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the Lord and also with men.

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? We're told that twice in the passage in Luke. And it's directly linking to the story of Samuel, that Samuel was the same kind of development that he grew in stature in favour with God and with men.

And so Luke is reminding us that Jesus is the greater Samuel, that Samuel points forward to Jesus. There's a lot of links, there's a lot of parallels between young Samuel as a prophet and as a high priest and with Jesus.

[8 : 18] Jesus is the greater high priest, obviously. Jesus is the greater prophet. But just as Samuel ushered in a new era in the kingdom and King David as the king, so Jesus ushers in the messianic kingdom, the greatest, the everlasting kingdom.

And Samuel was born to Hannah who was barren. Jesus is born to Mary who was a virgin. And there's great parallels in the servant songs of Hannah, Samuel's mother, and Mary, Jesus' mother. Servant songs that they were both favoured, that they were both had child redemptive children. And there's this great parallel so that Luke is saying, read your Bibles.

Read about the Old Testament. Read that the Old Testament is pointing forward to Jesus. And Jesus is the greater Samuel. Jesus is the greater David. Jesus is the greater Moses.

Jesus is the greater Adam. And so it's all part of God's wonderful and great purpose. And Luke wants us to read it that way. A couple more things before we finish, very briefly.

[9 : 28] First, thirdly. Thirdly. Fourthly. Fourthly, Jesus is also teaching his parents here. So you know, you can look at this story and maybe you've read it and you thought, Jesus, a bit of a

precocious child.

Is he being disobedient here by staying at the temple? Surely he should have been a bit more concerned as a perfect child about his parents. But we need to recognize, as I said to the children, that Jesus is the Son of God.

And he is here teaching his parents. He's reminding his parents, why were you looking for me, verse 49, did you not know I must be in my father's house?

12 year old with clarity and with authority is reminding them who he is.

Mary says, my father. And your father and I were worried about you. Jesus says, I must be in my father's house. He is dislocating himself, even at this point, somewhat from his earthly parents, reminding them that he's not an ordinary child.

[10:42] Pushing them back to the nativity truths about the angels and about Simeon and about Anna and all the prophecies that were made. The truths that Mary treasured in her heart, that here again we're told that she treasures these things in her heart.

Because Jesus is teaching them. There's here, maybe not great, but there's a whisper of divinity here, isn't there? I must be about my father's, I must be in my father's house.

I must be here. He's teaching them that he is no ordinary child. He will not simply be a carpenter. He will not simply be the oldest child. He is God the Son and he has come to redeem to be the Messiah.

And within that, there's this growing compulsion. A look of all the writers emphasizes this compulsion in Jesus. I must be in my father's house. Because I'm saying, later at Luke highlights, I must preach.

I must suffer. I must rise. I must go. I must stay. I must enter glory. There's this great compulsion that drives Jesus, the boy, the man, the child, the Savior, the Redeemer.

[11:54] He has a clear purpose. He knows who he's coming. Isn't that great that we sit here today on Christmas Day, bearing the fruits of this compulsion of God on our behalf?

We have life, eternal life, because of this glorious loving compulsion of Jesus, which made him empty and made him go into Mary's womb and be conceived in utter mystery and grow in knowledge of being the Redeemer.

And even at this stage, had the compulsion to be about his father's house. And lastly, then we learned that Mary must, Mary treasures all these things in her heart, as we've seen before.

Even later that these truths would sustain her heart when it's pierced at the fruit of the cross. And it's good for us to follow, as I think I said before in a plan, is to follow her example, that we are people who are soaked in the knowledge of God through the Scriptures.

As she obviously was and became evident in our understanding of Mary, that the mission of God that we've been looking at, so important to know, to see that the Old Testament always has a purpose, a reason that's pointing forward to Jesus all the time.

[13:14] And then nothing's wasted, there's no wasted words. They're all there for a reason, even though sometimes difficult to understand. Great encouragement for us. And also to not only treasure up these things in their hearts, but get to the stage where, like Mary, we're able to fall in her knees and worship Jesus Christ.

So we remember today that Jesus is worth our worship. He's worth coming out on Christmas Day, on this family day, to be in the company of our brother Christ and our Father God through His finished work on the cross, to trust and obey Him in the strength of Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus enables us to do, because He did it perfectly.

He obeyed the law. He loved His parents. He loved His Father in heaven, and He loved His neighbour perfectly. And may it be that we tell our children and share that with our children.

It's not the danger for all of us, always, that we treat Jesus a bit like that rather than wanted Christmas present, or worse than that, like the wrapping paper that the Christmas present is in.

Bright and beautiful until it's ripped away and thrown in the bin. Excited by Jesus for a moment, but then left in a back drawer to rot for the rest of our lives and years.

[14:54] And we can so quickly and easily, even on a Sunday, going into a Monday or a morning reading the Bible, going into our day, we can easily return or move back into self-diagnoses and self-justifying and self-centeredness and the love of sin and stuff and leave Jesus out of our lives.

And at the first hint of suffering or the first hint of conflict, we drop Jesus like a stone. And we blame Him for not loving us and for giving us a raw deal when He has clearly revealed Himself to have

already expended outstanding energy and love, infinite love, to give us freedom and hope and knowing that the suffering and the difficulties are part of the problem that He's come to redeem that one day will be over.

He is weighty. He's not light, He's weighty. So He is so committed to our peace and our joy and our life.

Maybe not be the way that we expect because our desires are imperfect, but don't treat Him lightly. Remember who He is and He will continue to transform our hearts as like Jesus we seek to grow in grace.

And as we grow in grace, we grow in favour with one another and with God because we're covered in Jesus' righteousness. Isn't that a great thing? That we can be like that, both in 2017 and for eternity.

[16 : 46] So we give thanks for Jesus and for the story of the 12 year old that holds for us so much truth for today. Let's bow our heads and pray. Father God, we thank You for Your Word.

We thank You for the story of Jesus and the little accounts we have. In many ways we would love to know more about His childhood and His teenage years, but we know He understands us.

We know He's been from birth to death. He's been through all the stages and understands them because He is God and He knows what it is to bear our burdens.

And we pray that we would bear one another's burdens, that we would love one another, that we would be self, not self-seeking in our lives, but we'd be self-denying in the best and freest and fullest of ways.

But actually, remember us today and remember those for whom this time of year is really difficult, for whom in the culture and in the time and in society it brings nothing but broken memories and heartache and that sense of loss.

[17 : 54] Lord, we pray for such today. We ask that we not be unmindful of them, that we not be so self-indulgent that we care less. Give us careful and loving hearts.

And we pray and remember the many parts of the world today where there is no joy, no celebration, where there's war, homelessness, brokenness, fear, brutality, violence.

Or maybe not just ignore these things or forget them, maybe we bring them to you and as we do so and leave them with you, maybe also give thanks for all your good gifts, for the pleasures and the joys and the happinesses that are ours today.

And help us to live by faith in Jesus, not leave Him as a child, but allow Him to grow in our own understanding and as we trust in Him more and more.

Fill His Lord with your Holy Spirit as we sing together in response to you and to your word for Jesus' sake. Amen.