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Glory in Childhood

Luke 2:41-52

Series: The Glory of Christ

The Village Church

March 15, 2026

I. Text

A. **Luke 2:41–52** (ESV) —

1. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.
2. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.
3. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.
4. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances,
5. 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.
6. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
7. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
8. 48 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished.
9. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so?
10. Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.”
11. 49 And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”
12. 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.
13. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.
14. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.
15. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

II. **The Context**

A. When a young Jewish man reached age 13 there was a **Bar-Mitzvah**

1. Literally – **“Son of the Law”**
2. Jesus isn’t quite old enough for that – a year away
 - a. But this was kind of a dry-run
 - b. Good to have the young man acquainted with the people and places that would be part of His “coming of age” the following year

B. **Luke 2:41–42** (ESV) —

1. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.
2. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.
- C. There were three annual feasts to attend in Jerusalem according to the Law
 1. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles
 2. **Pentecost – Festival of Harvest, Day of First Fruits**
 - a. Celebrating the first wheat harvest
 - b. Later to commemorate the giving of the Law to Moses
 3. **Tabernacles** – also festival of Harvests – the end of the harvest season
 - a. Commemorates the wilderness years in which the Jewish people would reside in temporary shelters
 4. **Passover** – commemorates the escape from Egypt, the redemption of Israel out of slavery
- D. The dispersion of Jews from Judah made it difficult for most families to attend all three
 1. Usually, devout families would choose one
 - a. Passover was the most popular
 2. So Mary, Joseph with the young Jesus killed two birds with one stone
 - a. Attended one of the three festivals
 - b. Prepped Jesus for His very special moment which we assume they celebrated – even though scripture doesn't record His Bar-Mitzvah
- E. Interestingly, women were not required to attend
 1. Some rabbis – like Hillel – encouraged devout women to participate
 2. So, the family's attendance, Mary's involvement, was an indication of her devout family
- F. Along with extended family and Nazarene friends, they appeared to stay for a period of time following the feast
 1. Most would only stay for three days
 2. They appeared to stay for the entire week – including the Feast of Unleavened Bread
 3. Also an indication of the family's devotion to the Lord

III. **The Occasion**

- A. **Luke 2:43–45** (ESV) —
 1. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.
 2. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances,
 3. 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.
- B. There is nothing more terrifying than a lost child
 1. I remember a time when we lived outside of Morgantown, WV in a house we had built in the woods
 - a. We had returned from somewhere, doing some activity, with the

- kids
2. I'm thinking Matt was about 10 or so, Katie about 5
 3. We got into the house, were putting things away, and after about 15 minutes we realized that we hadn't seen Katie
 - a. She was with us; had gotten out of the car with us
 - b. But she was nowhere to be found
 4. We were frantic
 - a. We scoured the house – the kids' rooms, the basement, the attic – everywhere we could think of
 - b. We went outside calling for her
 - c. As young-ish parents, we were of course thinking the worst – that some sinister thing had happened, that she'd been picked up by a stranger
 5. Finally, about a half hour later, we looked in the hall closet
 - a. There she was, curled up, holding a set of WVU pom-poms she loved to play with, sound asleep!
 6. I can just imagine what Mary and Joseph were thinking when Jesus turned up missing
- C. But an even better illustration of what was happening occurred with friends of ours – also in our Morgantown days
1. There were two families who loved to vacation with each other
 - a. They both had plenty of kids – I think nine (or maybe eight) – between them
 - b. One family with four; the other with five, I think
 2. And their form of vacation was camping
 - a. They would often go throughout the area from campground to campground at the many state parks in WV, MD and PA
 - b. They both had vans, so they could accommodate all the kids, equipment, whatever
 3. And on one occasion they had camped in a state park in Western Maryland, broke camp, loaded up the vans, and headed off to another state park in WV several hours away
 - a. Of course, the kids had their best buds in the other family, so they often traveled in the other family's van
 - b. So off they went and hit the road
 - c. Leaving behind one little girl who, I believe, had gone to the bathroom when everyone else was leaving
 4. This was before cell phone days, of course
 - a. So the two vans were merrily cruising down the country highways, each one thinking that all the kids were accounted for
 - b. If not with "us", then with "them" in the other vehicle
 5. Fortunately, the park ranger was kindly, and pretty quickly recognized what had happened
 - a. She comforted the little girl; called the State Police
 - b. And took care of her until the Police could make contact with the

- parents
6. I believe it wasn't until they families arrived at the next camp that they realized they were missing one!
 - a. A call back to the original state park was very reassuring
 - b. And one way or another, the State Police arranged a rendezvous
 - c. And all was well!
 7. But what a terrifying experience, to arrive two or more hours away before realizing that your little girl had gone missing!
 - a. The imagination can take you to very dark places in those moments
 - D. So this appears to be what has transpired with Mary and Joseph
 1. The custom in a caravan like this one was that the women and children would be in the front of the procession, setting the pace
 - a. The man and older boys would bring up the rear
 - b. Jesus was a "tweener" – somewhere in the middle
 2. So, as typical, the men assumed he was with the women; the women assumed he was with the men
 - a. But he wasn't with either!
 3. And it wasn't only a couple of hours
 - a. It was an entire day's journey!
 4. So, Mary and Joseph spent another day's journey heading back to Jerusalem, thinking the worst!
 - E. **Luke 2:46–47** (ESV) —
 1. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
 2. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
 - F. So, the time frame is a bit ambiguous
 1. "After three days they found him"
 2. What that a day traveling out, a day traveling back, then a day of searching?
 3. Or was it three days of searching once they got back to Jerusalem?
 - G. Whatever, they did find him
 1. And if they had thought about what kind of child this was, perhaps going to the temple in the first place would have been the best option!
 - H. So, the main issue for the parents was, "Where was Jesus?"
 1. But the main issue for Jesus – and for us – is "What was Jesus doing?"
 2. He was conversing with the teachers of the Law!
 - a. But he wasn't asking juvenile questions, or posing silly, childish hypotheses
 - b. He was amazing the teachers!
 - I. Lit'l Boy – Negro Spiritual
 1. Chorus
 - a. Lit'l boy, how old are you... (3)
 - b. **Sir, I'm only 12 years old.**
 2. Verse 1

- a. This Lit'l boy had them to remember,
 - b. was born the 25th of December,
 - c. Lawyers and doctor were amazed,
 - d. they had to give the Lit'l boy praise.
3. Chorus
- a. Lit'l boy, how old are you... (3)
 - b. **Sir, I'm only 12 years old.**
4. Verse 2
- a. Lawyers and doctors stood in wonder
 - b. as though they had been struck by thunder,
 - c. Then they decided while they wondered,
 - d. that all mankind must come under.
5. Chorus
- a. Lit'l boy, how old are you... (3)
 - b. **Sir, I'm only 12 years old.**
6. Verse 3
- a. The last time the Lit'l boy was seen
 - b. he was standing on Mt. Olivet green,
 - c. When he's dispersed of the crowd,
 - d. he entered up into a cloud.
7. Chorus
- a. Lit'l boy, how old are you... (3)
 - b. **Sir, I'm only 12 years old.**
- J. **Luke 2:48–50** (ESV) —
- 1. 48 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished.
 - 2. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.”
 - 3. 49 And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” [alt. “about my Father’s business”]
 - 4. 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.
- K. So here you have a communication issue
- 1. Can you imagine this reunion?
 - a. I can imagine from a parent’s perspective, your emotions might swing from, “I’m so glad you’re safe, son” to “I’ll strangle you the next time you pull this again!”
 - 2. Isn’t it encouraging to you that there were even communication issues in the holy family?
 - a. With the perfect, sinless child Jesus?
- L. **Luke 2:51–52** (ESV) —
- 1. 51 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.
 - 2. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.
- M. So, they eventually got home, safe and sound

1. Jesus was honoring to his parents
 - a. And Mary never stopped thinking about the episode!
2. And in the end, Jesus grew as a devout young man
 - a. Growing in both his relationship with God and with others
 - b. Including, one would presume, with His mom and dad

IV. **The Glory of His Nature**

- A. Consider the contrast of emotions
 1. Frantic parents v. comfortable child
 - a. Jesus is just different!
 2. This is not your typical pre-teenager!
- B. Consider the nature of his interactions with the teachers
 1. Questions and answers – a Hebrew version of the Socratic method
 - a. Common form of instruction in those days
 2. But what was interesting was that the quality of Jesus’ questions was even more interesting than the answers
 - a. Jesus was listening to them – taking it all in
 - b. But was asking them questions!
 - c. And they were amazed at that
- C. What we have here is a study in the two natures of Christ
 1. What theologians call the **Hyopstatic Union**
 - a. Jesus is “fully God and fully man”
 - b. *Vere deus, vere homo*
 2. The two natures of Christ are indivisible in their union
 - a. And yet the two natures are distinguishable
- D. There were things Jesus didn’t know
 1. **Mark 13:32** (ESV) —
 - a. 32 “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- E. And yet, there were times that the deity was communicated to the humanity of Jesus
 1. **John 1:44–49** (ESV) —
 - a. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
 - b. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
 - c. 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”
 - d. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”
 - e. 48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”
 - f. Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”
 - g. 49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

2. **John 4:16–19** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”
 - b. 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.”
 - c. Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;
 - d. 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”
 - e. 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.
 3. So, Jesus, in His humanity, had from time to time access to the omniscience of God
 - a. How that unfolded is certainly one of the mysteries of the Glory of His Nature
 4. But clearly, the hypostatic union is clearly evident in the person of Jesus in his earthly ministry
 - a. And is why the Church has embraced that theological truth over the millennia!
- F. **Perfect Humanity**
1. We also have a demonstration of the perfect humanity of Jesus
 2. **Hebrews 4:15** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.
 3. Interesting – for us mere mortals we see what theologians have called the **“noetic effects of sin”**
 - a. Noetic – from nous Gk (mind)
 4. The fall has affected us in many ways
 - a. Weakness
 - b. Disease
 - c. But also it has affected our souls – our minds, wills and emotions
 5. Our wills have been affected
 - a. Lots of evangelicals want to speak of the freedom of the will, as if our wills are neutral
 - b. That’s false! Our wills are fallen along with the rest of us!
 - c. Our wills are in bondage to sin; we want what we want, not what God wants
 6. Our emotions have been affected
 - a. We don’t feel the way we should as a result of the fall
 - b. We feel good when we sin when we should feel bad
 - c. We chafe under the discipline of God when we should celebrate it!
 7. But in this case before, we have the mind
 - a. Our fallen state affects our thinking
 8. **Romans 1:21–22** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
 - b. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools...

- G. But again, Jesus is different
1. Without sin, his thinking is not corrupted
 - a. He still has to learn things in His humanity
 - b. But he doesn't make mistakes in His thinking
 - c. And His thinking is not biased in the way ours is
 - d. Or, more properly, His bias is toward truth
 2. In his stage as a 12 year old boy, He is cognitively capable of abstract reasoning
 - a. And given facts, data – He could see relationships and coherence and meaning in ways that it would take years for others to recognize
 3. In other words, in thinking – a perfect 12 year old could out-think the most brilliant 40 something teacher of the Law!

V. **The Glory of His Relation**

- A. Then, let's consider Jesus' relationship with His parents
- B. Parent's reaction – happy He's safe; angry that He didn't think of them!
 1. Mary is the one who speaks
 - a. Joseph speaks little in the gospels; he's the quiet one
 2. Contrast
 - a. Mary: "Your father and I"...
 - b. Jesus: "my Father"
 3. Jesus is conscious of His Sonship
- C. Mary's failure – forgetfulness
 1. **Luke 1:31–35** (ESV) —
 - a. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.
 - b. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,
 - c. 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."
 - d. 34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"
 - e. 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
- D. Jesus would bear this out in His ministry – the special relationship with the heavenly Father
 1. **Luke 10:21–22** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
 - b. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is

except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

2. **John 6:37–40** (ESV) —
 - a. 37 “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - b. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.
 - c. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.
 - d. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
 3. **John 6:57** (ESV) —
 - a. 57 “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.”
 4. **John 8:18** (ESV) —
 - a. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”
 5. **John 8:28** (ESV) —
 - a. 28 So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.”
 6. Many other gospel passages speak to the closeness of the Son with the Father
- E. So, again – not “Where is Jesus?” but “What was Jesus doing?”
1. He was in His Father’s house, doing the Father’s business
 - a. And it wasn’t carpentry!
 2. Jesus: “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”
 - a. “You” is plural
 - b. Mary and Joseph could have, should have, figured this out!

VI. **The Glory of His Mission**

- A. **“I must be in my Father’s house?”**
 1. “Must” – necessity born of decree
 2. Jesus is conscious of His mission
- B. This is a divine “must”
 1. **Psalm 40:7–8** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 Then I said, “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: 8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”
 2. **John 10:17–18** (ESV) —
 - a. 17 “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.
 - b. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up

- again. This charge I have received from my Father.”
3. **Luke 4:43** (ESV) —
 - a. 43 but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”
 4. **Luke 9:22** (ESV) —
 - a. 22 saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”
 5. **Luke 13:33** (ESV) —
 - a. 33 ‘Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’
 6. **Luke 19:5** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.”
 7. And many other texts showing the Divine “must” March 14, 2026

VII. Conclusion

- A. So, whether we see His nature on display
 1. Or His relations with His parents and with His Father
 2. Or His mission, of which He was conscious from very early on
- B. Jesus shows His glory, even in childhood