

THE KING'S ARRIVAL

LUKE 2:1-52

"The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars (even the girls) and talked dirty and hit little kids and cussed their teachers and took the name of the Lord in vain and set fire to Fred Shoemaker's old broken-down toolhouse..." So begins Barbara Robinson's novel, "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" - as she describes a fictional family of juvenile delinquents, *the Herdmans!*

Barbara's book is about the hijacking of the church's annual children's reenactment of the Christmas story...

At the first rehearsal the Herdman kids strong arm other children to secure the important roles in the play.

When the director of the pageant discovers the Herdmans have never even heard the biblical account of Christmas, she decides the first order of business is to read the story, *and the Herdmans' reaction is hilarious...*

When the director reads, "Mary was great with child" the Herdmans' react with a puzzled look. Their brother, Ralph, crudely interprets, "She means 'pregnant'."

When they discover there was no room at the inn, the Herdmans want to know why Joseph didn't belt the innkeeper. They argue about whether he should've set fire to the inn, or just chased the innkeeper out of town.

They get upset when they hear that the baby was born in barn - and why in the world did they tie Him up with swaddling

clothes, and make Him lie in a feed trough. One of them even asks, "where was the child welfare?"

On and on the questions go... "Who were these wise men - *school teachers?*" When they hear that one of their gifts was oil, Imogene says, "What kind of cheap king would give oil for a present?" They even want to know who's playing King Herod, so they can beat him up for trying to kill an innocent baby. Barbara writes, "I couldn't understand the Herdmans. You would have thought the Christmas story came right out of the FBI files."

Yet ironically, the Herdmans may've had a more realistic idea of the first Christmas than most of us. In many ways church-folk tend to sanitize the Christmas story. We soften up its harsher, more brutal realities...

Author Gary Bauer comments on the first Christmas, "The girl was young - just a teenager. She was poor and unmarried and pregnant. Though engaged to a man, the girl admitted her fiancé was not the father of her child. For many this was a classic "*problem pregnancy.*" To compound matters, the girl claimed to have seen visions. She mentioned something about an angel. While on a trip with her fiancé, they found themselves down and out with no place to stay. They were among "*the homeless.*"

The point is, at the time it happened the first Christmas looked much different than it does today after-the-fact.

The sweet, stress-less calm seen in most paintings of the stable is as much a figment of our imagination as Santa Claus. Fear, and uncertainty, and desperation very likely dominated the hearts of Mary and Joseph.

As we did last week with Matthew's account of the visit of the magi, today we want to study Luke's recounting of the birth of Christ. As we do I hope you'll come away with a more accurate and realistic view of that first Christmas.

Luke 2:1, "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city." Augustus, the adopted son of Julius Caesar was one of ancient Rome's most successful emperors. It was said, "Augustus came to a Rome made of bricks and left it a city of marble."

Augustus' given name was Octavius, but in 27 BC he accepted the title, "*Augustus*" or "*the revered one.*"

Obviously, the man didn't lack for ego! He claimed to be a god. In fact, this census was to demonstrate the vastness of his kingdom, and inflate his already bloated pride. He bullies the world with his decree...

Yet ironically, the man who thought he was a god was actually being manipulated by *the one true God.*

Seven-hundred years earlier the Hebrew prophet, Micah, foretold Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Which meant, for the moment, God had a problem.

Mary was about to deliver her Son, and she was in Nazareth, 100 miles from the God-appointed birth site.

A still small voice won't be enough to prompt Joseph to take his waddling wife on a three day donkey ride. Nothing short of a royal edict will move the couple.

And that's exactly what God arranges. The arrogant Caesar flexes his muscle and expects the nations to squeeze... *Yet, Augustus is just a puppet on a string.*

The shots are being called in heaven - not Rome. As Proverbs 21:1 tells us, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; he turns it wherever he wishes." The Caesar's decree was God's way of convincing Joseph and his pregnant fiancée' to risk the rugged journey to their ancestral home of Bethlehem.

The ole adage is true, "God's ways are behind the scenes, but He moves all the scenes that He is behind."

Notice too, the world's eyes were fixed on Rome, while heaven focused on a peasant couple traveling down the Rift Valley. Caesar dominated the headlines. Joseph and Mary weren't even a back page story.

It just goes to prove that what's important to God isn't always what the world considers newsworthy. A kind act, a father's faithfulness, a woman's generosity may not get reported in the AJC, but God sees...

Here, history's most important event will occur in Bethlehem before the gaze of angels - yet not a single reporter or cameraman will be there to cover the story.

Verse 4, "Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called

Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.” Moms, imagine you’re at full term, riding a donkey over rocky terrain, for 72 hours. *How many restroom stops did Joseph make?*

The rigors of such a journey may've triggered Mary's labor. Verse 6, “So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.”

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths...” Hebrew moms wrapped their babies in mummy-like shrouds to simulate the warmth of the womb. Mary bundled up Jesus, “and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

When the couple arrived in Bethlehem no one rolled out the red carpet. Doors slammed in their face. Not even the Econolodge had a room for the Son of God.

Years ago, the ritzy hotel owners along the New England coast were prejudiced against Jews. They refused to rent them rooms. One night a Jewish lady, Mrs. Rosenberg, was stranded. She saw a hotel sign that read “**Vacancy.**” But when she inquired about a room the clerk said, “**Sorry, we're full.**” Mrs Rosenberg protested “*But what about the sign - it says Vacancy?*”

The clerk stuttered and stammered until finally he admitted, “**We don't rent to Jews.**” That’s when Mrs. Rosenberg told him, “**But I've converted Christianity.**”

The man didn't believe her, so he decided to give her a quiz. He asked, “**Why do Christians celebrate Christmas?**” Mrs. Rosenberg said, “*It's Jesus' birthday.*” Still he didn't believe her,

"Where was Jesus born?" *"In Bethlehem."* "Well, where did they lay Him?" *"In a manger."* "Okay, why did they lay Him in a manger?"

By this point Mrs. Rosenberg was so frustrated she couldn't restrain herself. She blurts out, *"Because a jerk like you wouldn't give a Jewish lady a room for the night."*

And that's exactly what happened to Joseph and Mary. *There was no room in the inn.* The King of the Universe, the Hope of the Ages, the Savior of all Mankind couldn't find a room. On the night of His birth there was no place for Jesus. *And why were there no rooms in Bethlehem?*

Well, I suppose the inns were **too full**. Bethlehem was a tiny place. It wasn't prepared for an influx of visitors.

Yet special arrangements could've been made. This was a unique situation, a woman was about to give birth for crying out loud... Yet that led to another problem - the proprietors were **too busy**. The inns were understaffed.

Yet surely someone saw the need? Why didn't a visitor forego their room for a mom in labor? Was everyone **too selfish**? Imagine the excuses, *"We worked hard all day... We also traveled a long distance... We were tired too... We deserved a bed as much as the next guy..."*

Jesus no longer needs a hotel room. Today, He looks for room in people's hearts. Yet tragically the same problems exist - and for the same reasons as on that first Christmas... we also are **too full, too busy, too selfish.**

For one, our hearts are **too full** - too full of stuff - of earthly stuff, material stuff. There's no room left for Jesus. Our attention is full. Our appetites are glutted.

Once, a Boston couple invited guests to their infant's christening party. The baby was left asleep. No one saw him on the bed in the dark room as they tossed down their coats. Tragically, when mom went to wake the baby, she found him suffocated under a mountain of coats.

And that's what happens to our love for Jesus at Christmas time. It gets smothered under a mound of fun and festivities. Jesus is left out because we're *too full*.

But we're also **too busy** - Christmas time overflows with activities. There's just no time left to worship Jesus.

In the 1500's there was a monastery in London named *Mary of Bethlehem*. It specialized in the care of mentally ill patients. Later, it was turned into a city-owned insane asylum, and its name was shorten from "*Bethlehem*" to "*Bedlam*." Eventually, the English word "**Bedlam**" was defined by its association with this insane asylum.

It came to mean "**noise, and chaos, and confusion.**"

And this is what's happened to us at Christmas. There's so much noise and busyness, we fail to slow down and focus. Our busyness crowds out our worship.

And the third way Jesus gets left out at Christmas is we get **too selfish**. We focus only on ourselves - we leave no room for anything other than our desires and convenience. Joseph knocked on every hotel door in Bethlehem looking for a room,

and every door slammed shut in his face. *And Jesus is still knocking on doors...*

Revelation 3:20 tells us Jesus stands at the door of our heart and knocks. This is a startling picture - it means Jesus is on the outside of His Church wanting to get in!

Imagine, **the Lord left out of His own church.**

It reminds me of a quote by author Dorothy Day, "It is no use saying that we are born two-thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Nor will those who live at the end of the world have been born too late. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts."

Is there room in your heart for Jesus?

There was no room in the inn, but Joseph found room in a stable... We usually think of a stable as a big red barn on a picturesque horse farm - all warm and cozy. It's built to protect the animals from the bite of winter...

But this shelter was not what you would imagine as a stable. It was probably a cave on the outskirts of town: *cold, wet, damp*. It stunk with the stench of manure. Its walls would be covered with the soot from campfires.

Geoffrey Bull once visited an Oriental Inn, and he describes the stable he found out back, "As I walked into the stable to feed the horses and mules, my boots squashed in the manure and straw. The horrible smell of the animals was nauseating, and I thought, "to think Christ came all the way from heaven to some wretched, Eastern stable, and what is more, He came for me."

It is indeed a sobering thought.

Each year at Christmas we sing “**Away In A Manger.**” “The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.” *Says who? Seriously...*

“The cattle are lowing...” *are you kidding?* More likely the sheep were bleating and the cows were mooing - probably disturbed by the strangers around them...

And what about the baby... “no crying He makes,” you sure? I’ve witnessed the birth of four babies, and they all screamed bloody murder. It’s healthy for a newborn to cry - it clears out the lungs. I’m certain Jesus cried.

Then Mary put her baby “**away in a manger**” - a manger was a dirty, fly-infested, saliva-stained feed trough. And I never knew until I went to Israel, that Middle Eastern feed troughs aren’t made from wood and lined with hay - they’re cut out of stones. They’re hard.

Notice too, there were no doctors, or midwives or childbirth instructors at Jesus’ birth. Joseph was there, but I’m sure he wasn’t much help. He was a carpenter.

Usually, in ancient times the birth of a baby was a family affair. Grandma, mom, aunts, sisters all gather to lend expertise - but on this occasion Mary had no one.

G. Campbell Morgan writes, “**Oh, the pity of it, the tragedy of it, the loneliness of it; that in that hour of all hours, when womanhood should be surrounded by the tenderest care, (Mary) was alone. The method of the writer is very distinct. Mary with her own hands wrapped the Baby round with those swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger. There was no one to do it for her.**”

The first Christmas was a lonely experience for Mary. She navigated it with only the help she got from God.

Verse 8, “**Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.**” This verse is why many scholars conclude Jesus wasn’t born on December 25, *or at any time in mid-winter*. Usually, from late October until early April, Jerusalem is too cold for sheep to be out in the fields at night. The sheep are brought into shelters.

I’ve been in the shepherd’s fields outside Bethlehem in late November, and the weather’s been warm. It could’ve been a warm winter for Jesus’ birth - *but we’re not sure*.

When it comes to God’s Incarnation the Bible doesn’t tell us **when** the miracle took place, only that it did. For me, December 25 is as good a day as any to celebrate!

There is a tradition though that insists that these particular shepherds weren’t tending ordinary flocks. They oversaw Temple sheep used for sacrifice. Bethlehem is just a few miles south of the Temple.

This provides insight to the detail that Mary wrapped Jesus in **swaddling clothes**. The Temple sacrifices had to be flawless, so when a sacrificial lamb was born it was wrapped tightly in protective cloth to shelter it from injury. *Mary protected her baby the exact same way...*

In a sense, Jesus was a member of these sacrificial flocks. He was the Lamb of God that would end all sacrifices. It was appropriate that the news of His birth was first announced to these Temple shepherds.

“And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.” Not just to Jews, but to “*all people!*” Jesus is for every human heart!

“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” As **Savior** He **forgives** us. As **Messiah** He leads us to **victory**. And as **Lord** He **rules** and calls the shots in our lives.

“And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying...” And I hate to disappoint you, but the angels are “*saying*” not “*singing*.” One of my favorite carols is “*Hark The Herald Angels Sing*.” But it’s not accurate. They *say* not *sing*.

FYI, **only twice in Scripture do angels sing...** Job 38:7 - at creation the angels sang for joy. And at the end of time, Revelation 5:8 - angels join the redeemed around God’s throne and sing praise to the Lamb.

Angels sing in the beginning and in the end. But while we remain in a fallen state their lips don’t sing.

Yet here they say, “**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!**” It always inspires me that the angels appeared to *shepherds...*

For shepherds were some really shady characters.

Shepherds were held in contempt in Hebrew society, so much so their testimony was inadmissible in a court of law... When shepherds came to town storekeepers were told to lock up - the police were put on alert.

Yet God's *peace and goodwill* first came to the worst people. Imagine, the *light of God* came to *shady shepherds*. That means there's hope for folks like us!

When we think of the angelic announcement we usually do so from the shepherds' perspective *looking up*, but imagine the scene through the angels' eyes...

You've been practicing a million years for this moment. Now the day arrives. The conductor taps his wand. The curtain rolls back. You expect see thousands of people - all earth's VIPs, kings - dignitaries and luminaries...

Yet all there is before you are shepherds - a half dozen grungy, smelly, sweaty shepherds... what a let down!

When I think of the real Christmas story it's not a script any of us would've written. *Peasants for parents. A barn for a birth. Shepherds as ambassadors*. Yet this was God's way. And I'm glad, for it speaks volumes to us.

It shows me that God is willing to bear hardships. He knows what it's like to be born on the wrong side of the tracks. He loves the unlovable and saves the unhinged.

Jesus is the Savior of even shepherds.

Verse 15, "So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to

pass, which the Lord has made known to us." The shepherds weren't content with hearsay. They want see for themselves. *May this be our attitude.*

"And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds." They made the news "*widely known.*" And this is the true spirit of Christmas. These "*good tidings of great joy (are) for all people*" - our job is to spread the news. And Christmas is a time to do so.

Despite the distractions of the season - *the stuff, and busyness, and self-interest* - Christmas is still a time when hearts are softened, and spiritual sensitivities are heightened. People who never think a religious thought any other time of the year do so at Christmas time.

It's said, "*Our world never comes as close to being in contact with its greatest hope as it does at Christmas.*"

The Spirit of Christ always takes advantage of the season of Christmas... Let's make Jesus widely known.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and He can be born in the hearts of all those who willingly put their trust in Him.

Verse 19, "*But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.*"

Notice the two reactions to the Christmas drama - *the shepherds shouted it out and Mary mulled it over.*

The **Shepherds praised** and **Mary pondered**. And Christmas is a time for both - *praising and pondering*.

I wonder if Mary kept a baby book for Jesus? We're told, "*she kept all these things... in her heart.*" But I wonder if she saved little mementos from Jesus' childhood, and recorded events, and journaled her thoughts? How far did she go in pondering these things? She certainly was a primary source for Luke's Gospel.

I'm sure we have Mary to thank for the rest of the story. Verse 21, "*And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*" It's a fact of modern medicine that a newborn boy lacks Vitamin K - which is the vitamin that provides our blood its clotting abilities. Doctors say it takes around eight days for a baby's blood to coagulate.

Today, when a baby boy is circumcised he's injected with a dose of Vitamin K to help with the recovery.

Apparently, God knew this long before modern science. The Law of Moses required that every baby boy should not to be circumcised until the eighth day.

And at Jesus' circumcision He was given the name ordained by the angel who spoke earlier to Joseph.

He was called, "**JESUS**" or "**Jehovah is salvation.**"

"Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the

LORD"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Beside circumcision the Mosaic Law had Hebrew couples observe two more ceremonies... The mother's purification and the payment of the redemption price.

Purification required a sacrifice - a *lamb* - unless you couldn't afford one: then you opted for "*turtledoves or pigeons*." The birds were the poor man's exception.

And apparently, since that's what Joseph and Mary offered to the Lord they must've qualified as paupers.

But while they were in the Temple the couple bumped into two Israelis senior citizens... The first, verse 25, "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel (a title for the Messiah), and the Holy Spirit was upon him."

"And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." "Christos" is Greek for *Messiah*.

"So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." And the old man,

Simeon, quoted what most Jews at the time didn't, **Isaiah 52:10**.

He understood Messiah would not only be a light to Jews, but also to Gentiles. And once Simeon saw that light he was ready to close his eyes for the final time.

“**And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.**” I'm sure they did.

But the old man wasn't through, verse 34, “**Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."**”

Simeon makes a four-fold prediction...

First, Jesus will be **pivotal**. All humans will rise or fall on their reaction to Him... **Second**, Jesus will be **persecuted**. He's “**a sign which will be spoken against...**” **Third**, He'll cause **pain**, especially for Mary. Verse 35, **Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also...** Simeon predicts the heartbreak Mary will feel later when she watches her son bleed and die. She was “**blessed**” and “**highly favored**,” but it didn't shelter her from pain... And **fourth**, Jesus will **peel** off facades and remove masks. Simeon says, “**that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.**” All our real and rawest thoughts get exposed before Jesus...

Simeon could see that Jesus will be *pivotal* and *persecuted* - His life will cause His mother *pain* - and He'll **peel** back the intentions of every man. Put it all together and Mary's Boy will be a force to reckon with!

“Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” Ana had been married for seven years, but that had been eighty-four years ago. The earliest a Jew could be married was 13, which made her at least 104.

And instead of remarrying, Ana chose to give herself totally to God. She resided in the Temple precincts, and performed a wide range of chores for the priests.

And like a lot of older folks Ana had *a bucket list*. *Things she wanted to do before she kicked the bucket*. But it was a short list. The only item on it was **to see the Messiah**. For verse 38 tells us, “**And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.**”

Verse 39 “**So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.**” *And you have to wonder what was it like to parent Almighty God?*

In fact, in his book “**God Came Near,**” Max Lucado does a great job of trying to answer that question. He has a chapter titled, “*Twenty-five Questions for Mary.*”

Here's a few he hopes to ask one day: “**When Jesus saw a rainbow did He ever mention a flood?... Did you ever feel awkward teaching Him how He created the world?... When He saw a lamb being led to the slaughter, did He act**

differently?... How did Jesus act at funerals?... Did the thought ever occur to you that the God to whom you were praying was asleep under your own roof?... Did you ever catch Jesus gazing at the flesh on His arm while holding a clod of dirt?... And did you ever think, *'That's God eating my soup?'*”

What growing up was like for Jesus we're not sure. Surely, He was taught the Bible from an early age. He also learned a trade. Jesus followed in Joseph, his foster father's footsteps. He became a carpenter.

Though Nazareth was a tiny town, it sat at the crossroads of three major trade routes. Strangers in town exposed Jesus to different people and cultures.

In addition, Nazareth set just across the valley, only four miles southeast of the town of "Sepphoris" - which was the summer retreat for the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Tradition tells us Sepphoris was the town where Mary spent her childhood. Perhaps she had relatives in Sepphoris and visited often. Joseph and Jesus may've found carpentry work in the bustling town. It's possible in the city's synagogue, the boy, Jesus, could have been taught by the most brilliant minds in Judaism.

Verse 40 records what Luke does tell us about Jesus' early development, **“And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”** He exhibited *spiritual strength and keen discernment*. It

was obvious from a very early age that the hand of God was upon His life..

We're also told His parents kept the Mosaic Law.

They were devout Jews. Verse 41, "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover." This was a requirement for all males twenty and over

Why Luke didn't tell us more about Jesus' childhood we're not sure. But he closes the chapter with an event from Jesus' early life that he chose probably because it seemed indicative of Jesus' childhood in general.

Verse 42, "And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. 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; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him."

Before you report Joseph and Mary to the DFACS for losing their child, understand a Jewish pilgrimage.

Families traveled in caravans - women in front - men and boys in the rear. *Mary thought Joseph had Him. Joseph thought Mary had Him.* And they didn't realize their mistake until they stopped that night to camp.

They return to Jerusalem to retrieve their son. "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.

And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” Jesus was 12 years old, yet He’s quizzing the Jewish scholars - *perhaps some of those He’d met in Sepphoris*. Imagine Jesus on an episode of: “Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?”

Jesus was just 12 years old - we would’ve dismissed Him from the sanctuary earlier to go to Middle School - but His grasp of the Scripture astonished the rabbis!

“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.

And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Jesus was attending to heavenly business.

And here’s our question - *in whose business are we embroiled?* Are we so wrapped up in our own stuff that we’ve neglect to be about the Lord’s business?

Verse 50, “But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.” The Sovereign God submitted to a parent’s authority.

“But His mother kept all these things in her heart.”

Obviously, Luke included this story to show us that even at twelve years old Jesus had a sense of who He was and what He’d come to do. In John 8:29 He’ll later say, “I always do those things that please (the Father).”

That was true of Jesus throughout His entire life.

Verse 51, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Notice, Jesus grew in four ways: in wisdom (**intellectually**), in stature (**physically**), in favor with God (**spiritually**), in favor with man (**socially**)... And here’s a model for parents who want to provide their child a *balanced upbringing*.

Are your children growing up in all four ways? *“In wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”*