**Luke**

**Luke 2: 21-50**

**Intro:** Have you ever had something that you really wanted or needed to happen but you let something get in the way of the goal? Maybe your bucket list item because you never got around too it. Lauren and I had that this week. We bought a house and are working on some things in it. I thought it would be quick and easy. We often let life stop us from getting things done, but spiritually

**BL:** We can’t let life get in the way of the mission

**Outline:**

Today we continue our series in Luke, last week we looked at the birth of Jesus, Christmas, and this week as we continue this series we are going to finish chapter 2.(if you missed the previous messages you can catch up online at ohiograce.com) All throughout this series you are going to see Luke investigating who the real Jesus is. In our message today, we are going to see Luke bringing out both the deity and humanity of Jesus. We’ve got about 30 verses to cover so we gotta move quickly, not only that we are going to cover over 12 years of Jesus life today! So let’s jump right in shortly after where last weeks message left off.

1. **Jesus Presented in Jerusalem (21-27)**
2. The Ceremonies (Slide 1-4)
3. Circumcision (21)—Shows that Mary and Joesph were following everything God commanded them to do. It is also when Jesus was given the name Jesus. Fulfilling many prophecies. The Hebrew name for Jesus means the Lord is Salvation.
4. Presentation (23)—This was signifying that the firstborn, which was spared by God during the first Passover, belonged to God.
5. Purification (22)—Jewish law stated a woman was ceremonially unclean, she had to go to the temple and sacrifice, the two turtledove sacrifice was a provision for those that didn’t have a lot, Mary and Joesph were poor!
6. The People (Slide 5-6)
7. Simeon
* We know next to nothing about Simeon. It doesn’t appear that He was a priest, because the Holy spirit told him to go to the temple and He wasn’t already there.
* The things we do know about Him are the things that matter most to God, things about His faith and character.
1. Righteous and Devout—This speaks of His personal walk with God and His integrity before people.
2. Faith and Hope—he looked for “the consolation of Israel” he was familiar with prophecy and God’s promises of a Messiah and was looking for one.
3. Filled with the Spirit—The Holy Spirit told Simeon he wouldn’t die until he saw the messiah. He then recognized Jesus for who He is, and proclaims that while holding the child.
* Simeon goes on to talk more about who Jesus is and what He will accomplish and we’ll touch on that more in a minute. (Slide 7-9)
1. Anna—a prophetess, She was married for 7 years and her husband died, she remained widowed for the rest of her life, being in the temple, praying and fasting day and night. She could’ve gotten remarried, could’ve done a lot of other things, she instead dedicates her life to looking for the Messiah and praying for her people to seek God.
2. **Jesus returns to Nazareth (39-40) (slides 10-11)**
* Mary and Joesph and Jesus return home to Nazareth. This is Post Wisemen visiting (which we don’t see in this text) and post flight to Egypt (Also not in this text) We are going to see basically 12 years go by in this passage today so don’t be shocked.
* Luke here is showing both the deity of God and the humanity. While Jesus is 100% God and knows all things, He is also 100% man and needs to grow in strength and also apparently in His earthly knowledge, how Jesus can know everything and have to learn I still don’t fully understand other than God was giving us an example by not using His God knowledge here and making His human side learn like we do. (John 16:33) Jesus went though life’s challenges and grew by doing life God’s way. He is our perfect human example. Jesus says He overcame the world. He knows what we are going through because He’s lived it and done it.
* The Bible says during this time That Jesus grew in strength and wisdom. If Jesus needed to grow in strength and wisdom and needed God’s grace **don’t we?** How do we gain wisdom? Just like Jesus we need to grow in it (James 1:5) (Slide 12-13) we also know that we find it in God’s word. It’s why it’s imperative for us to be reading God’s Word daily and praying and having conversation with Him as well. None of us have arrived there’s room for growth for all of us.
* Jesus also gives us one more interesting thing here to apply to ourselves. We aren’t focused so much here on Jesus learning Josephs trade of carpentry. (We know He does and that He helps in the family business) But we are seeing Jesus grow spiritually. The spiritual growth was the most important thing for Jesus and for us to understand. Carpentry, working with Joesph was important, but it wasn’t Jesus main job. **Here this, Your career isn’t the reason you are here.** The reason we are here is to glorify God and make disciples, everything else is secondary. We’ll hit this more later.
1. **Jesus visits Jerusalem (41-52)**
* 41 (Slide 14-15)The Passover feast was remembering the angel passing over the Israelites houses in Egypt and not killing the firstborn. (Elaborate) God commanded that they attend several feasts in Jerusalem yearly. Now by this time it became customary that those far away only attend once a year, Mary and Jospeh attended Passover yearly. It was an 80 mile journey to get there, remember last week they caravanned to these places because it was unsafe to journey alone.
* 42 (Slide 16-17)We are unsure if Jesus had gone before or not but this had to be exciting, leaving a tiny little town, going to the capitol and seeing thousands of people and celebrating for a week! Probably at this point we have Mary and Joseph’s other children as well with them. After staying a week for all the festivities they begin there journey back to Nazareth, Joseph seemingly thought Jesus was with Mary, Mary with Joseph or they thought Jesus was with other relatives in the caravan. The fact that they didn’t check for sure indicates a good level of trust that they have in Jesus. Many People will take this passage to try to make it seem like Jesus is sinning or not perfect (which is not the case), honestly it’s the opposite. We’re going to see more about Jesus reasons for not being with them in a moment.
* (43) (Slide 18-19) Think about this on a practical level though, next week, Hagan, Lauren and I are taking a bunch of our students to Kalahari, imagine if on the way back we all assume someone else made sure that your student was in the car and we didn’t double check, we trust them it’s all good! (nothing could go wrong right?) (also this is why we count and double count even with only 11 students going) Notice though we don’t see Jesus doing crazy miracles or getting into trouble. We see Him simply left behind. A mistake, an overlook on the part of His parents.
* (44) (slide 20-21) So now Mary and Joseph have gone a day’s journey and they haven’t seen Jesus, cue some panicking. (imagine it’s Monday morning and your student still hasn’t showed up after Kalahari…) This days journey would’ve been 20-25 miles. That’s a lot walking. So now they starting looking for Him, checking with the kids, family, friends, neighbors. Until they couldn’t find Him.
* (45) (Slide 22-23) Think about the fear and anxiety that would’ve been tearing at Joseph and Mary as they return to Jerusalem. They had another days journey to get back did anyone go with them? I’m sure all they could fear was the worst. How could they do this? Mary was probably thinking about everything they needed to get done when they get home from the trip, laundry, flowers that needed watering etc. Joseph was thinking about his customers, they hadn’t seen him in a week, work was gonna be backed up, the lawn needed cut. They took some time to celebrate God at this festival, but now their mind is probably set on getting back to normal life. That was the main focus for them. **Sounds a lot like our lives.** I’ve been there, I’ve sat in church thinking about all the things I need to get done, wanting to be anywhere else. Man I mean I’m thinking about all the things I need to get done right now! Like Christmas, it was great that it happened we enjoyed it, back to the grind with nothing really changing spiritually.
* (46) (slide 24-25)After 3 days they found Jesus, in the temple, teaching, learning, discussing theology with the priests. Jesus wasn’t just listening but was asking questions. Which is amazing because in order to ask decent questions you have to have some knowledge yourself. Let’s understand a few things from this.
1. Jesus Conduct: so often people try to say Jesus was sinning here. He could’ve done anything. He was left alone in Jerusalem with no parents! WOOO. He went to the temple and listened to biblical teaching. He went and talked about theology. Kids, students (adults too for that matter) What you do when your parents aren’t around is important. You don’t have to come to the church and debate theology with me Pastor Harald and Josiah (but you can). But keep this in mind.
2. Jesus sought wise counsel: Jesus wanted to learn. He went out and found those that could teach Him. Not that His parents were worthless in this regard, but He went out an found a way to learn more bout God. You should be seeking older Christians who can help you with this as well. Our spiritual life should be our main focus in this life!
3. Jesus primary focus was on spiritual things: Jesus wasn’t worried about getting back to His job, His friends, His school etc. Jesus was worried about focusing on God’s plan for His life. **How do you compare to young Jesus?**
* (47) (Slide 26-27) They were amazed at Jesus. Jesus was something special, they would’ve thought of Him like a child prodigy.
* (48) (Slide 28-29) Jesus parents finally found him and they were astonished. Essentially they were overwhelmed, beside themselves. Mary makes a statement trying to rebuke Jesus. Why have you made us feel this way? Mary and Joseph had never felt this way before, obviously the thought of losing a kid was terrifying. She uses the word behold, it means to get someone’s attention. Mary and joseph weren’t necessarily wrong in their fear of not knowing where Jesus was, and Jesus was not wrong here either.
* (49) (Slide 30-31) This is Jesus first words in the NT. Why were you looking? This is an idiom. Basically He is expressing His amazement for them not knowing where He was. Like you should’ve expected that I would be here. (like if you call me at 5pm tomorrow and you’re shocked I’m watching the rose bowl) Jesus said I must be here. I must be doing this. It gives a sense of inevitability. Jesus is setting His commitment for His heavenly father above his earthly family. **Where is our commitment to God? Him or earthly family first?** Jesus is setting the precedent that God comes before our earthly family. Essentially the most important relationship has to be our relationship with God. This is the first time that any individual in Scripture has claimed God as heavenly Father. He’s also lifting himself above humans. Jesus is illustrating His deity as well. Jesus wasn’t just the earthly son of Mary or Joseph, rather He was ultimately under God’s authority. The same goes for us. Yes you have earthly family, but ultimately God is the authority in your life. Obviously if you are a kid, God commands you to obey your parents while you are in their house, Jesus even submits to Mary and Joseph and follows them, but the idea is that nothing holds you back from obeying God. You obey him regardless of whether your parents do, your spouse does, your siblings do, your boss does and you don’t let anything come between you and your relationship with God.
* (50) (Slide 32-33)They didn’t understand what Jesus was trying to teach. (Like a lot of people back then, and today) Mary and Jospeh both had angels come to them and explain He was the Messiah and what was going to happen, but they didn’t understand Jesus mission. I guess you could say neither of them knew. Obviously on one hand they knew Jesus was the Messiah, but did they understand His mission, what it was really all about. Obviously not. They could’ve asked Jesus what He needed, clearly He was God and He understood and knew. But they didn’t. They were more concerned with getting back to Nazareth, back to their normal life, than making sure God’s will was being done. Jesus even explain what happened and they just go back to normal life and almost seem like they don’t know what to think. This wouldn’t be the last time that Jesus followers would fail to grasp what He was saying. Mary and Jospeh may not have seen anything miraculous up to this point in Jesus life. He had not done anything recorded at least in that way. Perhaps they forgot what the angel told them. Perhaps they didn’t’ understand His words because they were still too frazzled over fear of losing Him. But like they had to know right? How could they not get it? Well let’s give them a bit of a break? How many times do we say well, I know what the Bible says but Im gonna do this anyway? Or how many times do we just not get what the Bible is saying? **Easier said than done right?**

**Transition:** So we have seen that Jesus Mission from God was more important than anything else. So what was that mission?

1. **Jesus Mission (28-38, 51-52)**
2. On the big scale (28-38)
* Salvation for both Jews and gentiles
* Glory for the people of Israel (all the coming events)
* His own death
* Basically we are talking about His big scale mission. To come to earth to die on the cross and bring salvation to the Jews and eventually gentiles, the jews reject it and eventually come back to Him as a nation and He rules and reigns in Jerusalem for 1k years.
1. On the smaller scale (51-52) (Slide 34-35)
* Obeyed His parents in subjection. He submitted Himself to His earthly authority. Just as we are to do. Parents, bosses, etc. His obedience to His heavenly Father did not mean he could neglect His relationship with His earthly parents. Rather He went back home with them to Nazareth and obey them.
* To prepare for earthly ministry—Jesus had to submit to God to die on the cross. He gave up himself in submission for us, but it all started here, while He was in His parents Home. He started practicing that submission early on in life. We are going to have to submit in life, to God, to other believers, to bosses, to government, we may as well start practicing it in the small areas in life so we are prepared when the time comes to have to submit to someone in obedience in other areas. Jesus also grew in other areas to help Himself in future ministry. (52) Jesus increased in wisdom that means it took work. Think of fighting through a dense jungle. You have to work! Jesus grew intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially. None of those being unimportant. Jesus is showing the importance of learning all of these aspects of life, because they helped Him in His earthly ministry. Jesus gave us an outline for spiritual growth. In order to be successful at Spiritual growth we do the things that Jesus did that He was successful at. He was our perfect example of Spiritual growth.

**Takeaways:** Today I want to do something different to kind of close this out. We see that Jesus was both fully God and fully man and that He was focused on doing His fathers business no matter what, but we see a glimpse into the behind the scenes of the adult Jesus. The Jesus that is teaching eloquently and loving people and healing people. Jesus deity gave him the power to do everything He did, but He allowed His human side to learn and grow to give us an example of spiritual growth. As we come out of the Christmas season and Head into new year, it’s more important now than ever that we make spiritual growth our relationship with God more important than ever. Here’s some things we see from spiritual growth from this passage.

(Slides 36-38)

1. Spiritual Growth takes time and we must actively work at it. Jesus was growing in Wisdom, it wasn’t something that is a one time things. Honestly for us growing in wisdom is a lifelong thing. Jesus hungered after things that would help Him grow spiritually. Are you? Jesus actively put Himself in places to learn things about God. Are you? Jesus did as much as possible to grow not as little as possible, Jesus didn’t let anyone get in the way of spiritual growth or God’s will. Can you say the same? What are you doing to grow spiritually and in wisdom? Taking the grow class, connect class etc. Showing up to church weekly, Wednesday Bible study, serving, mens leadership group?
2. Spiritual growth requires an active interest in the Word of God. Jesus could’ve went anywhere when He was alone in Jerusalem, but He went to the temple to learn from the priests and Bible scholars. He was actively searching out ways to grow in God’s Word. Are you? We as a church actively present ways that you can grow in God’s Word, typically the deeper they go, the fewer people attend.
3. Spiritual growth should be focused toward God and towards others. Jesus grew in favor with God and man, just like the command for us to love God and love people. We can’t just simply study the Word of God and theology and knowing everything the Bible says without focusing that on knowing God more, loving God more and learning to love others. The goal isn’t just biblical knowledge, to become a biblical scholar but to know God better and love Him and others more. Just like Jesus example.
4. Spiritual growth will get off track is we lose focus. Both Mary and Joseph meant well when they assumed Jesus was with others and they both misunderstood His gentle correction later on. Even godly people who mean well can be mistaken. Later on the disciples won’t always understand Jesus mission just like Mary and Joseph missed it. We all must maintain teachable hearts and spirits or else we can risk running off course or missing the point. We must be teachable enough to take correction from wherever it comes, but we must also imitate Jesus in our spiritual growth.

If we make Spiritual Growth and living life God’s way the most important things we do in 2024 I have no doubt that God will do some amazing things in our lives and in our church this upcoming year. Don’t let life get in the way of the mission.