



‘But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’
2 Peter 3:18

December 27

First Sunday after Christmas

Gospel reading: Luke 2:41-52

Pray for growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and **read** the passage together...

Looking around

Immediate context

Our passage follows on from the presentation of Jesus in the Jerusalem temple, where Luke stresses Jesus’ parents’ careful observance of the Mosaic Law concerning their newborn son (2:21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 39). Our passage continues this stress by referring at the outset to Jesus’ parents annual attendance at the Passover (2:41). Paul would write: ‘But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons’ (Gal 4:4-5). Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Mosaic Law from his birth to his death, and in so doing became a perfect Saviour and Sacrifice.

The passage is bracketed by Luke’s summarizing statement about Jesus’ growth in wisdom, strength and stature (2:40, 52).

Its place in the structure of the book

It is set within Luke’s Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52) and precedes the account of John the Baptist’s ministry some 18 years later (3:1-20).

Its contribution to the message and purpose of the book

The book’s message centres on Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world. Jesus’ first words in this Gospel are recorded in our passage in verse 49 and, significantly, they record the twelve year old Jesus’ recognition of his unique relationship to God as Son to Father – ‘my Father’ – and of the necessity of his being in his Father’s ‘house.’ It is as God’s unique Son that Jesus is the world’s Saviour (see 1:31-33, 35).

Is the passage or part of it quoted elsewhere in the Bible or does it quote other parts of the Bible?

Only Luke records this incident in the life of Jesus. Verse 52 is an allusion to a very similar reference to the boy Samuel's growth and progress in 1 Samuel 2:26. Samuel would become a significant 'prophet of the Lord' (1 Sam 3:20) and so foreshadow the Lord Jesus who himself functioned as a prophet, proclaiming the Word of God (4:24).

How the passage contributes to our understanding of God, Jesus, humanity, God's salvation, life together as Christians, discipleship

God the Father has a unique Son.

Jesus is God's Son in a way that no one else is: 'my Father's house.' This is also revealed by his unusual thirst for knowledge and his own remarkable spiritual knowledge. Jesus' filial relationship to God as Father explains his actions in staying on in Jerusalem without his 'parents.' At the same time, it was not time for him to begin his ministry, so he returned home with them and obeyed them. This, again, stresses his faithfulness to the Law and his moral integrity.

Early on Jesus enjoyed peoples' acceptance and favour (2:52), but this was never to last (2:34; 4:28-30).

Looking behind

Relevant historical, political, social, geographical information helpful for understanding the passage

Every male Jew was expected to travel to Jerusalem each year for three festivals: the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Passover was the celebration of God's deliverance of his people from the angel of death and from Egypt (Ex 11:1-12:51). Jesus would become the Passover Lamb who would deliver God's people from sin and death (22:1; 23:46; Jn 1:29, 35-36).

Looking within

Movements or structure in the passage

Important or repeated words, ideas, themes

'the boy Jesus' (2:43), 'my Father's house' (2:49).

Important contrasting words (but, although, whereas, whilst), explanatory words (therefore, so that, for, because, since, in order that), timing words (next, immediately, after, when)

Looking clearly

Using all of the above, work out the passage's main idea and supporting ideas:

Main idea

Supporting ideas

Try to summarise these in a clear, succinct statement:

Try to represent what the passage **says** and **means** with a drawing. No art show entries necessary! Invite *willing* people to explain their drawings, unpacking what is being said and the meaning.

Looking at Jesus

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

How has this study enlarged or enriched your understanding of Jesus and his claims, call and promises?

How do you respond to Him?

Looking in the mirror

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

What personal and corporate (your home group or church) beliefs you hold does this study confirm to be true?

What personal and corporate beliefs has this study challenged and corrected?

What personal and corporate values, attitudes and priorities has this study reinforced or challenged?

What personal and corporate behaviour and traditions has this study endorsed or challenged?

Looking forward

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

What encouragements, comforts and changes will you or your group take with you today?

Resolve to help one another move forward in repentance and faith.

Prayer and praise