

My Father's Business

The Son's Calling in an Obedient Life (Luke 2:39–52)

Series: Luke: An Orderly Account - Dr. Randy White

I. The Son Grows in an Obedient Household (vv. 39-42)

Obedience Continues Beyond the Temple

- Having performed the required observances according to the law of the Lord, the family returns to Nazareth. The remarkable testimonies of Simeon and Anna lead back into ordinary household life.
- Luke is a historian attentive to chronology. This reads as a natural return to Nazareth after the Temple experience; we must reconcile our common understanding of the flight to Egypt with this passage.
- Jesus belongs within Israel's covenant history. His family's observance of the law does not introduce the later order of the Body of Christ or replace Israel's promises.

Real Growth Bears God's Favor

- The child grows, becomes strong in spirit, and is filled with wisdom. His humanity includes actual development; the promised Son does not merely appear to pass through childhood.
- "The grace of God was upon him" describes divine favor, not forgiveness of personal sin. Increasing wisdom does not require a previous life of moral folly.
- The household travels to Jerusalem every year at Passover. At twelve Jesus participates in Israel's worship; Luke identifies His age without describing a coming-of-age ceremony or calling this His first visit.

II. The Son Astonishes Those Who Hear Him (vv. 43-48)

Faithful Parents Discover Their Limits

- After the festival Jesus remains in Jerusalem while Joseph and His mother begin their return. They suppose Him to be in the company and look among relatives and acquaintances.
- Their assumption proves mistaken, and they return to Jerusalem seeking Him. Their privileged place in His upbringing has not given them complete knowledge of His movements or purpose.
- Mary speaks of their real anguish: "thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Her words express parental concern; Luke does not ask us to imagine either indifference in the parents or contempt in the Son.

Extraordinary Wisdom Appears in a Real Child

- They find Him in the Temple "after three days," among the doctors, hearing and asking questions. These are teachers, not physicians; Luke describes an exchange rather than a public ministry already begun.
- All who hear Him are astonished at His understanding and answers. His questions accompany remarkable comprehension, though Luke preserves neither their subjects nor the answers He gave.
- The wisdom announced in verse 40 is now witnessed in Jerusalem. Yet admiration alone does not explain Him: His own words will identify the relationship governing His presence there.

III. The Son Declares His Father's Claim (vv. 49-50)

"My Father" Reveals Who He Is

- Mary has said "thy father" of Joseph; Jesus answers with "my Father" of God. He recognizes Joseph's household place while declaring a relationship that reaches beyond it.
- Gabriel had already announced the Son of the Highest and the Son of God (Luke 1:32, 35). Jesus does not become God's Son in the Temple; His first recorded words in Luke disclose His consciousness of that identity.
- "Wist ye not" means "Did ye not know?" His question calls them to consider what His identity means for His actions, rather than treating Him simply as a child whose whereabouts are unexplained.

"I Must" Reveals What Governs Him

- "I must be about my Father's business" expresses necessity arising from His Father's claim. His presence concerns the Father's affairs, not merely an absorbing personal interest or Joseph's occupation.
- The Temple gives that business a concrete setting. The KJV's wording also carries the larger concern: what belongs to His Father governs where He is and what He does.
- Later Jesus will speak of His necessary suffering and resurrection (Luke 9:22). The Father's purpose governs the whole course, though this childhood saying does not disclose every later event to His parents.
- They do not understand this saying. Receiving true revelation does not mean grasping every implication immediately; their difficulty cannot change the truth of the Son's declaration.

IV. The Son Returns to an Obedient Life (vv. 51-52)

His Father's Claim Includes Household Submission

- Jesus goes with them to Nazareth and "was subject unto them." His declaration of divine sonship leads into continuing household obedience, not a demand for exemption from it.
- Honoring father and mother belongs to Israel's law (Exodus 20:12). The Son's obedience accords with His Father's command; parental submission does not diminish His identity.
- We must read His declaration and His submission together. His unique calling gives no warrant for ordinary children to dress disobedience in religious language.

Quiet Years Still Belong to the Father

- Mary keeps these sayings in her heart. What she cannot yet explain she preserves; the account honors thoughtful remembrance without pretending she already understands everything.
- Jesus increases in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. The growth surrounding this encounter is real and sinless; His divine nature does not become more divine.
- Favor with people does not promise universal approval throughout His ministry. Simeon has already foretold opposition (Luke 2:34-35); the Father's approval remains decisive.
- The chapter closes at home rather than with public acclaim. His Father's business encompasses the quiet years as surely as the extraordinary Temple moment: the same Son declares His calling and lives obediently within it.