

**SCHOOLING THE TEACHERS****Luke 2:41-52**

**INTRO:** My niece Jody is blond – but she’s not dumb, not by a long shot. She’s the one who punched a hole through the dome light in my ’63 Fairlane. She was about four years old and in the back of the car. Actually, she was standing right behind me jabbering to her mom, my sister Sherry, and myself who were in the front. Now, mind you, this was something like 1973 before car seats were a thing and certainly not a requirement at risk of felony charges for child-endangerment. As Jody stood there, she noticed the dome light cover had a brown spot in the center, you know, from years of heat from the bulb. Full of curiosity, she pushed her finger right through it. Her mom was horrified. She confronted little Jody with, “Jody! Why did you do that? You messed up Uncle Keith’s car!” And Jody’s response was classic. She replied, “Well, if Uncle Keith didn’t own this car, I wouldn’t have done it!”

So you know Jody was no slouch and certainly not a dumb blond. But when she was a teenager sometimes she acted like it. Like when she was visiting her cousins Lorie and Julie as she would often do for a week or so in the summertime. One night Julie and Lorie’s parents, Carolyn (my oldest sister) and Allen, her husband, took everyone to Ridge View Dairy a couple miles outside of town for ice-cream cones. They all enjoyed their cones at the tables provided at the dairy and then piled into the Dodge station wagon for the trip home. When they got back to the house someone asked “Where’s Julie?” And Jody giggled and said “She’s still at Ridge View!” and Carolyn and Allen were horrified to think they’d left her there and more so, why did Jody not speak up and say so? Al piled in the car a drove back to Ridge View and retrieved his missing daughter, none worse for the wear. But Jody had then scratching their heads.

But imagine leaving your son in a far off city and traveling for a full day before you notice he’s missing! Ridge View was just a couple miles. Mary and Joseph had been walking with the large group of pilgrims returning from the Passover Celebration for an entire day! That meant it would be at least that long until they could find their boy. Where was he? What happened to him? Where would he sleep? What would he eat? How could this happen?!!!

Well, it’s easy. Richard Donovan points out, “Traveling in caravan, men tend to gather with other men—and women with women. Children play together. It is not difficult to imagine how Joseph and Mary could assume that Jesus is present in the caravan.” (end quote)

Boys will be boys. This group of travelers were essentially a village. They knew each other and they took care of each other. For them “*It takes a village*” was a real concept. At the beginning of the day as the band began their 60 mile journey to Nazareth, Jesus was present and accounted for. In the same way that my brothers and I would venture out in the morning to play in the woods near our house and not return for hours, maybe even not until supper, Jesus was occupied and with his friends, or so his parents assumed. Somewhere he took a detour to the temple and it was not discovered for 12 or 14 hours. Imagine his parents’ terror.

But Jesus was okay. He was at the temple. He told his parents “*Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?*” (v. 49). No, they didn’t know that. But he was okay. He was with the teachers who were there and he was learning from them, he was impressing them with his knowledge and his perceptiveness, and he was even teaching them a bit. But really, the title of this talk is a bit misleading. Jesus wasn’t schooling the teachers as much as he was being schooled. Nevertheless, no matter what my title is or what it should be, there are great things to learn here. Let me point out several. First . . .

**Dedicated and godly parents produce dedicated and godly kids**

- Remember last week I pointed out how Jesus’s parents did everything by the book? Every Christmas we are reminded that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is 70 some miles from their hometown of Nazareth. But they travelled there because they were obediently following the edict from Rome to go to their ancestral town to register with the census. By the book. And then, per our study from last week, they had had Jesus circumcised and formally named him, by the book, on the eight day after his birth. And then, because they were at the temple for a purification rite as proscribed by the law, Jesus received the blessing of Simeon when he was 40 days old.
- Now we read here, *Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.* (v. 41) They might have been by the book, but it was more than that – they were dedicated to God. The sacred Jewish celebrations meant something to them. Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem for the

Passover if they lived within 20 miles – Joseph went every year even though he live 60 miles from Jerusalem. AND Mary AND Jesus went along. Women and children we not required to go, but they did – because they were dedicated to God.

- Here is the point, the fact that Mary and Joseph went every year to Jerusalem for the Passover shows that that Jesus grew up in an extremely faithful Jewish household. And then the emphasis here on Jesus in the temple and his interaction with the teachers is something that Luke emphasizes through his Gospel and then into the book of Acts. Jesus was immersed in Judaism from birth and so, as he meets with the teachers here in the temple, and then later interacts with the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, and all the other teachers of the Law, it's no wonder that he speaks as an insider with a thorough knowledge of the things of God, his Father. And its proof that dedicated and godly parents like Mary Joseph do indeed produce dedicated and godly kids.
- And that brings me to the next thing I'd like to point out . . .

### **Jesus was all about the future**

- When Jesus's parents find him at the temple his mother cried out in her best Jewish mama soprano, "*Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.*" (v. 48b) And, if you're like me, you know Jesus's response to them, maybe in King James English where he says, *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* Luke 2:49b (KJV). He was being about his Father's business, which G. Campbell points out is not a good translation – the NIV which I used is better, "*Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?*" He was immersing himself in knowledge about his Father. He was getting ready for ministry.
- This is the only story about Jesus as a boy. This is why we know that Luke must have interviewed Mary to be able to accurately write this Gospel. And the specificity in the details show Luke's intention to show that Jesus, even as a boy, understood his unique identity and mission. He knew God was his Father and he knew what lay ahead.
- In fact, Luke was pointing out something that was a little over 20 years in the future. Craig Satterlee points out "*Mary and Joseph find Jesus alive and well after three days in a place they didn't expect. This sounds like Easter. Yes, Luke's hint here is of resurrection. Jesus, dead and buried, is raised on the third day, and there is a new temple, Christ's resurrected body. Our searching will come to an end in new life, meaningful life, the life God intends, but not the life we expect.*"
- So, Jesus was then, and is now about the future. He was born and lived and died and rose to be about God's business of putting an end to our searching by making plain the way to God, even if that means shattering our expectations.
- And that brings me to my last point . . .

### **Don't look for Jesus in the wrong places**

- People often ask why it took three days to find Jesus. Well, first of all, it's common sense. Remember – Mary and Joseph didn't know Jesus was missing for a full day. Then they had a day's travel back to Jerusalem. They may have waited until daylight the following day to travel back. Not because of a lack of urgency, but because of security – it was simply safer to travel in daylight. That's why they traveled in groups of pilgrims, because there is security in numbers. So, they had a day long trip back and that is why it was the third day until they found him.
- So, the question is, where did they know to look? Jerusalem was a city large enough for 50,000 souls. That number grew to 200,000 people at Passover. So, it was not a little place. Ashland has roughly 22,000 residents, imagine finding a lost kid here. did it take them three days to figure out that Jesus must be in his Father's house and about his Father's business? Did they find him right away? Did they have an inkling where this holy boy might be?
- Nevertheless, Jesus responds to Mary's relieved, but almost accusatory question of why, with a question of his own, "*Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I'd have to be in my Father's house?*" I don't know if Mary and Joseph looked elsewhere, but we often do.

- Too often Jesus is a dispenser of our wishes. Too often he is seen as the one who will make the consequences of our own choices and sin go away. He promises to forgive us our sins, but the results of our sins are still there as a grim reminder of what happens when we take the wrong path.
- Too often we try to find Jesus in places where, because of his holiness, he will not enter. Jesus is God the Son. God is holy. There can be no sin in his presence. Don't try to find Jesus in the wrong places. F. B. Meyer writes, "*Let us never 'suppose' that we are in the company of Jesus when in fact we may have left him. Never rest until you have found him.*"
- And for goodness sake, if you have questions, rely on him to provide the answers and show up for you. Commentator Donald Miller writes, "*When God's truth is not clear, do not cast it off; hide it in the heart and wait for fuller light.*"

**Conclusion:** Let's wrap up. This has been a bit of stringing pearls as we learn about Jesus in his childhood. What we can see about Jesus's parents is that even if they should have known to find him in the Temple, still they were awesome parents who passed their own desire to serve God on to their very special son. Godly parents serve their children well.

We also see, that even at age 12, Jesus's eye was on the future and his Father's plans for him and humanity. And in this account, there were shadows of the resurrection looming.

And finally, let's make sure that we keep searching for Jesus – but make sure we look for him in the right places. Amen.