

Christmas 1 C Sermon
Luke 2:41-52
December 26, 2021

Growing Up Fast
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⁴¹Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my God's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

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One mother was a little surprised when her son suddenly announced one day after church, "I am thinking of being a Minister when I grow up." "Why is that?" she asked. "Well, I figure I have

to go to church on Sundays anyway, and I think it'll be more fun to stand and yell than to just sit and listen.”¹

It seems like adults are always asking children what they want to be when they grow up. In kindergarten, we all had to go into the principal's office where he sat, a tall imposing figure with flaming red hair behind his enormous desk. He asked us each that very question and our responses were published in the local newspaper. Maybe I was just overcompensating, but my response was that I wanted to be a knight in shining armor. My parents must've been so proud.

It seems like adults are always asking children what they want to be when they grow up and sometimes, I think that, quite unintentionally we put undo pressure on their young minds and force them to grow up a bit too quickly. To be honest, that's exactly how I'm feeling about today's reading from the Gospel According to Luke. It seems like only yesterday that Jesus was a sweet babe in a manger and today he's twelve years old and teaching the teachers at the synagogue. Talk about growing up fast!

I've heard many parents of young children say things like, “I just wish they could stay like this forever.” Parents of young children...thoughts? It's true that young children are a handful, but there is also something absolutely captivating about their sense of wonder – the way they approach everything as if it's new, almost magical, sacred. We almost envy their naïveté, their innocence.

Just yesterday, many of you experienced a real-life case in point when you watched with joy as your mystified and excited children or grandchildren swarmed the Christmas tree to see what delights

¹ “What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?” Greatcleanjokes.com, <http://www.greatcleanjokes.com/1032/what-do-you-want-to-be-when-you-grow-up/>.

Santa had brought them. Isn't it wonderful to see the looks on their faces, see the twinkle in their eye? Their joy is contagious, their excitement is infectious, their optimism, their hope – pure and unbridled by the common sense and rationality that comes with adulthood.

As readily as I will admit that I'm not ready for the baby Jesus of Christmas to be the boy Jesus of today, I must also admit that everyone grows up. But, does it have to be today? Perhaps we can go back to the stable, to the manger, for just a little bit longer. Perhaps we can embrace the naïve, innocent optimism of a child for just this moment. Perhaps we can allow their kind of joy to gurgle in our stomachs and move outward until our limbs are animated with dancing and our mouths open in laughter. Perhaps then, for just a moment, we can glimpse again the Christmas promise of peace, of hope, of joy, of love for everyone, everywhere, always. Perhaps then, we can believe that it is really possible. Perhaps then, we will work to make it a reality in our world.

May it be so. Amen.