

Well Rounded Growth

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Second Sunday after Christmas) is Luke 2:40-52. Our text begins and ends with describing Jesus' growing in physical stature, wisdom and favor with God and man. The verses in between tell of the twelve year old Jesus in the temple.

Annual attendance at three feasts by all adult males (normally accompanied by their families) was commanded in the law: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Distance prevented many from attending all three, but most Jews tried to be at Passover. (CSB) Extended families and neighbors often traveled together, singing and picnicking along the way. (TLSB)

At the age 12 boys were instructed and prepared for becoming adult members of the covenant community, which happened at age 13. At the end of a day's travel, Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus among the many children. After searching for a day, they returned to Jerusalem and found Jesus in the temple exchanging views with the religious leaders.

In verse 46 we find Jesus "*sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions*". The type of rabbinic teaching was for both teachers and pupils to ask probing questions, and to use the answers as springboards for religious instruction. It is still a wonderful thing to listen to learned people talk intelligently about issues that matter.

The very words of Jesus cause amazement among the teachers and others in the temple. Jesus is depicted as Rabbi par excellence, even from His youth. (TLSB)

Jesus' answer to Mary is not sassy but He knew his destiny and was already beginning his Father's will. Mary did not understand but kept thinking about it. Jesus went with them and we don't hear about him again until John the Baptist introduces him as The Lamb of God.

We have been blessed with numerous opportunities to experience a well-rounded growth. Even if it takes some medicine we can maintain a useful health. Our faith and our many resources help us to grow mentally and spiritually. As we grow in our assurance of a life with Christ in eternity, we will also grow in favor with our fellow man.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, open my eyes to your life-giving presence. Through your Word, Sacraments, and Spirit, bless my life, so that things that seem mundane become a foretaste of blessedness in your eternal presence. Amen. (TLSB)