

## **Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

### **Luke 2: 39-52**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 2, verses 39 to 52.

Before this, let us recall again the author of the Gospel of Luke—Luke. Every time I read the Gospel of Luke, I am very thankful and praise God's sovereign arrangement for allowing this Gentile author, who received excellent training in science and literature, to describe Jesus Christ. The materials he collected are not found in the other Gospels; he completely followed what a perfect person must go through and devoted ink to each stage.

When Jesus was still conceived in Mary's womb, only he recorded the hymns of three persons: Elizabeth's words of praise, Mary's hymn, and Zechariah's hymn after he could speak again. And when Jesus was born, he specially recorded a group of shepherds who, through their faithful service, became the first group to witness the birth of Jesus Christ and the first batch to directly go to the place where Jesus was born, witnessing that Jesus was the infant in the manger who would become the Savior of mankind. Afterward, he witnessed that on the eighth day after birth, He was circumcised and sanctified to the Lord; on the fortieth day, according to Jewish law, Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the temple.

In the temple, they encountered two faithful servants of God who had long awaited the Messiah—Simeon and the prophetess Anna. Through Simeon's prophecy and Anna's declaration, they proclaimed the message of the Messiah's birth to all who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem. Afterward, in his wisdom, only the Gospel of Luke records Jesus' life and learning before He was thirty years old. Though the wording is very brief, we can see that in Luke's mind, a complete person must go through every stage. The Son of God came to earth as man, just like every one of us: going through conception, infancy, childhood, gradually growing up until thirty

years old, when, according to the priestly ordinance, He could come out to serve God.

All the deeds of Jesus before thirty years old are recorded very little, basically only in the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke specially records when He was twelve years old, which is when ordinary Israelites perform the coming-of-age rite. After twelve years old, they can be called sons of the law; Luke specially records this, which is also the part we need to read today. We begin reading from verse 39.

**Verse 39: “So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.”**

Forty days after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary, according to the requirements of the law, returned to the temple, heard the prophecy, heard the blessing, and then returned to Galilee, to Nazareth. Nazareth in Galilee was a place despised and looked down upon by people, yet it was also the place where Jesus spent His childhood. According to Mary's hymn of praise, let us see that Mary was a woman well-versed in the Old Testament; therefore, Jesus' childhood education was basically received at home and in a despised place, Nazareth in Galilee. But how does Luke record it?

**Verse 40: “And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”**

“And the Child grew”—growing refers to His body gradually increasing, gradually becoming larger; the original meaning is enlarge, increase. So a child's growth, first is growth in stature. Then, “became strong in spirit”—the Chinese Union Version does not fully translate its original meaning; the English version translates it better: strengthened in spirit—He was strengthened in spirit. Then “filled with wisdom”; a person's true wisdom comes from the sensing in the spirit. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit; though He, like ordinary children, went through a

childhood growth process, He not only grew in body but was also gradually strengthened in spirit through Jesus' spirit, and through the strengthening of the spirit, He was filled with wisdom. True wisdom is joined to the Holy Spirit, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

So in Luke, this Greek man's description of Jesus' childhood has three parts: first part, bodily growth; second part, strengthening in spirit; third part, filling with wisdom. He adds a concluding sentence: and the grace of God was upon Him.

Jesus, like any child, in the growth process before twelve years old, actually did not need to do too much; what He needed to do was receive God's grace, let God's grace be upon Him, let His body grow, let His spirit be strengthened, let His wisdom gradually be filled. Actually, this also speaks that any child before twelve years old actually does not need to deliberately do too much; they only need to be in an environment filled with love, letting the child have a balanced growth from childhood—bodily strength, strengthening in spirit, gradual increase in knowledge and wisdom in the soul—all should be very natural. May God help us families with small children to know that every child having a happy growing childhood can obtain sound development in body, spirit, and soul in all aspects.

**Verse 41: "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover."**

According to Moses' law, the Israelites must go to the temple three times a year to keep the feasts. In Jesus' time, Israel had been a subjugated nation for a long time; most Israelites were quite poor, so many later went only once a year, at the time of the Passover. Joseph and Mary went every year; Jesus, because He had not yet reached the age, had never gone.

**Verse 42: "And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast."**

When a child in Israel reached twelve years old, he was called a son of the law; he must go to the temple. He was no longer like a small child only receiving; he must begin to learn the law and begin, under the education of the law, to be able to keep the law. Jesus was born under the law in order to redeem those who were under the law. Therefore, He, according to the requirement of the law, at twelve years old also went up to Jerusalem.

**Verse 43: “When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it.”**

Keeping the Passover in Jerusalem generally lasted a week. Usually, people living in the same city traveled in groups together. So one can imagine that at that time in Nazareth there should have been many families who went up to Jerusalem together to keep the feast. And because Jesus may have been an obedient child from childhood, never causing parents any worry or concern, when they returned, His parents confidently traveled with the group going back. As a result, this time Jesus did not return with all the people from their village; He remained in Jerusalem, and His parents did not know it.

**Verse 44: “but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.”**

Perhaps they left the city early in the morning, traveled a day’s journey, and only in the evening needed to spend the night on the road. At this time Joseph and Mary thought to look for Jesus, but among relatives and friends they could not find Him.

**Verses 45–46: “So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.”**

So they traveled a day's journey and in the evening could not find Jesus; they returned to Jerusalem—so back and forth two days. As a result, in the temple area they searched another day, making three days. On the third day they saw Him, and He was sitting in the temple. A twelve-year-old child, just becoming a son of the law, yet sitting among the teachers, very attentively listening on one hand and asking on the other.

**Verses 47–48: “And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’”**

Imagine Joseph and Mary spent three days returning to Jerusalem, searching all over the city, and finally found Jesus; they discovered He was among these teachers, seeming not disturbed at all, listening on one hand and asking on the other. The mother would of course be worried; Mary perhaps with a slightly reproving tone said to Jesus, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously!” Jesus’ answer was very special.

**Verse 49: “And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’”**

Mary said, Look, Your father and I came to seek You together; Jesus’ answer: Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business? Others did not know, but Mary certainly knew. Strictly speaking, Joseph was not the father who begot Him; the Father Jesus spoke of here refers to the Father in heaven. If you look at the Chinese Union Version, it has a footnote, or translated as: Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house? This translation is actually closer to the original text; Jesus in speaking may also have been hinting to Mary: You should know; My Father is the heavenly Father; I should be in the Father’s

house. Why search everywhere for Me? Coming directly to the Father's house would have been fine.

**Verses 50–51: "But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. But His mother kept all these things in her heart."**

The words Jesus spoke, Mary for a time did not comprehend, but Mary was a godly and gentle sister; when the words Jesus spoke she did not understand, she kept these things in her heart, pondering repeatedly. Many times when we read the Bible, the first time we read it, we feel we like it very much but do not understand; learn from Mary—just keep such verses in our heart, pondering repeatedly. When you encounter certain environments, these verses come out again, and they will cause you to truly understand why the verses are written this way.

Jesus on one hand was the Son of God; He came to earth with a special mission; He should be about the Father's business; but on the other hand, God placed Him in the home of Joseph and Mary; He also, according to human duty, lived thirty years in His home—this is very hard for us to imagine. Jesus came to earth for actually thirty-three and a half years, and nearly ninety percent of the time was spent in the carpenter Joseph's home. And the life He lived was no different from ordinary people. Among them there may have been many of Jesus' words and actions different from ordinary people; Mary, though many times did not understand, kept these things in her heart. Without such preparation, it would be hard for a mother who deeply loved her child to stand under the cross watching Jesus suffer on the cross.

I very much believe that God placed Jesus in the home of Joseph and Mary for thirty years; on one hand, of course, to prepare Jesus; on the other hand, actually also to prepare Mary. Luke uses verse 52 to conclude, speaking of Jesus from twelve to thirty years old—the eighteen years in between.

**Verse 52: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”**

A person’s growth must be balanced; on one hand your stature must grow, on the other hand your wisdom must also grow. Stature is a matter of the body; wisdom is a matter of the soul; and in favor with God and men—this is a matter of the spirit. In Luke’s record, Jesus’ first thirty years, in a simple home, Jesus grew balancedly; wisdom and stature, and favor with God and men, all increased together.

Let us pray together: Lord! Thank You; through Luke’s pen, You place Jesus’ growth before us. Jesus became a limited man, growing in a carpenter’s home. Though there were not good material conditions, His wisdom and stature, and favor with God and men, could all grow balancedly together. Help us, on the path of growth in every Christian’s life, to also be balanced. Bless my life today, that wisdom and stature, and the heart loving God and loving people, may all grow together. Thank You; I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.