

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to our young people for their songs and sharing. Youth Sunday is an annual tradition of our church. Our youth share what they have learned at the Student Life Camp they attended in July. It is also a celebration to send off high school graduates to college. This year we do not have any graduated senior. Let me begin by thanking our youth leaders for their good work. We parents need to show our constant support to them. Of course, there are many coworkers who serve diligently in other church ministries too. Parents do their best to help our children pursue their dreams. When I was young, all I knew was to get an education, find a job and make a living. Nowadays, students have tons of ways to explore their interests. There are various clubs in school, field trips and competitions. Some students even go overseas for exchange studies. I never hopped on a plane until I was 26 years old when I came to U.S. Back in those days, there were many cavemen like me. That was about the time when internet came into existence. How things have changed in such a short time! Though we now live in a different world, some important things remain the same. God never changes and His truth stands forever. God wants us to know Him, and to live for His glory. We just read about Jesus' childhood from Luke 2. Even when Jesus was still a teenager, He knew the reason why He came into our world. He is our Savior. But just like you and me, Jesus went through a growing process from baby to adult. What can we learn from this story? I plan to share a few things to encourage our young people. We can never accomplish the great things Jesus did. But here is a common ground we share with the Lord: God has a purpose for our lives. You may become the next engineer, doctor or writer. God has a purpose for your life. Your missions are to find that purpose and to live it out.

EXPLANATION

1. Someone Whom People Love 為人所愛

First of all, we can see that Jesus was a person whom people loved. He was a good boy. Luke told us Jesus was on a trip with his parents. Their names were Joseph and Mary. Look at **verses 41-42** again: 41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. Based on the Old Testament, every adult male had to go to Jerusalem to observe three festivals: the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Here it says Mary went back with Joseph every year. Jesus had yet to reach the age of adulthood, which is 13, in the Jewish custom. He could have stayed home with mom. All those facts indicate that the parents loved God. Young people: consider it a blessing if you are born into a Christian family. Many of you attend church since a baby. It is true that there are many more exciting ways to spend your Friday evening. It also takes extra anti-gravitational pull to leave your bed on Sunday morning. But it goes without saying that Bible study and worship are vital to your spiritual growth. If one or both of your parents are not Christians, then you can share what you learn in the church with them. It is also important to prove that church attendance will only make you a better child. Keep good grades in school and be a helpful kid at home. Jesus practiced obedience at home as a boy. Let us take a big jump and go to **verse 51**: Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them... Jesus knew His true

identity as the King of kings. But being a teenager, Jesus understood that He had His responsibilities at home. He learned carpentry from Joseph to help support His family financially. It was not until 30 years old before Jesus began His mission to proclaim the gospel. Jesus did not say to His parents: “Let me tell you who I really am. How dare you to tell me what to do!” Instead, Jesus went home with His parents from Jerusalem. Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father by submitting to His earthly father. The Bible teaches us to obey our parents, especially when we still live at home. Paul said in **Ephesians 6:1-3**: 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” - which is the first commandment with a promise - 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Paul quoted one of the Ten Commandments. God promises that you will live longer if you obey your parents. It is more effective than exercise and eating veggie. The key notion here is “in the Lord.” As long as what your parents ask you to do does not contradict the Bible, then you have to obey. I do not think your dad and mom will ask you to cheat in your exam or rob a bank. If tidy up your room, wash dishes or scrub the bathroom is on your to-do list, then you have to complete those tasks. I know that sometimes your parents may have different opinions. You may protest: “Why can’t I do what my friends do and get what they have?” A straight answer is because you do not live in their home. You never know. Perhaps your friends have other complaints too! Ultimately, your parents are accountable to the Lord for how they raise you. You may not like it when they ask you to come home by 10 p.m. or if they disagree with the style of clothes you pick. It is because they love you and care about you. It pleases the Heavenly Father if you are being obedient at home. It will reduce the wrinkles and gray hair on your parents too.

2. Someone Whom God Loves 為神所愛

The passage tells us that Jesus was not only a child whom people loved; He was also a child whom God loved. Joseph and Mary realized that Jesus was missing on their way home. They did what any parent will do. They went back all the way to look for their lost child. They finally found Jesus, not at the Apple store or GameStop. Look at **verses 46-47**: 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. Why did Jesus stay at the temple? He was learning from the Jewish teachers. Jesus is God and He knows every truth. But He had a desire to study the Bible! The teachers wondered how this smart kid got His knowledge. Next, Mary rebuked Jesus like a typical concerned mom in **verse 48**: ... “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” Any parent can share their feeling. Perhaps you skip the school bus and walk to Dairy Queen with your peers for ice-cream. Don’t trigger your parents a heart-attack. They cannot follow you with a drone. Let them know where you are and whom you are with. Jesus could have replied His mom: “Chill out, don’t get mad!” Instead, He sounded like talking in foreign language in **verse 49**: “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” A direct translation of the second statement from the original Greek text goes like “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s?” Many Bible scholars think that it is relevant to supply the word “house,” since Jesus was in the temple. When Jesus stated “I had to be,” it means both an obligation and a priority. Jesus addressed God as His Heavenly Father. To the Jews, God’s name is holy. They dare not utter the name “Jehovah.” Rather, they address God as “Lord.” But Jesus showed us a close relationship with God. To Jesus, the temple was more than a building. It was the dwelling place of God. Jesus wanted to be in the presence of His

Father. Young people: do you love your Heavenly Father? I understand that you are excited to see your friends when you come to the church. But do you also come here with a desire to get close to God? Let me tell you a little secret: from here I can clearly see what you are doing down there. I know it when you are dozing off, checking your phone or whispering to your friend. But I am your pastor, and I have no fun to play a policeman. I will do my best to make my sermons not so boring, and make them applicable to your life. But this is a church, not a movie theater. I can never compete with Disney to make things entertaining for you. I pray that you will have a growing appetite for God's Word. But you know, spiritual food is similar to physical food. Your mom cooks nutritious and yummy food. But it is up to you to eat it. Your Sunday school teachers, small group leaders and I try our best to put together a lesson. But we cannot force you to learn. Therefore, if you do not read your Bible at home and show little interest to come to the church, then you need to ask yourself why not. Spiritual life is more than obligation. It is about your relationship with God. If you love God, then you will want to know more about Him.

CONCLUSION

God has a special purpose for each of your life. You go through a growing process from baby to adult. Your parents surely hope that you do not just grow in size, but you grow in maturity too. It is scary to have a 100-pound baby at home! Your home is a place of nurturing to prepare you for the real world. Your parents develop you to become a grown-person. Parents: you spend all your energy and resources to provide the best for your kids. But the best gift you can give them is to introduce them to the Lord. Bringing them to the church is important. But that cannot replace your home teaching. Tell your kids that they are sinners just like any of us. Help them to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Pray for them that they will live for Jesus no matter what career path they choose. Yes, they will find fulfillment in what they do, they will please you with their accomplishment but ultimately, they should give God all the glory. Jesus learned to be an obedient child at home. In fact, He came into our world to fulfill the purpose of the Heavenly Father. Jesus' birth was prepared for His death. He willingly completed His life journey at the cross for our sins. When Jesus breathed the last, He said: "It is finished." Jesus had completed the salvation plan. Those who confess their sins and receive Jesus into their hearts will be saved. Our communion today is to help us remember the price Jesus paid for us. May our hearts be filled with gratitude.