

## Jesus Was Just Like Us

Scriptures: Luke 2: 41 – 52

I Samuel 2: 18 – 20, 26

The New Year is coming Thursday night. What will the New Year bring? We all hope for good health, security in our jobs, lower taxes, and good weather. We all make resolutions that we won't keep. We will resolve to lose weight, stop wasting money, cut out bad habits, and on and on. How about if we resolve to open our minds to the possibility that we will learn something from someone who depends on us? I know that resolution seems to come from out of left field but let me explain by telling you a story.

A doctor was taking his interns on a tour of an assisted living facility. As they walked he began to describe a patient of his. This patient could not walk so she had to be carried or pushed everywhere. She had no teeth so everything she ate had to be ground up into pabulum. She had no control of her alimentary functions so she had to wear diapers and be changed and cleaned frequently. Her gown was always stained because she drooled constantly and she frequently wet her bed. After giving this description he asked if any of the students wanted to volunteer to take care of her. When nobody raised their hand he said, "I'm

surprised that none of you volunteered for this job because she is actually one of my favorite patients. I have learned a lot from her about trust and unconditional love. Her smile is always warm and loving and she has beautiful eyes. Would you like to see a picture of her?" He then passed around a picture of his 6-month-old daughter. We can learn a lot from those who depend on us.

In the gospel lesson, Mary and Joseph learned that their son had special and unique abilities concerning the things of God. They learned that they could trust their son even at the tender age of 12. And Jesus learned something too as I told the children. He learned that even if you are doing nothing wrong, it is always a good idea to let your parents know what you are doing.

It will always be hard for loving parents to let go of the children and let them grow up. And sometimes our children will feel stifled and think that their parents are being overprotective, but they must learn to accept worry for what it really is—love. Joseph and Mary loved their first born son very much. I'm sure no more than Elkanah loved Samuel when she gave him to the high priest Eli in the Old Testament lesson today. She learned to let him go and to trust that God was in control. She also taught

Samuel about unconditional love by the gift she brought him every year when she came to visit. Although the Bible doesn't supply the details, I like to think that coat she made for him was always just the right size. Her mind imagined him growing and she could estimate how big it should be just from that. So who is it that we will meet in 2016 that will teach us something in an unexpected way? Could it be someone in church? Could it be one of your children or perhaps a neighbor who is a stranger to you right now? The point is we need to open ourselves up to the possibility that we don't know everything and even some of the things we think we have down pat may need adjustment or improvement. Mary and Joseph thought they had a normal 12-year-old, but they found out he was mature beyond his years and already understood what his role in life was to be. Are we like Mary and Joseph? Do we think that we have Jesus all figured out? What is your relationship with Jesus? Is he someone you trust with the innermost secrets of your life? Do you know him as well as you know yourself? Can you improve your relationship with Jesus?

He was born a human being just like us. He felt the same pain we feel. He knew heartache and difficulty, hunger, and hurt of rejection. But he trusted

in God to deliver him even beyond the pinnacle of death itself. Can we say that?

Let 2016 be the year that you get to know Jesus on more than just a casual basis. Let this New Year begin with a resolution to study the life of Jesus Christ so that you can be more like him. That may be the best resolution you have ever made and it will certainly be one worth keeping.