

HisSpace.com

Luke 2:41-52

INTRODUCTION

- A. Back in the day, a period known as PC (pre-computer), most kids made friends the old-fashioned way: by moving in next door or sharing common interests on the playground or in the classroom.
1. It wasn't called "social networking" back then—just "making friends."
 2. Computers have changed the world since then, however, and now making friends simply requires some bandwidth and few mouse clicks.
 - a. Your average teen now has access to a worldwide network of "friends," acquaintances and information that can impact their lives—for better or worse.
 - b. The growing popularity of Web sites like MySpace.com is a signpost for this relational revolution.
 3. Founded in 2003, MySpace is a site where anyone can post information, pictures, preferences, and musings by and about themselves.
 - a. While it's designed for people 16 and older, increasing numbers of preteens have been logging on, declaring (or manufacturing) their identities for the world to see.
 - b. On the surface, it seems kinda innocuous.
 - 1) Users can arrange themselves into groups by interest, musical preferences, hobbies, schools and the like.
 - 2) The interactions take place in ways that postmodern kids love and PC parents mistrust: blogs, instant messaging, music downloads and chat rooms.
 - 3) MySpace has created a virtual community where everyone can participate.
 4. Still, it defies definition.
 - a. MySpace is more than a blog; "It's a community, a music source, a rankings site—many things," notes Amanda Lenhart, a researcher with the Pew Internet & American Life Project, which studies teen use of the Internet. She says, "I don't know that we have any data that fairly capture what MySpace is."
 - b. And therein lies the problem.
 - 1) Schools and parents have slowly been catching on to the fact that kids are wild about this brand of social networking and are concerned about the implications.
 - 2) Jeff Allen, president of the Northwest Council for Computer Education, says, "It didn't take more than two minutes to find really inappropriate stuff I don't want my 14-year-old daughter reading and seeing. I'd venture to say that the vast majority of parents of teens who subscribe to MySpace have absolutely no clue what's going on there."
 - c. Kids who naively post their personal information on the site are often oblivious to the obvious security concerns. The wild popularity of the site has led some schools to ban MySpace from classroom computers out of concern for safety and as a way of keeping kids focused on schoolwork.
 - d. The basic appeal for teens and preteens (and the problem for parents and officials) is that you can never really know who a person is on a site like MySpace.
 - 1) Everyone's identity is self-generated, which encourages embellishment at the least and outright falsehood at the most.
 - 2) MySpace taps into one of the key tasks of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, which is discovering one's identity.
- B. In a day and age where one's identity can be manufactured and changed ad nauseum, how are

parents to help their children find their identity? How can children be expected to form their identity in such a world?

1. In the passage before us this morning, we find Jesus growing in his identity at the age many young people seek an identity from MySpace.com, and we see his parents' helping him find that identity.
2. Jesus did not get his identity from MySpace.com, but from HisSpace.
3. This lesson really needs to be divided into two sections: What Jesus' parents did to help with his identity and what Jesus did to help with his identity.

WHAT DID JESUS' PARENTS DO TO HELP WITH HIS IDENTITY?

- A. Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, v. 41.
 1. The Old Testament required attendance of all adult males at three annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.
 - a. Ex. 23: 14-17.
 - b. Although they were not required to attend, the males' families often accompanied them to Jerusalem.
 - 1) When Elkanah went to sacrifice, his family went with him (1 Sam. 1:3-5).
 - 2) Mary, although not required to go to Jerusalem, went with her husband Joseph—she is going above and beyond the call of duty.
 - c. Here's the point: Mary and Joseph were through their obedience to the Law instilling the proper identity in Jesus.
 - 1) Mary and Joseph were individuals who did what God instructed.
 - a) After an angel instructed Joseph to take Mary as his wife, he "woke up" and "did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him" (Mt. 1:24).
 - b) When an angel informed Mary that although she was a virgin she would have a child, she replied, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said" (Lk. 1:38).
 - b) Mary and Joseph circumcised Jesus on the eighth day (Lk. 2:21) and presented him at the temple as the Law required (Lk. 2:22).
 - 2) At the conclusion of Luke's telling how Mary and Joseph presented their firstborn to the Lord, as required, he records, "When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth" (Lk. 2:39).
 2. If we want to instill in our children the proper identity, we need to be individuals obedient to the Law of God.
 - a. Peter wrote some sound advice in the context of husbands and wives: "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (1 Pet. 3:1-2).
 - 1) There can be no doubt but that actions are as important, if not more important, than words.
 - 2) If we tell our children they can't lie, but we lie, what are they learning? If we tell our children not to lose their tempers, but we regularly do, what are they learning? If we tell our children they need to attend worship, but we regularly miss, what are they learning?
 - b. My dissertation dealt with how elders can better deal with inactive members of the local church.
 - 1) As part of my research, I examined the reasons individuals become inactive, and there are a host of reasons, not all of which parents can do a thing about.

- 2) But, one large factor in whether adults are faithful or not is their parents and whether or not their parents were active.
 - 3) Specifically the research shows that the extent parents carry their religion into daily life impacts how faithful their children will be.
 - a) In other words, it's not coming and sitting in a pew three times a week that will lead your children to desire to be active Christians. It's how you live on Monday morning and the example you set before them.
 - b) What example are you setting before your children? Are you, like Mary and Joseph, obedient to the will of God?
- B. They took Jesus to Jerusalem when he was twelve, according to the custom, v. 42.
1. Jewish boys became part of the religious community at the age of thirteen; thus, Mary and Joseph are here seen preparing Jesus to take his place in Judaism.
 2. We need to prepare our children to take their place in the church--parents have such an obligation.
 - a. "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov. 22:6).
 - b. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).
 3. Are we training our children appropriately for the role they will play in the church?
 - a. Are we training our boys to read Scripture and to pray? Are we teaching our girls the vast array of opportunity that awaits them in the church and how they can fill those roles?
 - b. Are we teaching our children to care for the needy and for the sick? Are we preparing our children to teach the lost the message of Jesus?

WHAT DID JESUS DO TO HELP HIS IDENTITY?

- A. Parents cannot do all the work themselves.
1. We've all known children who had devout and faithful parents but they themselves were anything but faithful.
 2. The research I previously referenced about inactive Christians demonstrates that some youth abandon their parents' faith for a multitude of reasons which have nothing to do with their parents.
 3. What are youth to do to help find their identity and keep themselves from falling away?
- B. Jesus spent time in the Word of God, v. 46.
1. You know the episode:
 - a. Mary and Joseph departed Jerusalem, but Jesus was not with them. Mary and Joseph thought nothing of it, for they thought Jesus was traveling with their relatives.
 - b. When they realized Jesus wasn't with them, Mary and Joseph began a three day search and finally find him in the temple with the teachers of the Law, listening to them and asking them questions.
 2. If you will, Jesus took matters into his own hands and sought to know the Word of God.
 - a. Jesus well understood the importance of knowing the Scriptures.
 - 1) When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus responded to each temptation with the words: "It is written" and quoted an appropriate Scripture.
 - 2) When Jesus was tested about the resurrection, Jesus quoted Scripture (Mt. 22:29-32).
 - b. We need young people who know Scripture in this day and age.
 - 1) Teens cannot expect their parents to spoon-feed them the Scriptures.
 - a) Granted, parents have a serious, serious responsibility to train their children in the Word of God.

- b) Yet, there comes a time when teens need to take an active responsibility for themselves.
 - i. I have no doubt but that Mary and Joseph trained Jesus in the Law—I cannot imagine God’s choosing them as the earthly parents for his Son if they had not.
 - ii. Yet, Jesus here is using his own ability to learn the Scriptures.
- 2) Teens, like Jesus, can greatly benefit from knowing the Scriptures.
 - a) When you forget about that test on Monday morning, what standard will you use to decide whether to cheat or simply do the best you can?
 - b) When a bully torments you, what standard are you going to use to determine how to reply?
 - c) When your parents demand you clean your room, what standard will you use to determine what you’ll do?
- C. Jesus understood his chief responsibility was to God, v. 49.
 - 1. When his parents found the boy Jesus, he replied, “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”
 - a. Jesus knew he had no more important role than serving his Father: Doing what his Father desired him to do.
 - b. Jesus taught that we need to place God first in our lives.
 - 1) “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6:33).
 - 2) When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment” (Mt. 22:37-38).
 - 2. Will teens today place service to God above everything else?
 - a. When the decision is between a ballgame and worship, what will we decide?
 - b. When we must decide between doing what we ourselves desire and what we know God desires, what will we choose?
 - c. When we must decide between putting money in the collection plate or buying that new movie, what will we do?
- D. Jesus was obedient to his parents, v. 51.
 - 1. Jesus’ obedience to his parents is significant, for a couple reasons:
 - a. God requires children to obey their parents, and had Jesus not obeyed his parents he could not have been the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
 - b. Also, it is my firm conviction that obedience to parents prepares children to obey God in later life.
 - 1) Parents must provide boundaries for their children so that when their children are grown those children will know the necessity of obedience and be ready to obey God.
 - 2) Teens, I know you don’t like obeying your parents—I remember those days myself—but obeying your parents prepares you to obey the Lord God as you grow older.
 - 2. Teens, how well do you obey you parents?
 - a. Are you obeying your parents and learning to obey God as you mature?
 - b. Are you obeying God? Do you need to come this morning and obey God?