

# Luke 2:39-52

*"In My Father's House"*

*April 7, 2024*

## 1. Intro

- a. In the year 1595, a Puritan pastor in England named Nicholas Bownde, wrote a book called the *True Doctrine of the Sabbath*
  - i. In this book, he urged the Christians to fill their Sundays with works that were befitting the worship of our holy God
    1. He encouraged them to rise early in the morning, preparing their hearts for morning worship by spending time in the Word and in prayer
    2. Then, of course, he taught on the necessity of attending the Sunday morning worship service
      - a. In those days, since there was no separation of church and state in England, the law actually required that EVERYONE attend services on Sunday morning
      - b. But Bownde still wanted to make sure they understood the BIBLICAL reasons for going to church
    3. But what made Bownde's book unique was that he encouraged the Christians to return to the practice taught in the Old Testament of making the ENTIRE day holy to the Lord
      - a. So don't just get up early and read your Bible, and then go to church for a couple of hours
      - b. AFTER the church service, fellowship with one another at lunch, and then spend the afternoon ministering to the poor, sharing the Gospel, or taking part in more Bible study
      - c. And then come BACK to church for the evening service, making it a full day of honoring the Lord
  - ii. Well, this book had quite a mixed reaction in England
    1. Many read it and were thoroughly convicted, as they realized that going to church had simply become a box that they were required to check
      - a. For the next two decades, churches all across the country began implementing Bownde's teachings, and a love for the Church and for setting aside an entire day for THE LORD'S work grew among the people
    2. However, this enthusiasm was far from universal
      - a. Many saw Bownde's teachings as too rigid and old-fashioned
      - b. As their pastors began putting these things into practice, many people felt as if their freedoms were being infringed upon, and that their Sunday afternoons of rest and play were being taken away from them
        - i. So, they went to King James with their complaint
  - iii. King James was already not a fan of the Puritans, and their growing influence upon the Church of England, so this gave him a chance to stir up opposition against them
    1. In 1617, he published a four-page booklet called "The Book of Sports"
      - a. In this booklet, he still maintained the governmental law that required Sunday morning church attendance, but he decreed that the rest of the day was NOT to be set apart for the Lord
        - i. Instead, it was to be set apart for games, festivities, and dancing
          1. His justification for this was that this would result in a happier people overall

2. And, by encouraging the men especially to be engaged in Sunday afternoon sports, it would keep them fit and ready for battle, should England need to go to war
  - iv. Again, this was just a four-page booklet, but it set into motion a whole host of world-changing events
    1. Bownde's book on the *True Doctrine of the Sabbath* was ordered to be burned
    2. The Book of Sports was ordered to be read in every church
      - a. And, if any pastor refused to read it, the bishops were ordered to remove that pastor from the pulpit, and to take away their license to preach
    3. A few years later, when King Charles took the throne, he reissued "The Book of Sports"
      - a. And this time, he said that any pastor who refused to read it to his congregation would be strongly encouraged to leave the country
        - i. And so, between 1620 and 1640, this is what tens of thousands of Puritans decided to do
          1. They left their homes, their parishes, their comforts
          2. And they set sail across the ocean to move to what would eventually become the United States
    4. We've all been taught that these Puritans fled from England because of religious persecution
      - a. But how many of us have ever known that this persecution revolved around Sunday worship and sporting events?
        - i. Could it be that the reason THAT part has been left out of our history books is because, if we're honest with ourselves, we would actually side more with King James than with Nicholas Bownde?
        - ii. Could it be that, were we to encourage the church to return to setting aside an entire day as "holy to the Lord," we would meet with much of the same reaction as those who said their rights were being infringed upon?
          1. Well, I won't necessarily be pushing today for Sunday afternoon evangelism, or a return to Sunday evening services
          2. BUT, I do pray that, as we look at our passage for this morning, that we will come away with a deeper love, not just for the house of our Father, but for the work of our Father as well
2. So let's turn to our passage for today, Luke 2:39-52
  - a. When we left our study in Luke a few weeks ago, Jesus was a little baby, just a few weeks old
    - i. Mary and Joseph had brought him to the Temple at the end of the allotted time commanded for Mary's purification
      1. At the Temple, they encountered the old man, Simeon, and the prophetess, Anna
        - a. Both Simeon and Anna spoke incredible things about this little baby, and how he would be a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for God's people, Israel
    - ii. And after these momentous encounters, we read in verses 39-40,
      1. <sup>39</sup>And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.
        - a. It's important for us to note here that, for reasons we don't know, Luke does not include Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt, as they had to flee King Herod's wrath and the murder of all the young baby boys in Bethlehem

- i. Many scholars believe that Luke interviewed Mary firsthand for much of his information
    - ii. Maybe the thought of those days, and the fear and the terror of what might have happened to her little baby were too much for Mary to talk about
      - 1. But we simply do not know why it's not here in Luke's Gospel
      - 2. It's likely that Jesus was now maybe 3 or 4 years old, when they returned to Nazareth
        - a. And this is where Jesus would call home for the rest of his life, as he grew and became strong, and was filled with wisdom
- 3. Luke then jumps ahead eight or nine years, and we now find Jesus and his family back in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover
  - a. Starting in verse 41...
    - i. *<sup>41</sup>Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. <sup>43</sup>And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup>but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, <sup>45</sup>and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." <sup>49</sup>And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup>And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup>And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.*
  - b. This is a great story, isn't it?
    - i. One of our family's favorite movies to watch around Christmas time is *Home Alone*
      - 1. If you've seen the movie, you know that there is a moment on the plane where Kevin's family is finally settled down, and they're heading off to their vacation
        - a. But Kevin's mom can't shake the feeling that they've forgotten about something
        - b. Until it finally dawns on her that they left Kevin back home, and she gets this crazy look and shouts, "KEVIN!!!"
      - 2. You can't help but wonder if Mary had a similar moment, as they were all heading back home, already a day's journey away from Jerusalem, and all of a sudden she stops and shouts out, "JESUS!!!"
        - a. Now, we don't want to be too hard on Mary and Joseph in this situation
          - i. The Passover Feast was one of the great highlights of the year for the Jewish people
          - ii. It's possible that tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Israelites made this pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year
            - 1. So Mary and Joseph would have been in a large company of people traveling back to the region of Galilee
              - a. We read later in the Gospels that Jesus had MANY brothers and sisters, so it's very likely that Mary had

her hands full with a bunch of toddlers, maybe even a new baby!

- iii. Also, in those days, 12 was not the same as 12 today
  - 1. Kids were forced to grow up faster, and mature much more quickly in that culture
    - a. Remember, Mary was only around 15 or 16 or 17 when she was engaged to Joseph
  - 2. So Jesus, as a 12-year-old boy in the Israelite culture, would have already been entrusted with much responsibility
- iv. And on top of all of that, we cannot forget that Jesus didn't become the Son of God later on in his life – he was the perfect Lamb of God from his mother's womb!
  - 1. So he wasn't just a good kid, he was the BEST kid!
    - a. He never spoke back to his parents
    - b. He never rebelled against their commands
    - c. And he likely did everything he was told with great joy and humility
  - b. If we put all these things together... the huge crowds, the responsibilities given to young kids in that culture, and Jesus' record as a faithful and obedient son, we can understand why Mary and Joseph simply expected him to be right where he was supposed to be
- c. But Jesus was not with the family heading back home, so Mary and Joseph frantically went back to Jerusalem to search for their son
  - i. And don't miss the point that verse 46 says that it took THREE DAYS for them to find him!
    - 1. Just imagine the worry and fear that they must have had, until finally, after three days of searching, they found Jesus in the Temple
      - a. Not just wandering around aimlessly, but sitting intently among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions
      - b. And EVERYONE was amazed at his understanding and answers
        - i. Don't you just wish that we had more details to this story?
          - 1. I wonder what kinds of questions Jesus was asking?
          - 2. I wonder what the answers were that HE was giving to the these learned instructors of Israel?
            - a. Well, maybe someday we'll get to find out!
- d. So they find Jesus speaking with these teachers, and Mary and Joseph were astonished by what they saw and heard
  - i. I think it's probably safe to assume that they were both pretty exasperated in this moment as well
    - 1. Remember, Jesus is the sinless one – not Mary and Joseph
      - a. I would guess there was a certain "tone" to Mary's voice when she said, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress!"
  - ii. Well, in one commentary on this passage, the writer said that this was one of a few times where Jesus had to gently "relegate Mary back within limits beyond which she tended to advance"
    - 1. She says to him, "Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress..."
  - iii. And Jesus replies with a reminder of who his TRUE Father is...
    - 1. As he speaks for the very first time recorded in the Scriptures, Jesus says...

2. "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"
  - a. Mary, understandably so, was only thinking about Jesus' earthly father
  - b. But Jesus makes it clear to her that his TRUE Father is God Almighty
    - i. And where else would he be, but in his Father's house?
- e. It's important for us to address the fact that there is a translation issue with what Jesus says here
  - i. In the ESV Bible that I read from, it said that Jesus said that he "must be in his Father's HOUSE"
    1. But if you're reading in the King James version, it says that he "must be about his Father's BUSINESS"
  - ii. So why is it different?
    1. Well, in the original Greek, this verse actually reads, "Did you not know that I must be IN THAT of my Father?"
      - a. This would have been a familiar idiom to the people in those days
        - i. But for us today, it doesn't make a lot of sense
        - ii. So the translators don't just have to look at the words of the text, but they also have to figure out the meaning behind these historical idioms, and bring those into our modern day language
      - b. So for the King James version, they saw this as Jesus saying that he must be about the "business" of the Father
      - c. But the reason why most of the other translations insert the word "house" is because this whole conversation revolves around LOCATION
        - i. Mary and Joseph looked for Jesus amongst all their relatives and friends
        - ii. They looked for Jesus all over Jerusalem
        - iii. And Jesus' reply to them was "Why didn't you think about the fact that I had to be HERE, at the Temple? That would have saved you a lot of time and heartache!"
    - iii. So, is it BETTER then to read it as "I must be in my Father's house," instead of "I must be about my Father's business"?
      1. Well, I would argue that we should read it as BOTH!
        - a. Jesus was clearly speaking to the truth that he HAD TO BE in his Father's house
        - b. And in his Father's house, he HAD TO BE about his Father's business!
          - i. We'll unpack this more in just a moment
4. But, there are two things we learn from Jesus' response to Mary
  - a. The first thing we have already mentioned, that even at the age of 12, Jesus KNEW who he was
    - i. Alexander Maclaren says that Jesus here reveals to us his "consciousness of Divine Sonship"
      1. This is one of the truths of the Scriptures that our minds simply cannot fully comprehend
        - a. We've grown comfortable in the church with affirming that the "grown-up" Jesus was fully man and fully God
        - b. But it can also rightly be said that Jesus here is fully BOY and fully God
          - i. As a 12-year-old boy, he was still growing in wisdom and strength, just like any other 12-year-old boy
          - ii. But, AT THE SAME TIME, he was also FULLY aware of the fact that he was the only begotten Son of God
        - c. It's impossible for us to even begin to fathom the things that the 12-year-old Son of God thought about, or dreamed about

- i. The emotions he felt... how he handled the hormones that come along with entering into puberty and the teenage years
      - d. Jesus was fully God, AND he was fully boy
        - i. And he was FULLY conscious of his Divine Sonship, as he sat there in the Temple and amazed all the teachers in his Father's house
        - ii. Just one of many beautiful mysteries we have in the Scriptures!
  - b. The second thing we learn from Jesus' words is the NECESSITY of him being in his Father's house and being about his Father's business
    - i. Maclaren refers to this as the "sweet 'must' of filial duty"
      - 1. As the Divine Son, fully aware of his Divine Sonship, Jesus knew that his highest calling was to do the work of the Father who had sent him into the world
        - a. We see this later in his life in John 4, after Jesus speaks with the woman at the well, and his disciples show up and try to get him to eat some food, and he says to them in verse 34,
          - i. *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish HIS work."*
            - 1. Jesus was physically and emotionally and spiritually strengthened as he went about his Father's business
        - b. We also see this in John chapter 8, when the Pharisees are accusing him of bearing false witness about himself, and he says to them in verses 28 and 29,
          - i. *<sup>28</sup>When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup>And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I ALWAYS do the things that are pleasing to him.*
      - c. As the Divine Son, Jesus longed to please his Father in everything that he said, and in everything that he did
        - i. He understood his role as the Son – this was his filial duty, that he MUST be about his Father's business
          - 1. But, he also understood this as a sweet "must"
            - a. As we saw last week, Jesus was the obedient son, who humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross
          - 2. It was a JOY for Jesus to be about his Father's business
- c. But there is a third thing that we can also learn from our Lord in this passage
  - i. Even as Jesus shows his awareness that he is the Divine Son
  - ii. Even as he shows from a very early age that he always MUST be about his Father's work
  - iii. Jesus shows even greater humility as we read in verses 50 and 51,
    - 1. *<sup>50</sup>And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup>And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.*
      - a. Jesus was in the house of his Father, doing the work of his Father
        - i. As the Jamieson Commentary says, "Here he felt himself at home, breathing his own proper air"
      - b. And yet, when his mother and his earthly father came and told him it was time to leave, he humbly went back with them to Nazareth and was submissive to them
        - i. Jesus knew what it meant to honor your father and your mother, didn't he?

1. He knew that the first and great commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind
  - a. And he was fulfilling this commandment in his Father's house
2. But he also knew that the second commandment was to love your neighbor as yourself
  - a. So he fulfilled this commandment as he willingly became submissive to his CLOSEST neighbors, his mom and dad
- ii. On these two commandments depend ALL the Law and the Prophets
  1. So Jesus humbly obeyed both commands in this story
- iv. And then the passage concludes, much like it began...
  1. *52And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man*
    - a. And for the next 18 years, he would live in quiet, obscure submission, to both his Father in heaven, and to his parents on earth
5. So, what is our application today from this passage of Scripture?
  - a. I would say that there are two different groups of people that are increasing in number within the church of our day
    - i. The first group of people would say that we must be in our Father's house
      1. We must GO to church, and we must go as often as the doors are open
        - a. They're at church early for Sunday School, they never miss the main service, and they're always there for Wednesday night services as well
        - b. In fact, they serve regularly in one or more or all of these services
          - i. But the problem is, once they LEAVE the church, they no longer ACT like the church
            1. Instead, they gossip and complain about the same things the world gossips and complains about
            2. They chase after the same pleasures and treasures all the world chases after
            3. They dress the same, they talk the same...
              - a. No one would ever mistake them for being a Christian, except for maybe the church bumper sticker on the back of their car
          - ii. This group of people is all about the Father's HOUSE... but they're not interested in the Father's BUSINESS
      - ii. But then, at the other extreme, we've got a different kind of error that is growing
        1. This is the group of people who say, "Ah, we don't need to GO to church... that's just a manmade institution, in manmade buildings, governed by manmade structures. All we need to do is BE the church!"
          - a. To their credit, many who believe in this way ARE doing a great job out in the world
            - i. They typically are very faithful in sharing the Gospel
            - ii. They're usually wonderful evangelists, serving in their communities with great compassion and mercy
            - iii. They are passionate about being about the Father's business out in the world
      - iii. But as they do so, they are in error when it comes to the Father's HOUSE

1. They ignore the fact that, from day one, the church has ALWAYS gathered together, at specific, local, locations, at specific times, on a specific day
    - a. In the early days of the church, following Pentecost, the Christians continued to gather together in the synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath on Saturdays
      - i. They believed VERY much in keeping that day HOLY to the Lord
        1. Even more so, now that they were beginning to understand all of the fulfillment that had come through Christ!
    - b. But, as persecution against the Church increased, much to their sorrow, these Christians were cast out of the synagogues
      - i. So these groups of Christians began gathering in houses
        1. And, although we do not know when the practice actually began, we know that they started gathering on Sunday, the Lord's Day, in order to weekly commemorate the day of his resurrection
6. In the early 100's, there was a man named Justin, who would become one of the great defenders of the church in his time
    - a. He would eventually be killed for his faith, so he has become known in history as Justin Martyr
      - i. In one of the defenses he wrote, he gave an incredible description of what the church looked like, less than a century after Christ had walked this earth
    - b. This is what he wrote:
      - i. "On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who [gives assistance to] the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead."
        1. Isn't that amazing!!
          - a. Again, this was just a few decades after Christ... a few decades after Pentecost
          - b. And we find that the believers are gathered together in VERY MUCH the same way as we are gathered here today, nearly two thousand years later!
            - i. On Sunday morning, those who lived in the city or country all came together to ONE place
            - ii. The Scriptures were read
            - iii. Then the President (which Justin meant to be the presiding elder) got up and instructed and exhorted the people
            - iv. Then they all prayed together and took communion together
            - v. An offering was taken up for the poor, and the sick, and the immigrants, as well as for those who were in prison for their faith
            - vi. And then the deacons would leave and take the bread and the wine to those who weren't able to make it to the service



- ii. Friends, what we see in these writings from Justin is that the early church had no concept of just BEING the church, with no need to gather together weekly
- iii. Nor did they gather just to “check the box” for the week
  - 1. These early Christians knew the cost of calling themselves followers of Jesus Christ
    - a. They embraced all the trials, all the rejection, all the persecution with joyful hearts
      - i. And Christianity EXPLODED throughout the Roman Empire through their lives and through their testimony
    - b. They understood that they MUST be in their Father’s house, and they understood that they MUST be about their Father’s business
      - i. For this is how God has ordained that HIS Kingdom advance all over the earth!
- c. The Apostle Paul was one of THE great evangelists in all the history of the church
  - i. But he was also one of the strongest instructors on what a church should look like, how it should be structured, and how worship should be ordered
    - 1. His pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus are especially helpful, as he basically taught these two men how to plant churches in the land
      - a. He gives detailed instructions on elders and deacons
      - b. He speaks of the great importance of training and equipping and shepherding the believers
      - c. And he gives them some pretty strong warnings about false teachers and fickle congregations
  - ii. And in 1 Timothy 3:14-15, we read this great declaration...
    - 1. *<sup>14</sup>I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup>if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*
      - a. In Jesus’ day, the house of his Father was the Temple in Jerusalem
        - i. It was there that Jesus felt at home, as he breathed his proper air
      - b. Today, for us who have been adopted into the family of God, the house of our Father is right here, at Forest Hills Baptist Church, in Sapulpa, OK
        - i. This is where we MUST be, as we gather weekly to worship our risen Lord and Savior
        - ii. This is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth
      - c. But this truth is meant to be taken outside of these four walls, isn’t it?
        - i. And that is why we MUST be about our Father’s business
- iii. This is why Nicholas Bownde urged the church in his day to make the Lord’s Day set apart for the Lord’s work
  - 1. He wanted the Christians to be in the Father’s house
  - 2. AND he wanted the church to be about the Father’s business
    - a. And this became so important for these Puritans, that thousands of them were willing to uproot EVERYTHING so they could continue to make the Lord’s house and the Lord’s work the main priority of their week
    - b. This is my prayer for our church family, right here
  - 3. When the world comes searching for us, may we be able to say to them, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house? Didn’t you know that I had to be about my Father’s business?”