

# (Christ Formed) 04 - Christ as Young Adult

by Ed Miller

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*The sermon explores the stages of Christ's development as a young adult and its implications for our own spiritual maturity.*

**Duration:** 51:23

**Scripture:** Proverbs 2:1-5, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:41-52

**Topics:** "Childlike Faith", "Passover Celebration"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of embracing the principle of coming to God as a little child and crying out to Him. The speaker also highlights the significance of the Passover and how whole families and communities would gather together for this event. The sermon discusses the journey of Mary and her family to the Passover, which took several days and involved joining with other believers. The speaker also references the story of Jesus being found in the temple after three days, illustrating the need to be aware of the enemy's attacks and to protect the Christ within.

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## Transcript

Well, good evening again, brothers and sisters in the Lord. The Lord is giving us a wonderful, precious time together, and we praise Him. As we come to look in God's Word again, I remind you of that wonderful principle.

We call it the indispensable principle to drive home the truth, that we cannot live without this principle. If you're serious about knowing the Lord, if you're serious about God opening His Word to your heart, and dawning the living Savior on your spirit, then you must embrace that principle. You must come as a little child before the Lord, and cry out to Him who waits to be wanted.

He wants to be sought. I want to read a couple of verses before we pray together from Proverbs, if you'll turn please to Proverbs chapter 2. I want you to notice how God piles up these words, and they all mean the same thing. Hunger.

Seek. Desire. Thirst.

Proverbs chapter 2, verse 1. And incline your heart to understanding. If you cry for discernment, if you lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, if you search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and you will discover the knowledge of God. He waits to be

wanted.

Let's bow and commit our time to Him. Our Father, how glad we are that you have called us to desire to know you and to see you, and how glad we are for your revelation and your word, how much you desire to make yourself known unto us. And so Lord, tonight we want to come in simple childlike faith, not in some attempt to overcome your reluctance, but in simple childlike faith to lay hold of your infinite willingness to unveil the Lord Jesus to our heart.

We thank you for these simple Bible stories, and we pray that as we meditate together, that you would minister to each one of us individually. We wait upon you now, and we want to thank you in advance that you're going to meet with us, because we claim it in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Well, here we are again, and Joshua is speeding away, looking at this wonderful, wonderful segment of Scripture, the 30 years of preparation for our Lord Jesus. The first 30 years of the life of the Lord Jesus, as it's recorded in the Bible, his life on the earth, as I said several times, I'll say again, I know of no other section of Scripture that gives us in a more succinct way the progressive revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. If any passage of Scripture shows the development of Christ, surely it is this passage that covers this wonderful 30 years.

Because before our eyes, he is growing. He is increasing. He is maturing.

He is being formed. He became a seed sent from heaven. Became a baby.

Became an infant. Became a little child and grew in stature and wisdom and favor with God and man. Became a young adult.

Became a teenager, adolescent. He grew, developed. Finally, according to Hebrews 5, he became qualified to be the perfect Savior and the perfect High Priest.

To pour out his life in redemptive ministry. And I've suggested this wonderful truth, that as he came, he comes. What was true then is true now, and God has just given us a picture of it, that's all.

Exactly the same stages that are outlined for us in the gospel record, we experience in our life when he is formed in us. He comes in as a seed. He grows in us.

I told you that my prayer is from Galatians 4.19. It's the sigh that Paul had for the dear Christian, the Galatians. Galatians 4.19 says, And this weekend, God has guided us, I believe, to meditate on that aspect. Of his truth.

That he grows. Surely we're going to grow in the Lord, too. But that's not the point.

This weekend we're looking at the development, the maturing of Christ in you. If Christ is in you, he's going to grow. Going to develop.

In these seasons that are outlined in the Bible, long for some, short for others, he is going to mature through these seasons. And so we've been looking at, following the outline that I handed out, we've been looking at these four, I think God has given us those in a special way, these four stages of the development of Christ. Christ as a fetus in my heart.

And then Christ as an infant in my heart. And then Christ this evening, we'll see, as a young adult. This, by the way, is probably, in most Christians, the longest experience.

Christ as a young adult. As far as the gospel record, that was 18 years of this. And I have found in my life, when every now and then, you know, you get out of one stage and touch another, and then seem to go back to the original and so on.

I have really experienced Jesus as 12 years old in my life. Now let me just give this quick review. The characteristics of life when Christ first comes in.

You can recall the Bible stories, I'll just give the principles. When it all begins, we first learn that it's not by man, it's a virgin birth. Man has no part in it.

And we discover it's all by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit then forms Christ in us. And in that moment, we have a song written in our hearts.

And our hearts are filled with emotional joy. And we begin to gravitate almost immediately toward those who have been prepared by God and who have had a similar miracle in their own lives. When we arrive with our almost imperceptible Christ to their door, they're not able at that point to even discern the difference between the one that brings the blessing and the blesser.

The instrument and the treasure within is sold in, almost in an unhealthy way, but not really at that stage. The instrument is embraced. And it's at that stage also when there's complete ignorance and darkness as to the Word of God.

God in His great grace guides that fetus Christ into His path, even though we don't know it. And He uses circumstances. We have all tasted that.

And then the next stage God gives us, we looked at this morning, Christ as an infant in our heart. And at this point there seems to be at, right at the beginning, a separation between the instrument and the treasure, Christ Himself. So much so now that the instrument is able to hand the treasure to another.

That's one of the characteristics. At that point, taking the terminal points of His infancy, illustrated by Simeon, we now embrace Christ and He is our salvation and we're ready to die. And we see Him as Lord and like the wise men, as King.

And we bow down and pour our gifts before Him. We've tasted a little worship, not much. A little of surrender, not much.

And from knowing Him as Savior and knowing Him as Lord, having that incomplete view of a complete Savior, we then make our way to the temple to dedicate. And dedication then becomes a big part of that experience when Christ is an infant in our life. When we left off, I was showing you how at that stage, when we know nothing about the enemy, we know nothing about warfare, and we discover that there is an enemy and we're on the run, so to speak, illustrated by going down into Egypt.

It's at that point that God shows us that when Christ is just an infant and we are so ignorant, we know nothing and all of hell makes an attack to destroy the Christ within. We are at that time as safe as a baby in its mother's arms. God protects the Christ within.

And even though at that time our whole thinking and knowledge and world is Egypt, God deliberately sent them to Egypt to illustrate, even in Egypt, He is going to protect His Christ and not only protect His Christ, but it's at that time that Christ has time to mature and to grow and then He calls them out of Egypt and to a place called Nazareth, the place of rejection. And we begin to see the cross more and more and now Christ is beginning to mature. And that, I believe, are some of the principles of Christ as an infant.

So that brings us this evening and I'll ask you to turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 2. This third stage of the development of the Lord Jesus. Jesus as a young adult in my heart. Illustrated by this story when Jesus was 12 years old.

Beginning at verse 41, His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was 12 years old, they went up after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy, Jesus, carried behind in Jerusalem.

And His parents knew it not. But supposing Him to be in the company, they went a day's journey. And they sought for Him among their tensfold and their acquaintances.

And when they found Him not, they returned to Jerusalem seeking for Him. And it came to pass, after three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking questions. And all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answer.

And when they saw Him, they were astonished. And His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy Father and I sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that you sought Me? Knew ye not that I must be in My Father's house? And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth. And He was subject unto them. And His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. So that our fellowship in the Word can be intensely practical. You hate to analyze a lot of this, but sometimes it helps to have, to know where you are and where you're going.

I would like to share from this story four characteristics of Christ as a young adult illustrated by this story. Now some of these characteristics are so closely related that there is some overlapping. But I'm deliberately making a point of each because there's a little nuance in each and I want to make sure that we get a hold of that.

Let me state it as a principle, and once again, we're not doing what we usually do. When we come to a text, we try to understand that whole text and its context and all of that. But this time we're looking at Christ as He developed.

And so we'll jump over a lot of things that you might want to dwell on because I want us to get to the heart of God as we look at this Christ being formed. So may God help us on that. Let me state the first characteristic and then try to develop it.

The first characteristic of Christ as a young adult in this record is this. It's a time when there is a new desire to be with the people of God and to celebrate redemption. And almost more than a desire, it's become a habit.

It's become a custom as Christ develops this month. And notice if you would, chapter 2, verse 41. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Passover.

And then verse 42. They went up according to the custom. Every year.

It had become a custom. It had become a habit. Gathering with the saints was now the thing to do.

When Jesus was a young adult, you know they had three annual festivals that they went to. In the spring they had the Passover. And that was around the end of March or early April.

And then in the summer they had the Feast of Pentecost. That was just early June at the end of May. And then in the fall they had the Feast of Tabernacle.

Now those three annual festivals actually included all of the feasts. That spring feast, the Passover, also included the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the first fruits of the barley harvest. And then in the summer it also included the feast of the first fruits of the wheat harvest.

And Tabernacle included the Feast of Tabernacles and the Day of Atonement. But it had become the custom. It had become the habit to gather with the people of God.

Now the illustration that God gives us of course is this Passover. We just sort of read these things la la la. We don't really enter into how wonderful this was.

We have conferences. We have retreats. We have church fellowships.

We have gatherings together. But quite honestly it was nothing like this. See whole families would gather together and whole villages and whole towns would gather together.

And they would make like a pilgrimage. In this case for Mary and the family it was about 80 miles that they would travel and it took 4 or 5 days for them to go. And as they traveled they would be joined by other saints.

And they would all travel together and they had great caravans going up. According to Josephus the Jewish historian he tells us that the Passover gathered over a million people. A million people would come just at that Passover time and crowd into the Holy City.

Can you imagine a million people signing up for Passover? Can you talk about a retreat? We get excited. 150 people. Praise God.

What are you doing? We're talking about the saints getting together. It was a wonderful thing. And as they made their way to the City of Peace we're told that they would sing the Great Hallel.

Psalms 113 to Psalm 118. And the closer they got the louder they would sing and the more people would be there. It was a glorious time.

The Bible tells us or not the Bible but we learn from history that probably more than a quarter of a million lambs were sacrificed just during the Passover at that time. This was a spiritual time for them. The rejoicing.

The fellowship. Seeing old friends. Praying together.

Hearing about heartaches. Hearing about troubles. Hearing about blessings.

Testimonies going back and forth. They would sing. They would praise.

They would read the Word of God. They would study the Word of God. Praise and worship and fellowship and Bible study.

It was wonderful. And that became the characteristic. That became the habit.

And when Christ is a young adult that becomes the habit. I want to be with the people of God. And when they gather I want to be there.

And when they gather to worship I want to be there. And when they gather for prayer I want to be there. And if there's a conference or a retreat or a social occasion I want to be there.

That's part of the maturing of Christ. And as He develops in us there's this desire to be at all the feasts and to be at all the festivals and to be in fellowship with God's people and to be there as a family. So much so that the Bible says at this point in the formation of Christ that kind of thing has now become routine.

That kind of thing has now become custom. That's what they do. See this is a big step from Mary running to Elizabeth's house.

That was the first fruits of it. That was the beginning. That was, God planted that in there.

But now it's become the habit. Now it has become the life of the people of God. That is the stage when Jesus is young adult.

Let me give the second principle. The second principle is this. Not only at this stage do the people of God have this desire to be with God's people and to celebrate redemption at every occasion that has become the habit.

But at this stage of Christ's forming it's also a time because of that very thing that everything has become routine and everything has become custom. There is a tendency to take the presence of Christ for granted. There's a tendency to take your eyes off Jesus.

Because I've experienced him in his fetal state and because I've experienced him in his infant stage I become accustomed to his presence. Because I've already experienced him I've been related to him and so from the story we see that at this stage those who aren't related to him have now formed certain expectations of him and expect him to respond a certain way and when those expectations are disappointed he has done wrong. If I get anxious that's his fault.

He did that because what right really does he have to change my direction? I was going in a certain direction and I expected him to be going in the same direction I was going in. This is a wonderful time in the formation of Christ because the people of God are involved with the people of God and they're involved with the book of God and they're celebrating redemption together and it's a wonderful time of fellowship and uniting. But it's at this stage where there is this tendency to keep taking your eyes off Christ and then getting frustrated and wondering what's going on and then going back in the search and on the third day it's always the third day we find them in the temple it's always in the temple over and over again this is repeated.

You see this is all illustrated in Luke 2, 41 to 52. No doubt they got so involved with the festivities and the blessings they forgot the blessing took their eyes off the Lord.

See they thought for sure he'll be in the caravan they expected he's going to leave when we leave he'll be there but the sad record is they left the Bible conference and started talking about wasn't that great what a testament to hear those people sing what a song wasn't it wonderful to see old Saul and so again and we need to pray for this boy he's going through it all of that and then they suddenly discover where's Jesus this ain't the lead Jesus and Joshua you know they go back and say what a time we had we looked in the word of God saw some insight we sang praises we worshipped there was a baptism we broke bread what a wonderful wasn't it good to see Saul and so and you look around where's Jesus see that's the tendency when Jesus is an adult we get so involved in all of the festivity

you see look at verse 48 please we're not surprised really on the level of earth to see mother Mary so upset when they saw him they were astonished his mother said to him son why has thou dealt with us this way thy father and I sought thee sorrowing after all Mary was the mother Joseph was the stepfather they had a relationship with him and based on that relationship they expected certain behavior out of him because they have a relationship here's what we expect based on this relationship and of course Jesus did something that disappointed him at this stage he's constantly disappointing our expectation because we've taken him for granted he's been with us we've seen him we know he's there we just take his presence for granted and then he disappoints us this is all on purpose in this Mary

pictures the church because we also have a relationship with him and sometimes we think based on that relationship we ought to act a certain way we expect things from him after all we're not them we're his kids we're his children because without I expect that he will protect me and he will provide for me and he will heal me and he will deliver me because I have a relationship with him and I expect that from him and if he doesn't do that I get anxious and what are you doing you know we're related I expect you to behave that's how it is in this when Jesus is a young adult I expect him to bless me and to make me prosper it's my expectation if he doesn't do that I get confused I expect him to be in the caravan and to be going in the direction that I go with well then we panic and we get

anxious we go into a wild search for him and we find him that's how it is when Jesus is a young adult as he develops in us now our life is filled with the people of God celebrating the redemption of God on every occasion it's become a custom it's become a habit but there is the tendency because of our relationship with him to take his presence for granted and to get so involved in all these precious things that somehow we leave Jesus back there and then we see him again don't answer this but there's a glimpse through in your heart come on watch it and then you take your eyes off the Lord I'll never take my eyes off the Lord again I've learned until tomorrow and then you take and then you get anxious of what's going on you're supposed to and then you come back to all your let me give you

the third principle when Jesus is a young adult when he begins to grow chapter 2, 49 and 50 he said unto them how is it that ye sought me did you not know that I must be about my father's house and they understood not the same which he spoke to them he's going to lay down a principle and God tells us right away that they're not understanding at this point he's going to give us a principle but we won't understand we'll hold it in our heart but we're not going to understand what we think we do and so we begin to act upon it and here's the principle King James said I must be about my father's business at this point there's a new step let's just call it the will of God God introduces us now to a new we didn't see it when he was a fetus we saw some shadows some hints we didn't see it when he

was an infant but now for the first time Jesus states it as a principle he tells them there's something new now I've got to be about my father's business the new American standard said I have to be in my father's house another translation says I must be about my father's interests another translation says I must be about my father's concerns another translation says I must be about my father's affairs how come they don't all agree? all these translators give us different words because in the Greek there's no noun and so the translators are trying to help you here's what the Greek says did you not know that I must be about my father's that's the Greek my father's what? my father's everything my father's business my father's house my father's purpose my father's will my father's pleasure my

father's interests my father's people his temple his everything it's at this stage in the maturity of Christ and you talk to young people you'll see it all the time the will of God becomes the greatest God has now introduced into this forming of Christ my father's business and now they begin to say I need to do my father's business and the will of God becomes so great the importance of the father's everything and so we hear Christians saying what does Christ want me to do and where should I go to school what should I study and who should I marry what does he want me to become and is he calling me here is he calling me there and all of a sudden the will of God is introduced into this formation of Christ in your life none of these stages are wrong they're all right and they're all good and

at first when he's a fetus you don't know anything and God's guiding you and then when he becomes an infant God's protecting you you still don't know too much but now you're involved in all of the ceremonies and all the festivities and everything that celebrates redemption and you're identified with the people of God and it's your custom it's your habit to be with the people of God and every now and then you forget Jesus and then you go back and you go and you forget him and now the will of God becomes everything when Jesus is a young adult in my life he lays down that great principle the passion I just want to do his will you've heard the testament they stand up you know they've already come through he's my savior he's my lord I've given myself I went forward I was at the altar I've

dedicated that's all when he's a baby but now their heart is saying I just want to do his will where are you going what are you going to do I don't know I just want to do his will just seeking his will my father's business my father's pleasure is the fourth characteristic and I think this is the chief characteristic and I think this is what makes this season last 18 years chapter 251 he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them his mother kept all these sayings in her heart Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man let me try to get this before your hearts by relating it to what has just gone before when Mary and Joseph returned looking for the missing Jesus chapter 2 verse 46 says after three days they found him I don't know how you

understand that three days I know it was one journey going and maybe a days journey back and then some say they found him on the third day others say they went back and searched for three days I'm not dead sure how that works but when they arrived found him in the temple either way they were in a panic they were anxious because they were blaming him too quite honestly they did reprimand him he had disappointed them he had violated in their minds their relationship he had acted in a way that they didn't think he should act in order to drive home this fourth principle let me paraphrase the conversation it's as if Jesus said mom dad how is it that you sought me why did you suppose that I would be in your company you chose a certain direction to go in and you went in that direction why did

you presume that I would be going in the direction that you were going in because you happen to be going that way did you presume I'd be going the way that you're going because you happen to be there did you

think do you suppose that I have to be where you are and it was at this point of course that he laid down the great principle I have to be about my father's business it's something about his will not your will my body is now Jesus informs them at my father's disposal it's not at your disposal are you sure you will it's my father's will this is the manifestation of Christ as a young adult now here's the principle may God help us see this because this is the crux of it Jesus said I must be about my father's business that's what it's all about for me I've got to be about his business now

they didn't face this when he was a fetus and they didn't face this when he was an infant but now he said I'm ever going to be about my father's business don't presume because you go in one direction I'm going to be there because where you are I'll be and then he did this this is so amazing to me this explains so much of what we see in our lives and in the lives of others he lays down the principle I've got to be about my father's business and then he submits to them do you realize the burden he put on them this is an amazing thing do you realize the burden he put on them I've got to do my father's business now I'm going to submit to you now that you know the principle and it's going to be up to you to find out what my father's business is this is an amazing thing it's all about him

forming himself in us and this is when he's a young adult he said I'm going to submit to you you must decide my father's business every time you act every time you move every time you do every time you decide you better remember this little conversation we had I must be about my father's business and so at this time he's subject to Mary you talk about condescension you talk about the grace of God he limits himself to her choices he lets her dictate year after year after year after year one of the main characteristics of the Christian life when Christ is a young adult in your heart in my heart I don't want to be irreverent but he takes instructions from us he submits unto us and so we begin to drive Jesus everywhere because he submits to us and then our heart is I want to do your will

alright I'm going to open up a ministry down here and come on Jesus we're going to the prison and off he goes to the prison and we're going to the nursing home and off he goes to the nursing home and we're going on a mission trip and off he goes to the mission trip and we're doing the start of pastorate and off he goes to the pastorate and we're going to school and off he goes to school He just keeps submitting to us time in the Christian's life.

But I want you to notice that, as far as the record goes, that this time, he has not yet begun his ministry. Many, many Christians come this far in the Christian life. They're all involved in the festivities.

They keep taking their eyes off Christ, and coming back to Christ, and taking their eyes off Christ, and coming back to Christ again. Somehow, in that heart, God's planted His will, His purpose, to do it for Him. They know that.

Somehow, this strange thing, where Christ submits unto them, in order to decide what that will be. I've tasted some of this, going public before he went public. Many, many Christians.

They might be in full-time ministry. They might be famous. They might have a great ministry.

They might get invited to big conferences and special places to speak and to share. They might be noted as great missionaries. But his ministry hadn't begun yet.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, it's good news for me to tell you, this will not go on forever. You know why? Because Christ is born again. There's another stage.



These, I think, brothers and sisters in Christ, are the characteristics when Christ is just a baby in my heart. Or rather, a young adult in my heart. Don't be discouraged in your walk with the Lord.

If Christ is just a fetus in your heart, He's going to be formed in you. Enjoy your joy. Praise God.

Live in that revelation where He is. And by and by, He's going to develop. You're going to learn what it is to embrace Him as Savior, embrace Him as Lord, and to worship, and to surrender, and to dedicate.

That's all part of the package. You're going to get involved with the people of God. Sometimes you're going to take your eyes off Christ.

You've got expectations. He's going to disappoint them. He's going to come back and He's going to show you.

And the will of God is going to become everything to you. And He's going to submit to you. And you'll be dragging Jesus here and there.

And that's not forever. Then one day, as Christ is formed, and we're going to look at that, God helping us tomorrow. What is it like when Christ comes to full maturity, now prepared to live His redemptive life? So, we'll stop there.

May God help us. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for Your working in our lives.

For these wonderful stages as You develop and You grow. For Your great patience in us. How You work with us.

How You change us. How You conform us to Yourself. Because we know Your heart.

And it is Your desire to become qualified. To minister and bring redemption to the earth. Mature in us, we pray.

So that You can work Your redemptive ministry through us. We thank You that You're doing it. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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