

# Adventuring with God

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## Jesus' Humanity

*"Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."*

Luke 2:52

I just went to see *The Nativity* with my grandchildren, the movie portraying the events around Jesus' birth. It was a good reminder of the depth of humility assumed by the infinite God, to become a helpless baby. This is something we seldom consider at any time other than the Christmas season. We are quick to defend the deity of Christ Jesus, and rightly so. He was God in the flesh, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). He was the "image of the invisible God" and "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things." (Col. 1:15, 19-20).

But Jesus was also fully human. . . and we have a hard time wrapping our minds around how that played out in His daily life. At what age did the stirrings of His divinity begin to get Jesus' attention? Prior to His baptism by John the Baptist, did He ever wonder why He was different from other boys or young men? By the account of His encounter with the teachers in the temple when He was twelve years old, we can guess that the Holy Spirit was beginning to propel Him towards the calling within. But following that event we read that He returned to Nazareth and continued to submit to His parents' authority in all things. It was a taste of what was to come, but His time of public ministry was still far off.

I have always wondered why the account of Jesus' first miracle in John 2 is presented as it is. For someone who obviously knew who He was and was anointed with the Holy Spirit, why did Jesus first refuse to do the miracle and then turn around and perform it with profound success? Why did He curtly address His mother as He did and then reconsider? All the other miracles that followed were done

with a great deal of authority – no hesitation or reversals. Why was this one different?

Perhaps this is one of those rare glimpses into the humanity of Jesus (seen again in the Garden of Gethsemane when He struggled with embracing the horrors of the cross). Here we see how – even with the full assurance of who He was – Jesus had to step out and risk doing something brand new in the power of His Father. Perhaps He didn't feel ready; maybe He was unsure about this situation. (Would it be glorifying to His Father to merely make some wine for a small wedding among friends?) His mother seems to put Him on the spot. . . was this something He should give in to? Or should He hold out for a more profound miracle in another setting?

We have no way of knowing if any of that went on in His head; the Scripture merely hints of it through His hesitation. But Scripture *does* say that He "*grew in wisdom and stature*" as he matured. That means there was an unfolding of God's plan – a deepening awareness of His calling and role in life. In other words, He didn't receive a fully scripted score from which He just recited His part. Jesus had to seek out His Father's will through prayer. Before choosing His disciples, for instance, He prayed all night. Obedience for Him looked a lot like it does for those of us who follow Him: determining the leading of God and then following through.

Too often I overlook this fact of Christ's humanity and so miss the lessons it holds for me. As God's child, redeemed by Christ's blood and indwelt by His Holy Spirit, I have been equipped with everything I need to carry out authentic spiritual ministry. In 2 Cor. 3:6 Paul says that God

has made us "competent as ministers of a new covenant." I know who I am in Him and understand that I am to be His ambassador of reconciliation. I have access to the throne room of the Father, just like Jesus had. Yet I wait, haunted by the same kind of questions that probably faced Jesus that day. *Am I ready? Did I really hear God on this? Will He supply the power needed to do His will?* But unlike Jesus, I often stall out in my doubts indefinitely. I look at the seeming impossibility of the situation and assume that I will fail. I refuse to risk being wrong and so I do nothing when spiritual opportunities arise.

It's time for the body of Christ to grow up. If we want to see God move we must press on in spite of our insecurities. As Jesus matured in His calling He performed some amazing

miracles. Eventually His confidence in the voice of His Father was absolute, enabling Him to even face the cross.

For us, we can choose whether we will experience the abundant life of the Spirit or the withered and stunted life of the flesh. Faith in the One who called us is what will make the difference. Our humanity is not what holds us back - Jesus proved that in a spectacular way. We can fulfill the Father's will even in the vulnerability of an earthly body. It is our unbelief and refusal to step out that keeps the abundant life from flowing through us. Jesus said it best when He challenged Martha in John 11:40. "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

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*"The Savior offered no petitions by way of mere form; His supplications arose out of an urgent sense of His need of heavenly aid. It is difficult to realize it, but so it is, that our divine and innocent Savior placed Himself in such a condition for our sakes that His needs were manifold. Hence, He endured such necessities as we do, and resorted, as we must, to the one all sufficient source of supply, approaching His Father by prayer."*

C.H. Spurgeon

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**Book recommendations for the New Year:**  
*Your God is Too Safe* and *The Rest of God*  
by Mark Buchanan.

Written by a Canadian pastor (the "Philip Yancey of the west coast"), I believe these books will both challenge and inspire you to seek a deeper walk with God. Tony and I loved his keen spiritual insights, poetic storytelling, and honest disclosures.