



The Hidden Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? (Matthew 13:54) The people in the synagogue uttered this question as our Lord was teaching them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven. The assembly in the synagogue was perplexed at His sayings – *is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?* (Mark 6:3) They could not understand where this Man received His wisdom and power, for He was not a pupil of the elders of the synagogue. So, where did our Lord acquire such wisdom, and how? Where was our Lord and how did He live His life as a youth? Most of the corporeal life of our Lord Jesus Christ was not recorded in the Holy Scriptures, for if it were *the world itself could not contain the books that would be written* (John. 21:25). Therefore, let us explore the hidden life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we begin, it is necessary to mention that when we speak of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is of His human nature that we speak. As the Church has taught us, our Lord, the Only Begotten **Son** of God, consists of both human and divine nature, which are inseparable. It is also note worthy to mention that our Lord, the Son of God, was in existence before the creation of the world, with the Father and the Holy Spirit as ONE triad. God then created man, set him in the Garden of Eden, and gave him everything, but set him only one limit – that he not eat of the Tree of Knowledge. Man, in his disobedience, ate from the Tree and fell from grace, making himself subject to corruption and imperfection. Therefore, God, out of His mercy and love for mankind, descended from the heights of Heaven to His created world and took the form of a servant, uniting the Heavenly (divine) with the earthly (human) in the womb of the Virgin. Having said this let us begin.

The Holy Scriptures begins by telling us of the

annunciation to the Virgin concerning the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Following the annunciation, it records for us the story of the birth of our Lord, at the time of Herod. Then, as we read in the Holy Gospel of St. Luke, it speaks about our Lord's purification and circumcision in the temple of Jerusalem. After His circumcision our Lord disappears from the Holy Gospels until he is twelve years old, just in time for the Feast of Passover. The only clue given to us concerning the years of His childhood is recorded in chapter 2, verse 40: *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.* This verse is simply implying that our Lord grew in a human form, just like any other child, but without sin. The final account of our Lord, prior to His ministry, is at the conclusion of the Passover Feast. Sts. Mary and Joseph set off for their home supposing the Child to be among them – possibly with other relatives. Once realizing that the Child was not with them they returned to Jerusalem seeking him. Finally, after three days they found the Child in the temple with the teachers, asking questions and listening to them.

So, this means that our Lord was alone in a foreign city without His biological father and mother. Many questions may now begin to cross our minds – a twelve-year-old boy alone for three days. Where did He stay and what did He do?

St. Luke concludes the adolescent years of our Lord by saying the following verse: *and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men* (Luke 2:53). Similar to the previous verse, this too implies our Lord's growth. If we look at this verse carefully we will find that our Lord grew in all elements of life just as we do – psychologically (*wisdom*), physically (*stature*), spiritually (*in favor with God*), and socially (*and men*).



There have been many speculations as to what our Lord did during His youth, where he spent it, and so forth. If we examine what the Holy Scriptures have revealed to us concerning our Lord's life during His ministry it would lead us to a plausible formulation of our Lord's life as a youth.

As we mentioned previously our Lord, out of His love for mankind, descended from Heaven and took the form of a servant. Also, out of His love for us, he set for us an archetype or example of how humankind should live in the grace of God. In many occasions we see our Lord do many things that He, being God, did not have to do e.g. baptism, circumcision, and crucifixion. If we can imagine, our Lord was already

in Heaven in total completeness lacking nothing, but He still preformed these practices to set an example for us, His children. Our Lord Jesus Christ, along with His spoken teachings, was also a teacher of virtue via example. One of the most prominent and beneficial values that our Lord taught us was that of solitude or separation.

On several occasions our Lord Jesus Christ used solitude to get away for a little while from the people, his disciples, and the rest of the world. Why? When one separates oneself from the world he is left with himself and God. Therefore, when we spend time with God and ourselves, it allows us to reflect and meditate on our life in retrospect and meditate on the wonderful works of God. Also during solitude we search for the Lord in us – is he present? Does He guide my life? What change can I make in my life? Elijah the prophet expresses where he searched for the Lord and where he found Him saying:

and behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice (1Kings 19:11-12). So, by this we know that our Lord dwells in stillness and tranquility, which can only be found in stillness. So therefore, it would be safe to conclude that our Lord Jesus Christ separated Himself to be alone with the Father, and communicate with Him without distraction.

A virtue that is considered by the early church fathers to go hand-in-hand with solitude is silence. How can



one be in solitude and not in silence? We, as human beings, use spoken language to communicate with one another and to express our hearts; but when we speak to the Lord we need not a spoken language for *He searches the hearts and knows what the mind of the spirit is (Romans 8:27)*. The wise Solomon also advises us saying, *in the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains (Proverbs 10:19)*. There is also another old proverb that says, “All of those who open their mouth, close their eyes.” The main purpose of solitude and silence is to allow us to hear; for when one speaks he stops listening, thus blinding him from the voice of the Holy Spirit – just as the Pharisees. Our teacher St. James speaks about silence in his Holy Catholic Epistle, chapter 3. In his introduction he states that *if anyone does not stumble in word, he is a **perfect man**, able to bridle the whole body*. So, according to St. James, our mouth is what keeps us away from perfection. To clarify this point let us look at the words of the wise Solomon, *to everything there is a time...a time to keep silent, and a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7)*. So, therefore silence is a discipline that we must strive to attain. Just as in fasting, we discipline our body; in silence we discipline our tongue. Many times we may say things that we do not mean, or things that should not be heard by others, thus we may be getting ourselves into trouble. If we take the advice of St. James – *my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear and slow to speak (Joshua 1:19)* – we will find it easier not to slip in words. Therefore we should all strive daily to keep a watch on our tongue and heed the word of David: *Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it (1Peter 3:11)*.

In our modern society, were everything moves so up pace, we may have trouble consecrating time for meditation and solitude. When was the last time we sat alone with ourselves, meditating on the Lord and

His wonderful creation? Many of us have a very busy schedule with school, work, church, and other activities that occupy our time, leaving little time for prayer and meditation. So, how can we find time to spend alone? Actually, it is very easy. There are many times during the day that we are left alone. For example, the car rides in the morning on the way to school can be a perfect place for meditation. Instead of turning on the radio, CD or tape player, sit quietly and drive; keep your mind occupied by a verse from the Holy Scriptures or just speak to the Lord with short prayers. Also, many of us go to schools with large campuses, so possibly during our commutes between classes. Many of us may also have serene places – at home, church, parks – that give us peace when we spend time there. Therefore, we must try to dedicate time to meditate on the Prince of Peace and His works.

Now, after considering solitude and silence, it would be easy to formulate a plausible idea of what our Lord did as a youth. As mentioned previously, little was written in the Holy Scriptures about the Lord’s childhood, but in the few stories that were written it is clear that the authors of the Holy Gospels were not interested in feeding the curiosity of the Church with legends of His youth; they were content with the approximate twenty–eight years that were missing because their interest was in the heart of the Holy Gospels, not peripheral matters. It would be erroneous to think that our Lord performed childish supernatural miracles as a youth, as some writers say, for even when He began His ministry he did not seek glory until due time – His Resurrection. So, in conclusion, we can say that our Lord spent His childhood growing and learning as other children did (except for sin), spending much time in solitude and silence. Let us all strive to imitate our Lord’s life so we may all experience the blessings of solitude, silence, and tranquility in the Holy Trinity.