



Jesus and His Father's House

Luke 2:41-52

Blinking to adjust his eyes to the light, the white haired, wise, old man with the gentle smile looked out over the green lawn to the magnificent castle, which towered over the surrounding gardens. As Head Keeper of the Castle Gardens, Theophilus worked hard to serve the great King. He paused to think how proud he was to be one of the King's servants. Suddenly, the sound of barking pierced the air. A grin spread over his face as he turned to look towards his small pet dragon in the castle window.

"Rufus! How are you?" Theophilus greeted the royal messenger of the King.

Rufus barked in response— Rufus believed he was a dog. Theophilus had raised him since he was an egg and did not have the heart to tell him he was a dragon.

"Have you got a message for us?" the gardener asked.

Rufus nodded and barked proudly. Theophilus tilted his head, trying to listen closely. "Slow down, I can't understand you. Who is coming?" he asked.

Rufus barked again.

"A rider is approaching!" Theophilus translated.

Rufus bowed to demonstrate the next part of his message.

"Aha, treat him with grace! A rider is approaching, so treat him with grace!" the gardener finished. "How does the King know these things?" he asked.

"Bark! Bark!" Rufus barked again and this time Theophilus nodded.

"You're right, Rufus. He is the King. He knows everything. Well, thank you so much for the message. Tell the King I shall obey His command."

The moment the dragon disappeared, Theophilus heard hooves pounding across the lawn. He turned to see a thin young man riding a bony old horse.

"Hello. I say there, old man. Where am I?" the young man asked as he reigned up beside the gardener.

"This is the palace of my Lord, the King!" Theophilus announced proudly.

"At last, I have arrived!" the young rider tumbled off his horse and made a shaky bow. "I am ready to guard the King with my life! I am ready to be His noblest knight!" He tried to gallantly pull his sword from the sheath but instead the sword flew out of his hand and clunked against the ground a few feet away.

Theophilus tried to hide his laughter as he told the young man, "You'll need a little more practice to be a guard! Besides, the King has many servants. Are you sure you're in the right kingdom?"

"I am! I am Squire Goofus the Gallant, but you can call me Gus! I am ready to become a knight." He scrambled to pick up his sword and swung it over his head. Once again, he lost his grip and it went flying through the air. This time, it stuck securely in a tree.

Theophilus picked himself up off the ground, where he had ducked for safety, and said, "You're going to be ready to go to the hospital if you keep swinging that sword around!" He paused for a moment and then said, "Well, leave your card. We'll get back to you."

"You don't understand. I cannot come back. I am here to be a knight. I left all I know—my house, my job, my mommy and my daddy. I left it all behind to travel here to become a knight!" Gus explained as he pulled hard on his sword, trying to free it from the tree.

"I wish you left that sword behind," Theophilus mumbled under his breath. To Squire Goofus he said, "So Gus, you want to be a knight?"

"I want to be a mighty warrior!" Gus said as he finally freed the sword and fell backwards to the ground. "But, all my parents ever want me to do is go to church."

Theophilus felt sorry for this clumsy man with the big heart. "I might be able to help you. I know a knight, the Captain of the Castle Guards, who might be able to take you under his wing and teach you how to handle that sword."

Gus jumped up and bowed in front of Theophilus. "You would do that for me? Oh, thank you, thank you, kind sir."

"I said might but you must do something else," Theophilus said. "You must return here, every week, for instruction."

"I shall do anything to be a knight!" Gus exclaimed. Then he asked, "What kind of instruction?"

"Why the noblest quest a knight can pursue. You shall study the Word of our Lord!" the wise gardener answered.

Gus frowned. "What?! Churchy stuff?! But, I ran away from home to get away from churchy stuff!"

"Do you want to be noble?" Theophilus asked.

"More than anything," Gus gushed.

Theophilus motioned for Gus to follow him to a special corner of the garden full of brightly colored flowers. There in the wall was a door made of stained glass. "Open that door and take out the manual," he instructed. As Gus obeyed, the gardener explained, "In this report, Jesus is a young man."

"Like me?" Gus asked as he handed a gold-covered Bible to his new teacher.

"He was even younger. Jesus was only twelve years old when His family went to the Passover feast in Jerusalem. Afterwards, His parents left for home but Jesus stayed behind. They searched everywhere and even went back to Jerusalem to look for Him," Theophilus explained as he opened the Bible to Luke 2:46-47. He read, "After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers."

"Weren't His parents upset He left without telling them?" Gus asked.

"Yes, very!" Theophilus said. "But Jesus said, 'Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?'"

Gus was confused, "His Daddy lived in the temple?" he asked.

"He was talking about God," The gardener explained.

Gus smiled. "Oh, His heavenly Father!"

Theophilus smiled. "Exactly! As God's Son, Jesus knew to stay close to God in order to grow to be the man God wanted Him to be. The Bible says, 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.'"

"I want to grow in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man!" Gus announced.

"And that is why you must return here every week so you can learn to be more like God!" Theophilus said.

Gus bowed low before the wise gardener. "I shall, good Theophilus!" Then he turned and walked back to his horse. He knew in his heart he would work hard to learn to be a knight and serve the King.