

January 3, 2016
Luke 2:40-52

Christmas 2C
Where is Jesus?

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Adolescent King. Amen.

Merry Christmas! Yes, it's still Christmas...we have a few more days to celebrate Christmas before Epiphany on Wednesday. Have you been in the stores recently? They have decided Christmas is over on December 25, for on December 26 the Christmas merchandise goes on clearance and the Valentine's Day items appear on the shelves. It's still Christmas though, we are still looking at the Child Jesus. Last Sunday we saw Jesus in the temple at 40 days old with Simeon and Anna. We heard how this baby Jesus was going to grow up to be the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. But now today, we pick up the story of the child Jesus in Jerusalem again.

This time the Child Jesus is now the Adolescent Jesus. It's the only story we get from his "childhood". It's the only story between his infancy narrative to the point where he is baptized by John in the Jordan. We learn quite a bit about this Adolescent Jesus in our text.

First, we learn that Jesus was growing with wisdom and grace from God His Father. Mary and Joseph were teaching Jesus to be a good Jewish boy. You see, the age of 12 is significant. At age 12 is the typical age when the Jewish boy has his Bar Mitzvah. At his Bar Mitzvah the Jewish boy becomes a Jewish Man in regards to his faith. We might compare this to our Rite of Confirmation. In the Jewish faith they are responsible for their moral behavior, they became a "son of the commandments". This is the first time for Jesus in the temple as an adult according to the religious laws.

Mary, Joseph and Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, most likely with other relatives, neighbors and friends...it was safer that way then traveling alone. Jesus is there for the Passover as a young man for the first time. You see, this family is a devout Jewish family, they are doing things according to the Law that was set before them. Joseph and Mary raised Jesus as a good Jewish boy and now as Jesus is in the temple, Joseph and Mary take off to head home and assume that Jesus is amongst the clan of travelers.

This is when the story gets interesting. Joseph and Mary and presumably the rest of their travel companions are setting up camp for the night and Joseph and Mary are looking for Jesus and they don't find Him. Jesus is lost to his earthly parents. I'm sure the anxiety hit an all-time high for Mary and Joseph. The son of Mary is lost, the boy Jesus is nowhere to be found. They have no idea where He is. I am sure that like most parents when a child is missing for a few minutes, hours or days, jump to the worst possible conclusion. They begin asking the most logical question... "Where is Jesus?"

They had already traveled a day's journey from Jerusalem, now they have to go back a day's journey. They are without their son for two days now. Sometimes on the third

day, they find Jesus. Their anxiety, their troubled hearts were quickly turned to amazement, astonishment and other emotions...probably of pure joy, when they find Jesus.

So the first answer to their question: "Where is Jesus?" is simple. Verse 46 and following gives us the answer: ⁴⁶ *After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.* ⁴⁷ *And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.* ⁴⁸ *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."* ⁴⁹ *And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*¹

Jesus is found in the temple. Mary asks him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." Perhaps you have heard something similar from your parents. Perhaps you caused your parents distress in your adolescent years, maybe not to the point of them searching for you because you were physically lost, but perhaps you were emotionally lost from them, spiritually lost from them. Perhaps even now you still cause them angst. Some of you are at this very age or will be soon, are you causing your parent's angst?

Maybe it's something different with you? Maybe you are looking for Jesus in all the wrong places. It seems like Mary and Joseph were. Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" So where is Jesus? He's in His Father's House. Mary said, "Your father and I have been searching for you, while He has actually been in the presence of His Father. Jesus knows who He is. Jesus' Heavenly Father will and does care for His Son. He's doing so now. Verse 50 tells us that they did not completely understand the divine plan of God.

Rightfully so, Mary and Joseph were worried and full of anxiety and distress. Not much has changed...parents still worry about their kids. As the days go by there seems to be more and more things we worry about as parents and in life in general. One of those reasons is because the world does not point us to Jesus. Jesus is not "found" in the world. Our world promotes distress and anxiety. It promotes worry. It also wants us to believe that money is the cure all. For just 3 payments of 19.99 you can have this or that. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 13 ²² *As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*² How often do the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word out of our lives? Quite frequently right.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 2:46–49). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mt 13:22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

The answer shouldn't surprise us of where Jesus is? Jesus is the king that is born, Jesus is the light that is born. Jesus is the very Word made flesh. Jesus quite obviously is found in His Father's House.

It's the same today as well. Jesus is revealed to us in the Word of God in His Father's House. You receive Jesus here!

There's another answer that Luke wants to give us of where Jesus is. He's in the hearts of His people. Think about this...what time of year is our text taking place. It's the Passover celebration. A Passover that required the slaughter of a lamb. This is the first recorded time that Jesus is in Jerusalem at the Passover. Jesus at the age of 12 stays in Jerusalem...about twenty years later he would find himself in the same place...in the temple, but yet he wouldn't stay in the city, he wouldn't be sitting with the teachers...they would cast him out of the city. He would be the Passover Lamb that is slain.

Where is Jesus? He's where He is found...in the living Word of God. He's found doing His Father's business in His Father's House.

What is His Father's business? Luke alludes to that in his writing of the gospel. Notice that Mary and Joseph found Jesus "after three days" or "On the third day". What else happened on the third day. The Father's business for Jesus is to eventually be found again on the third day, the time in which the angel asks Mary Magdalene "why do you seek the living amongst the dead?"

Jesus is found in Jerusalem because that ultimately will be his destiny, this is where He will do His Father's business. This is the divine plan. But yet, His parent's misunderstood what he was saying. This is a theme throughout his life...people not understanding His work and word.

Yet Jesus, not being fully ready to be in ministry went back with his mother and Joseph and he was submissive to them. His mother treasured up the things in her heart and he continued to increase in wisdom and in the favor of God (His Father) and of man (he'd be a good citizen.)

Jesus is always found doing His Father's business. When Mary and Joseph first asked the question, "Where is Jesus?" it filled them with anxiety and fear. Perhaps when we ask that question we are also filled with anxiety and fear, because we need him and we are in trouble and lost without him.

So, Where is Jesus? Jesus is in His Father's House. Jesus is in the very Word of God. Jesus is found in the Scriptures. That Word of God has been implanted into your hearts and lives. That Word of God is read and preached to you each and every week. Jesus is found in His glorious Word of Absolution. He is found in the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus is found in the water and the word of Holy Baptism, where He has claimed you to be His own special child. Jesus is found in His very body and blood in,

with, and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus is still found in the Father's house.

The first time Jesus is in the temple Simeon prophesies that Jesus will be destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel. It was his earthly parents that stumbled over the cross first. Dr. Arthur Just writes this: "What Mary and Joseph did not understand was this: That in those first fateful words, 'I must be in my Father's home', Jesus was darkly alluding to his future passion and Resurrection in the Holy City." We can see it, but they did not.

The infancy narrative, the narrative of Christmas ends with Jesus living in the proper order of relationship...he was submissive, obedient to His parents. So for all of us who might ask, "Where is Jesus?" Jesus is found in His Father's House...Jesus is found in our hearts...Jesus is found in His Word and Sacraments. And really, Jesus is Immanuel...God with us. Really, Jesus is found amongst us, His baptized and forgiven people.

So you see as we prepare to close out the actual Christmas season in a few days and enter into the season of Epiphany and then quickly into Lent, we are reminded today on this the 10th day of Christmas that Jesus is born to be found with you...because Jesus is "God with us." Jesus is Immanuel.

In Jesus Name, the Adolescent King. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.