

Christmas 2 1/5/2020
Luke 2:40-52

“DID YOU NOT KNOW THAT I MUST BE IN MY FATHER’S HOUSE?”

When I was a kid, we always wore mittens, because where I come from it was cold; I mean cold. And the last thing you wanted to do was lose one of your mittens, so our mittens were knitted with one long strand of yarn holding them together so that you could thread them through your parka and sleeves, so that – wa la – you would never, ever, lose a mitten.

Which at my age, I appreciate more and more every day. Whether it’s my glasses or car keys, or any number of things, I spend a lot of time searching for lost items. What about you? Do you ever forget?

Jesus says in our lesson this morning, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house (v. 49)?” Jesus says that because Mary and Joseph **forgot**, they **forgot** exactly who Jesus was.

It was not mere happenstance that Jesus, the Son of God, went to the Temple in Jerusalem because that is where God the Father dwelt among His people -- between the wings of the cherubim above the Ark of the Covenant behind the curtain in the Holy of Holies.

Yes, this is Mary’s Son. Day by day, he grew like any child would; he knew tears and smiles, like us, as the hymn writer reminds us. But, this was not just any little boy, a smart kid of 12, this was God’s own Son. The miracle of Christmas is that God dwells among us, behind the veil of human flesh and bone.

Jesus is “true man, born of the Virgin Mary,” but also “true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,” as our *Small Catechism* teaches us. He would have understanding and answers because He was there from the beginning, at creation. John tells us, “All things were made through Him,

and without Him was not anything made that was made (Jn 1).” So, it shouldn’t surprise anyone that when God came, of all the places in all the towns in all the world, He would go to Jerusalem to His Father’s house, the Temple.

Mary and Joseph knew that He was the Son of God. Both of them had heard it from the voice of the angel. When the Angel Gabriel visited Mary, he told her, “[He] will be called the Son of the Most High (Lk 1:32).” Joseph found out that Mary was with child before they came together and intended to divorce her. But, an angel came to him and informed him “that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:20).”

Yet, did you catch His mother’s words, “Son, why have you treated us so? Your father and I have been searching for you in great distress (v. 48).” “Your father and I.” Those are interesting words to ponder. They notice their son is missing and it takes them three days to look for Him in Jerusalem in His Father’s house. Yes, Mary and Joseph forgot. They had forgotten that Jesus was true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity and that God was His true Father.

Dear Friends in Christ, do we forget who journeys with us on life’s way? Jesus said, “I am with you always (Mt 28:20).” “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (Jn 11:25).” Paul speaks the Word of God, “...for those who love God all things work together for good (Ro 8:28).” Yet, when the ill wind of fate blows upon us; when we feel that lady luck has not smiled on us, what is our reaction? “Why, me, Lord, what have I ever done?” as though somehow God is punishing us; as if Jesus did not really suffer the punishment and death of all our sins upon the cross. Instead of fearing, loving, and trusting in God and His good and gracious will above all things, we pray to God as though he were a magic

genie and we grow angry when He does not grant me my every wish. Instead of trusting that God will open His hand to satisfy our every need of body and life, we hoard, want more, and treasure the things of this earth above the Kingdom of God.

Like Mary and Joseph, we forget. We forget who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

II. What is that old saying? “It’s always in the last place you look.” How true that is of Mary and Joseph -- “After three days they found him in the temple.” The last place they looked for the Son of God was ... in **God’s** House. In our Gospel this morning, Luke records for us the first recorded words we have of Jesus, and did you notice what those words were? “Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?” He is reminding Mary and Joseph, and teaching us who He is and why He has come to dwell among us. He has come to do His Father’s business.

And, the Father’s business was there, in the temple. That is where God dwelt among His people, above the Ark of the Covenant, between the wings of the cherubim. Separating God from His people was that curtain, a reminder to the people that their sin separated them from God. God’s business was the forgiveness of sin, doing away with that which separated the Creator from His creatures. It was here that sacrifices were made for sin. It was here that the Passover Lambs were brought to be slaughtered.

So, the Son came to His Father’s house to be about His Father’s business and His Father’s business was to allow His only-begotten Son to sacrifice Himself upon the altar of the cross for the to be the atoning sacrifice for the sin of all the world. That 12-year-old boy Jesus is in His Father’s house at the time of the Passover feast, and His parents have been missing Him for three days. Twenty years later, He will be the

Passover Lamb, sacrificed and blood shed so that He could mark us with His blood and death would pass over us. He will be missing for three days. But then He will rise again, so that you will have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of your trespasses, according to the riches of His grace (Ep 1:7).”

Among the nights of anxious thought and days of darkness in this valley of the shadow of death, our unbelief shows itself in doubt. Like Mary and Joseph, we can forget who Jesus is and that He with us. But, the Good News of the Gospel is that in Jesus, we have a high priest who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses and because He sympathizes with us, He never leaves us nor abandons us.

Enquiring minds want to know, so the printed pages are filled with predictions for 2020 -- what movies will be the blockbusters, what celebrities will be hot, will the Twins make it to the World Series, when will the golf course open, and on and on enquiring minds go.

Your enquiring minds wants to know, don't you? We all want to know what 2020 holds for us. We want sunny skies, health, and wealth, joy and contentment. In the weakness of our flesh, what we really want is a guarantee that the year 2020 will be without crosses.

The good news of great joy that we have, Dear Saints of God, is this: whatever actually happens in the upcoming 12 months, whether triumph or tragedy, Jesus is with you. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. And, Jesus is with us in the Word and Sacraments.

In the water and Word of our baptism, God the Holy Spirit works faith so that we trust, rejoice, and find comfort in Jesus alone and the Spirit re-creates us in Christ so that we overcome sin and live to do God's will.

“Where two or three come together in My name,” Jesus said, “there am I among them (Mt 18:20).” There Jesus is to forgive sins. Wherever God’s Word is spoken – from the pulpit, the bedside, the graveside, your kitchen table – that Word forgives sin and gives and strengthens faith.

Here, at the Lord’s Table, Jesus feeds you with His own true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and strength for to live a new and holy life of faith, as you said you would the day of your Confirmation and our newly elected officers will reiterate this morning.

Friends in Christ, we need never worry or fear that God is not with us. He is with us in His only-begotten Son, Jesus, the Son who came to be about His Father’s business – win for us the victory over sin, death, and the devil. We can rejoice and be glad for “in Him we have obtained an inheritance,” -- the inheritance of heaven.