

2 S. after Christmas 1/3/20
Luke 2:40-52

“WHY HAVE YOU TREATED US SO?”

Enquiring minds want to know – what will come in 2021? I think I can speak for most of us – if not all of us – when I say “good riddance” to 2020.

We have found ourselves living in the strangest of times. 2020 was a year like no other in my life time – and I’m sure many of you share that sentiment. The Covid pandemic has prevented us from gathering together, not just as the family of Christ for worship, but in restaurants, attending funerals, holidays with families; even visiting our loved ones in the hospital and nursing homes. Shut downs have caused unemployment and financial hardship. Rioting, looting and mayhem have filled the streets of our nation. And, I’m going to mention football. It wasn’t that many years ago that a player names Tim Tebow, who was a devout Christian, would kneel on the sidelines before games for a moment of silent prayer. And, he was mocked and ridiculed and shamed for it. But now, it is perfectly fine – and commended, I would add – that during the playing of our national anthem, NFL players kneel and show all manner of disrespect. This, by the way, I would like to point out by adults who are getting paid millions of dollars to play a kid’s game.

So yes, enquiring minds want to know what will come in 2021. We want sunny skies, health, and wealth, joy and contentment. In the weakness of our flesh, what we really long for is a guarantee that the year 2021 will be without crosses. In these unusual times, we wait, with worry, apprehension, fear, outright dread, to see how things will play out.

I have to wonder if Mary and Joseph ever had worry, apprehension, fear, about being the parents of the Savior. Our Gospel reading for today is

the only account the Bible gives us of the boyhood of Jesus, from the time his parents returned to Nazareth from their flight to Egypt until His baptism when He was 30 years old.

In accordance with the Law of Moses, the holy family went to the Temple in Jerusalem for the yearly observance of the Passover. And, as the Evangelist tells us, when the feast was ended, they headed home to Nazareth. Thinking Jesus was with family, they journeyed an entire day before they started looking for him. They went back to Jerusalem, and after three days, found Him ... where? In God's own house, the Temple. And look at the words of His mother, Mary, to Him, "Why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress" (v. 48).

My Dear Friends in Christ, it is not pessimism nor cynicism, but simple honesty to say that we know days and nights of great distress. 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? We are filled with self-pity, as though God has abandoned us, or even worse, 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.

It's easy for us to cry in our great distress, "Jesus, why have you treated us so?"

I mentioned that this Sunday's reading is the only account of the boyhood of Jesus we have in the Bible. And, it also contains the first spoken words of God in the flesh, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house" (v. 49). Jesus came to do His Father's business, which is abiding and dwelling with us, just as God dwelt with Adam and Eve in the Garden.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," St. John writes (Jn 1:14). And the Bible also says this, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:18). He destroyed the devil's work by being sacrificed upon the altar of the cross for all the times we believed the devil's lies; all the times we gave in to our feelings that God was not with us, working good for us; all of our sin. 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)."

Enquiring minds want to know – what will come in 2021! So, I'll tell you. In 2021, we will see the faithfulness of God to us – whatever our circumstances in life have been or currently are. Whatever happens in the coming months, whether triumph or tragedy, Jesus is with you. Jesus is our Emmanuel, God with us, and He promises, "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

He was with us in our Baptism to make us His own child. 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 – there is Jesus working through His Word to forgive sin and to give and strengthen faith.

Here, at the Lord's Table, here Jesus is with us. He 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.](#)

Yes, Dear Children of the heavenly Father, the Lord will bless you and keep you, even in the midst of uncertain paths, until that day we obtain our inheritance – our inheritance of heaven.