

2 S. after Christmas 1/2/22
Luke 2:40-52 C

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

Well, it's already the 2nd of January, which means we are well into the New Year. So, let me ask you: did you make any New Year's resolutions? You know what a New Year's resolution is, right? It's when people take a good and honest look at themselves and decide 'enough is enough.' They say, "I'm tired of the old me and in the next 365 days I'm going to lose weight, get fit, eat better, drink less bad stuff, save more, spend less, reduce stress, spend more time with family, clean out my closets, and the clutter of my life, find a better job. You know, resolutions. I don't know what you decided to do, but if you're like most folks, you resolved to try to do something different, to make some sort of change. Which is why I'm asking, "How are your New Year's resolutions coming along? Is your will-power still holding up? Or, is it possible your new resolutions have already been thrown out with the Christmas presents wrapping paper?

I ask you that because, sadly, most of us aren't very good at keeping our resolutions. I found some statistics which say 55% of Americans can keep a resolution for about a month; 40% are faithful to their resolutions for six months, but after two years, the figure of the faithful has dropped to a dismal 19%.

Today, we are about resolutions -- human resolutions; resolutions, which, in spite of our best intentions, are often broken or forgotten. But now I'd like to speak about another resolution, a good and gracious resolution; a resolution made by God when humankind fell into sin; a resolution kept by God in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of His Son; a resolution which is, for believers, renewed each and every day. That

resolution is this: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son”* to save us (Jn 3:16). So that we might be rescued from eternal death and damnation, God resolved to send His only Son into this world. Merry Christmas! *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14)*. Jesus was born as true God so that He could perfectly keep the Commandments for us, and true man so He might take our place in death.

It was the keeping of God’s resolution that the angel choir sang of the night of Jesus’ birth. It was the keeping of God’s resolution that the shepherds came to see. It was the keeping of God’s resolution that the Wise Men came to see. It was the keeping of God’s resolution that Simeon and Anna met in the temple. And, it’s the keeping of God’s resolution that we meet in the temple this Sunday.

You know the story. As was their yearly custom, the Holy Family went to Jerusalem for the Passover when Jesus was now 12 years old. When the feast was ended, His parents did not know that He stayed behind. After 3 days, they found the Son of God, where? The House of God, the temple.

“Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s House” (v. 49). With the first recorded words we have of Jesus, he reminds Mary and Joseph and us who He is and why He has come to dwell among us, because His Father kept His resolve to send a Savior.

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.

The Son resolved to do His Father's business, so He humbled Himself to be born of a Virgin and nothing could keep Jesus from keeping His resolve. Jesus did not smack His friend who betrayed Him with a kiss; He did not destroy those who came to arrest Him. When He was beaten, He did not get even by withering the striker's hand; when He was spit upon, He did not shut the mouth of the person who insulted Him. Innocent of any sin, Jesus carried our transgressions; free of any wrongdoing, Jesus died as the wages of our sin. Jesus, the Son of God, kept the Divine resolution to redeem us when He was crucified on Calvary's cross.

Some twenty years after our Gospel account, Jesus would go missing for three days again. But, in glorious victory, Jesus rose from the dead and showed to the world that because He lives, all who believe in Him will live also. God's promise was made, and He kept His resolution.

I asked you a few minutes ago what your New Year's resolution was and how you were doing with it. Wouldn't it be nice, really nice, if when the clock ticks from one year to another, 2021 to 2022, all the worries, fears, and stresses would just end with a goodbye to the previous year. "Poof" – they're gone. But, life doesn't work that way, does it? One tick of the clock doesn't take away our troubles and trials.

So, My Friends in Christ, I ask you: What are you struggling with today? Are you afraid of facing the New Year with continued illness and pain? Are you dreading the constant financial difficulties that you seem to face each year? Are you heartbroken over a relationship that is hurting or disappointing you? Are you wondering if God will open a door and show you the purpose and plan He has for your life?

Don't despair. Don't let Satan, the world, the doubts of your sinful nature mislead you into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. The darkness of sin and evil are real. For the darkness you experience in this valley of death, Jesus, the very Light of the world, has come.

If life seems desolate, be encouraged. Jesus says, "I am with you always to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). You count on it. If you're losing hope, listen to what God says: "The LORD goes before you. He'll be with you. He will never leave you. He will not forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV). If you're wondering whether or not you can face what's coming on in your life, the Bible says: "The Holy Spirit is your Helper" (John 14:26). He literally even prays for you in words that we can't even muster with our own lips.

When the worrisome words of the world come your way, you have the sure and certain Word of God. When you are struggling with your identity, who am I, what am I supposed to do, the Lord says, "I baptized you. I put My Name on you. You are Mine." When you are struggling to know whether life is really secure, the Lord comes and says "Taste and see. I'm good. This is My body and blood given and shed for you."

So, for this New Year; for 2022, look in faith to Jesus. He resolved to do His Father's business and He did. He resolved to go to the cross and He did. He resolved to be with you always and He is. He resolved to come and take you to be with Him that you would be forever where He is and what a glorious day that will be for you, Dear Child of God, because Jesus keeps His resolutions.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.