

Sermon Luke 2:41-52

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

a

As I read through the account from the second chapter of Luke, of how Jesus was not with His parents or family on their trip from the Passover Feast in Jerusalem, I couldn't help but think of that classic Christmas movie, "Home Alone." If you're not familiar with the movie, it's about a boy around the age of 10-12 years-old who is unintentionally left at home for Christmas when his large and extended family take a vacation to France. The family gets on the plane and it takes off and that's when the mom has a feeling that something is wrong, only to realize that her son was not with the family. But there the similarity ends.

We might call the account that we heard this evening from Luke in chapter 2, "Jerusalem Alone." But this is not the story of some mischievous little boy or negligent parents who forgot their son. This is the story of God's Son Jesus, knowing

exactly who He was, and why He had come into the world. That was something important for His parents to remember, and something that is important for us to stop and contemplate.

At the Feast of the Circumcision, we found Jesus at the temple with His parents Mary and Joseph, but He was a little over a month old at that point. Remember how they travelled from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to present their son to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice for purification. Some time later, the family returned to Nazareth where Jesus and his family would permanently live.

Some twelve years had passed and Jesus' family had made their annual trip to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover. This was a week's long festival that was also called "The Feast of Unleavened Bread." This was probably the largest celebration of the three major festivals that God commanded His Old Testament people to observe each year, and rightfully so. It was the celebration of how God had rescued his people, the nation of Israel, in a magnificent fashion, from their centuries' long slavery in Egypt. He guided them through the Red Sea and brought them into the Promised Land. It was during the Passover that God's people were reminded of God's promise to send the Messiah, who

would rescue people from the slavery of sin, and by His sacrifice, make the eternal death of hell pass over us.

Every year, Mary and Joseph, along with thousands of their fellow faithful Old Testament followers, travelled from all over Israel to Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover. But this Passover was one that Mary and Joseph would not soon forget. The festival had come to an end and the family began their journey back home to Nazareth. They had travelled for nearly a day when Mary and Joseph started looking for Jesus whom they had thought was travelling with their Nazarene family and friends. They couldn't find Jesus! And that's when panic began to set in. Now, if you have ever lost sight of a child in a large crowd, even for just a few moments, you know how that feels. The darting around, the questioning of relatives and friends if any of them knew where Jesus was. And then you can't help but imagine Mary and Joseph thinking about WHOM they had lost! This was not just their son, this was the Son of God - entrusted to them by God the Father - and they had lost Him! This was a terrible predicament. The most wonderful and miraculous gift of God was nowhere to be found.

They started retracing their steps, talking to friends and relatives seeking their help. None of these people knew of Jesus' whereabouts, which led them back to Jerusalem. They

searched everywhere in the city for three days looking for Jesus. They were at wits end.

When they finally arrived at the temple, there was Jesus. And, Luke tells us, “After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers” (Luke 2:26,27).

These religious experts had what would become a quite common reaction when listening to Jesus. They were absolutely amazed at His knowledge and His intellect. That was especially understandable considering how young Jesus was. At first, Mary and Joseph were also captivated in amazement at what they were seeing and hearing. But then, frustration, relief, fear and exasperation all came together as Mary questioned Jesus, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you?” (Luke 2:48). In other words, “Why did you put us through this hellish experience?” The 12 year-old Jesus’ respectful response was simple and to the point, “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” (Luke 2:49) .

At first, Jesus’ answer might seem abrupt and somewhat dismissive of His parent’s concern for their son. But Jesus

knew exactly who He was. Even as a 12 year-old boy, Jesus understood that He was the Son of God. But, His parents needed this reminder of that. They were chosen by God to nurture and protect Jesus as he grew. Yes, He was their son, but He was the Son of God, who had been sent into this world for a very specific purpose - to carry out His Father's plan for the salvation of all people.

Did you notice the reaction of Mary and Joseph to Jesus' answer? "And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them". And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

Jesus understood that He was going to have to become like us so that He could help us to believe God's plan for us, that He could follow God The Father's will for us, that He could be obedient for us, and, yes, that He could die for us. The 12 year-old Jesus understood all of that. He knew who He was and what He was sent to do – He was sent to be our Savior.

Yes, that Passover when Jesus was in Jerusalem alone, was not only a memorable trip for Mary and Joseph, but a significant one for them and for us. Jesus, their son, was the Son of God. He was sent to do His Father's will. He was to teach us of the Father's love and forgiveness.

He continued to grow into manhood, to be obedient to his parents, until Almighty God determined He was to begin His ministry among the people of Israel and then to expand into the gentiles with a message of peace and the love of Almighty God, a peace which passes all understanding.

Thanks be to God.

May the peace of God keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and the blessings of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us now and forever.

Amen.

a