

The 2nd Sunday after Christmas
January 3, 2021

“I must be about M(m)y Father’s business.”
(Luke 2:49)

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LSB 410

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text for this second Sunday after Christmas, is from our reading from Luke 2.

“And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.” (Luke 2:49-50)

Here ends our text.

Had this happened in the year 2020, Joseph and Mary would be mercilessly scolded for letting their 12 year-old be on His own for a full day, before checking with Him. Today’s 21st century children are picked up by their parents immediately after school. They are handed off under the watchful eye by the teacher to the parents. It’s not like it was when I was in middle school that if you had an after-school activity, you would hitch hike your way home.

My dad has told me stories of how in his generation, the kids basically ate breakfast and then were on their own until supper time. Does that sound about right? When my dad lived in Washington D.C., he and his sister, as kids, took buses on their own all around the city. I remember having a tremendous amount of freedom in my childhood to hang out with the neighborhood friends and not check in back home until at least lunch time. Do you share similar memories?

So, it doesn’t seem so out of place to me that Jesus was gone for the day. Mary and Joseph assumed He was with family. Modern day parents, however, would have amber alerts out if their child didn’t answer the phone after the first hour. How times have changed!

Well, after one day of travelling, Mary and Joseph did start to get a little concerned when they couldn't locate Jesus. After two more days, Mary, was at her wits end. Understandable, except that her Child was the Son of God, as the angel clearly told her 12 years earlier. Memories tend to fade over time, which is all the more reason to faithfully hear the Word of God regularly.

“Son, why have You done this to us? Said an exasperated Mary. With these words, we see how truly human Jesus was in the loving relationship between mother, father and Son. Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” (Luke 2:48)

To which Jesus answers, **“Why?”** They shouldn't have been surprised that He was about His Father's business. Yes, Jesus was truly part of their family and part of the human race, but they weren't understanding in that moment His purpose as Savior of the world. He has a big “must” to accomplish, one that only He could do. Where there is a lack of understanding, there always is unnecessary panic, stress and fear.

“Do not fear little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom”. (Luke 12:32) We heard on New Year's Eve. The Father's business is His good pleasure of gifting His kingdom of grace to you.

Again, it had been 12 years after all since Simeon had told Mary and Joseph that his eyes had seen the Lord's salvation in their very baby, Jesus. Simeon told them that, **“He was destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel.”** They marveled at the time when they heard these words, but that was 12 years ago.

They weren't making the connection that the Feast of the Passover Lamb which they just celebrated was the business that Jesus was referring to...the business of saving all people from their sins by shedding His blood as the innocent Lamb of God.

Thanks be to God, that for our sakes, Jesus was all about learning His Father's business. For Jesus wasn't there in the temple just for His spiritual self-enrichment. No, as soon as we hear Jesus say that He was about His Father's business, we must also quickly add the words, “for you”. Jesus was about His Father's business – for you! It's not the carpentry business of His earthly father, Joseph, He's about. No, it's the saving business for the sins of the world!

We remember on Christmas Eve, how that angel said earlier in chapter 2 of Luke, **“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”** Where there is understanding there is not fear, but great joy!

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

The Father’s business is all about you! He was born as a true man to be the holy sacrificial lamb for all people! That’s the understanding that Jesus wants us to have first and foremost.

At the age of 12, Jesus was not in the least confused about who He was and what His purpose for being born was.

We’ve got our work cut out to give understanding to a very confused world. That’s the business that our Father has for each of us who have been given this wisdom from the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus. We are to share the good news like the shepherds who made widely known what they had heard and seen. (Luke 2:17-18) These weren’t trained professional church workers. And, one doesn’t have to be, in order to tell others what we have heard in God’s word.

There is so much confusion at the most basic level being sown by the leaders of our government about who people are. On Monday, our Democrat led House of Representatives will “boldly” adopt new rules which will prohibit any use of gender identity. All pronouns must be gender neutral and one cannot be called a father, son, mother or daughter. No, people will be referred to as a parent or a child.

Children these days are being taught that they can decide to be gender neutral. They can decide to be neither male or female. They choose nothing and be called non-binary.

God, who in His Word clearly states that He has made people male and female, is being rejected by people who believe they are smarter than God. They believe that God got it wrong and they can choose what they want to be. This is arrogance that God’s creation would act as a god and correct God’s “mistakes”. It is but a short leap to then determine on one’s own what is morally right and wrong. For, if I can decide my own gender or lack of gender, then I can certainly decide how I want to live my life in whatever gender or lack of gender I choose. We are quickly arriving at a time where there is no moral absolutes.

God's people have much to be about in our Father's business to convict people of sin with God's law, and then show them the Savior Jesus who completed His Father's business by paying for the whole world's debt of sin with His death on the cross.

At the age of 12, Jesus was not confused that He was the Son of the Father. He was not an "it", and God is not an "it". On New Year's Day, the church traditionally reads the story of Jesus' circumcision and naming 8 days after His birth. Jesus fulfilled the law's demands perfectly in our place. Jesus was a male, a true Man, who took our place on the cross as a true Man.

He gives to us His true body and blood in with and under the bread and the wine for our forgiveness. The Holy Spirit gives us understanding to receive this sacrament for our spiritual well-being. And the Father's business, the salvation won on the cross by His Son, is carried out personally to you when you receive this sacrament.

As a forgiven believer in Jesus, each of us can and should call God our Father and pray to Him as Jesus has taught us to do in the Lord's prayer. United with Christ through faith, we are also united with His continued work to save unbelievers. The Father's business is our business. It's our "must" to abide in the Vine as His branches. For apart from Him we can do nothing. (John 15)

We are the servants that He has put in charge of His house while He is away until He returns. So, we heard on New Year's Eve in Luke 12. Jesus summed it up in His great commission in Matthew 28 what His business for each of us is. We are to:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Father's business is baptizing repentant sinners and teaching them, giving them understanding of God's great mercy and grace in Jesus. It's our daily business for all who call God their Father.

We see in our Gospel reading how Joseph and Mary were diligent in going every year to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Each of us is called to be diligent in coming to God's house regularly, as best as one can during these days of

pandemic. For here we are in our Father's house where He feeds us, nourishes our faith and gives us understanding of His will.

And Joseph, Mary and Jesus continued to be about their Father's business as they left the temple. Jesus was obedient to His parents. He fulfilled His Father's business by keeping the law perfectly for us. Mary treasured these things in her heart.

So, also children need to be taught to obey their parents and other authorities in as much as they obey God. (Acts 5:29). And they need to be taught, above all, about what the Father's business through Jesus means for them. They need to hear that God loved them so much that He gave His Son to take away their sins on the cross.

In whatever vocation each of us has, whether it be a carpenter like Joseph, or a tent maker like Paul, a husband, wife, father, mother, son or daughter, we are each called to be about the Father's business of receiving His gifts in His temple and then sharing them with all people.

I read the story of a musician who lost his apartment, clothes, guitar and car when the bomb exploded in Nashville last week. Another musician, Brad Paisley gave him an autographed guitar and unlimited groceries at "Brad's place" to help him get back on his feet. He left a note that said, "Twang on, pal. I'm glad you're still here." Brad, himself is a Christian and writes Christian music and helps people in need. It's his way of carrying out the Father's business.

"Twang on". In whatever vocation and role we have been given by God, we continue on in the Father's business of living Christ crucified and leading the lost to Him. So, we enter the New Year with much understanding of God's love and grace in Jesus for all people. He became a true man to bring us into a new relationship with God the Father. The Father's business plan was simply to rescue each of us and give us the highest privilege of sharing His salvation with others. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)