

CHRISTMAS 1

YEAR C

1 SAMUEL 2:18-20, 26

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

LUKE 2:41-52

DECEMBER 31, 2018

How many of us have experienced the helpless feeling of searching for a child that wandered off? We might go into large store with our children and they wander off to find new adventures in the store. We might look lots of places hoping to find that child but then discover our child in the place we should have looked first. We should have known that child would be in the toy section. Why were we surprised to find him among the toys. Isn't that where children go?

Luke 2:41-43 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

It was only six days ago we celebrate the birth of our Lord. Today we look at Jesus who has grown so that he is 12 years old. A 12-year-old boy was said to be on the threshold of adulthood. He was ready and sometimes exhorted to take on some of the duties in the local synagogue or even in the temple. It was similar to our confirmation instruction and affirmation of baptism. We teach our students and then we have a ceremony setting them apart to be full members of the church. We encourage them to become active and become leaders in the church. In that culture, a 12 year old was said to be a man but you and I know that a 12 year old has lots of growing up to do. As parents we become anxious when our younger children are not home when they are supposed to be. We might even wonder and become anxious about our older children. We wonder where they are and if they are in trouble.

The same was true of Mary and Joseph. Jesus was missing and they

could not find him. They looked for him among their friends and relatives supposing he might have been with them. When they did not find him they retraced their steps until they got all the way back to Jerusalem. After three days Mary and Joseph found him in the temple with the elders of the Jewish faith. This is more than a story about a child wandering off and causing fear and anxiety for his parents. It is a story we love to hear because it shows us that Jesus had this wisdom even as a child and the elders were impressed with him from the beginning.

We might have come to church today searching for the Christ child. Jesus can be found in the church and in honest preaching and teaching. Some times we do not know where to find him and so we search other places. We might search many places to find Jesus but get frustrated because we did not find him in those places. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that that everyone that searches for the Lord will certainly find him. There are times we need to look into a manger to see a sweet baby boy but other times we look for Jesus in other places in our lives. If we keep searching we will eventually be led to a cross and an empty tomb. His parents found Jesus in the temple. They were relieved to have found Jesus but they were also astonished. They were confused at the words he told them. How many of us would look for our lost children at the church? We might not think this is the first place they would go. When you think about it, why wouldn't they go to the church? Their Father lives here why would they not want to be where the Father is.

Luke 2:48, 49 **When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"**

There are many reactions when we finally find Jesus. We search and we

find him and then wonder why we did not look there in the first place. We will always see Jesus in the church. This is the house of the Lord and we meet him here. There are many verbs used in this lesson from Luke 2. The verbs tell us the different actions of the people in the lesson. Mary Joseph and Jesus went to Jerusalem, as was their custom for Passover. The custom for Jesus was to always be found in the place of worship on the Sabbath. Jesus followed the example of his parents who were also in the habit of being in the place of worship. Mary and Joseph were searching and then they were anxious. They were astonished when they found him in the temple.

Jesus astounded the elders of the religion because of the way he answered their questions and the way he asked them questions. When Mary and Joseph arrived he went with them to Nazareth and was obedient. Jesus knew the meaning of “honor your father and your mother.” He knew that he had an obligation to God the Father but he also had an obligation to his earthly parents. There are so many things to take from these readings today but for me it is important to remain active in the Lord. It is important to continue searching until you find the Lord. Once you find him you must remain obedient to the will of God. You remain obedient by staying in the word of God so you understand what God expects from you

Luke 2:51-52 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

When you remain obedient to the word of God you will also grow in wisdom and knowledge as you grow in years. You will grow in divine and human favor. AMEN