

Text: Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹ Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (NIV)

Prayer of the Day:

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Alleluia. (Colossians 3:15a cf. NIV)

Sermon Text:

Every parent wants to hear them. Every parent secretly wants to be them. A child's first words are a long awaited and often celebrated event. Apparently "dad" clocks in with 50% of one surveys results, while "mom" claims around 30%. Others are "dog", "cat", "ball", "no", "bye", and "uh-oh". Of course there are phonetic reasons for all the words as well rated on a scale of ease the D sounds in dad are simply easier to say than the M sounds of mom. So moms can take solace that while "dad" seems to be the usual winner ... well I'll let you all finish that one out.

So after celebrating the birth of Jesus with such vigor only a few days ago. Today we ask what were Jesus first words? And the answer is ... well we really don't know. I suppose if I had to guess it would be dad or mom or who knows what ranks among the easiest words to say in the Hebrew language. At any rate we have no recorded account, but the first spoken and recorded words of Jesus after His birth come 12 years into his life. They are in our lesson today as the family goes on a bit of a trip to Jerusalem and as you might imagine, they are certainly worth our attention.

It can be easy to forget who Jesus really is. A baby in a manger after all doesn't look to be very powerful. A laying on the hay doesn't scream, "Here is someone who is really important." A family that has to flee political unrest and work for their everyday living, well it all just seems so very common, right. After twelve years one wonders if this had affected Joseph and Mary too. Even after a pretty amazing start to His life, angels, shepherds, magi, a quick family flight to Egypt and back again, after 12 years well things get ordinary. So we are told, ⁴¹ *Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.* ⁴² *When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.* ⁴³ *After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but*

they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. Other than Jesus absence among the relatives it sounds like life had taken over. The family busied up doing what people usually did. Nothing out of the ordinary, nothing overly weird.

In fact, maybe Mary has even succumbed to all of this a bit. Because when they can't find Jesus, she sort of takes her son to task. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

Jesus' answer is an important reminder for Mary and for us as He tells us once again who He really is. ⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. It doesn't sink in, at least right away, but Jesus answer is remarkably clear. I'm in my Father's house, not Joseph's home, who really is His stepfather. Why wouldn't they have expected this? Where else would God be but in God's house? It so simple that it can be missed. Jesus is God. As remarkable as it is to think about it is true. God who allows Himself to be made flesh. God who allows Himself to become obedient to human parents that He created. God who allows Himself to grow in wisdom and in stature.

Of course, there is a reason for it all. Our second lesson spelled that out. ¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Such gloriously massive yet tiny words in Lutheran theology. This is all FOR YOU!

It's a good thing too. Because we desperately need it. How many times have we forgotten who God is and what He has done for us? I know for me it's far more often than I would like to admit. Like Mary and Joseph life has a way of erasing God from my memory. Life goes on. Bills need to get paid, meals prepared, chores done and while I'm consumed with it all it sure doesn't seem like I'm one marked heir of heaven, child of God. Little annoyances mount up and perhaps I even think I have a right to chastise God. "You know what God, You have me worried sick down here. I don't understand what You are doing and it sure even seems like You're out to get me. Why are You treating me like this? Where are You?"

Jesus words should be filled with wrath, "Why you ungrateful" Instead they are humble and loving. "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Oh dear, Christian, You know where I am. I'm exactly where I have always promised to be, in Word and in Sacrament. Come listen and be amazed. Recall your baptism where you were called an heir of heaven as you were connected to me through faith. Come take My body and My blood in, with, and under bread and wine to strengthen your faith, to assure you of forgiveness, to remind you that I have never left your side.

It's all so simple that it can be easily missed, so Jesus reminds them, reminds us that He is here to follow His Father's will. In so doing He lives and dies and rises again not just as the Son of Mary but as the Son of God. He is the perfect sacrifice, obedient, truthful, faithful in all He does. When we lose sight of it all, perhaps it's time for a reminder ourselves. Maybe it's time to take Mary's cue once more not in chastising God but in treasuring all He has done. Yep it's all there this morning in **JESUS' FIRST (RECORDED) WORDS**. Amen.