

Written Copy: Luke 2:46-49 “Always About the Father’s Business”

The 2nd Sunday @ Christmas

Sunday, January 4th, 2026

Text: Luke 2:46-49

⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Exegetical Statement

Although Jesus was 100% the divine Son of God, He was also 100% a human child who grew in strength of body and in human wisdom as He matured. In keeping with His call from the Father to live the perfect life we could not, He observes the Jewish festival of Passover as called for in the laws of Moses. But when its time to return to His hometown of Nazareth, He stays behind in Jerusalem at the temple, unbeknownst to His parents Mary and Joseph. When, after traveling a day's journey, His parents discover He is not with the group of friends and family; they turn back to Jerusalem and spend three days frantically searching for Him. They finally discover Him in the last place they think of looking, which should've been the first place, in the temple. He is there discussing theology and Scripture with the learned men and teachers of God's Word, doing so not in an antagonistic way that shows them to be incompetent, but engages them for three days straight, leaving them amazed at His depth of understanding, wisdom, and practical discernment through the questions He asks and His response to theirs. When Mary and Joseph find Him they are shocked, gaping in astonishment that this is where He is and what He is doing. Mary, out of frustration and wonderment chastises Jesus for what appears to be disobedience to them. But Jesus responds by gently teaching and reminding them that He has come as the precious gift of the Heavenly Father to be first and foremost about that Father's business. This is beyond Mary and Joseph's understanding. Nonetheless Jesus returns with them and is perfectly submissive and obedient to them, continuing to grow in wisdom and maturity physically, and in the grace and favor of His Heavenly Father.

Focus Statement:

Like Solomon we should lay our problems, struggles, and requests before our Lord God in His presence, knowing that in Christ we are blessed with all the spiritual blessings we could ever need: redemption from a life lived apart from our God now and forever, and declared good enough to be His precious child, a member of His family. As such He is always ready and willing to help us with what He knows we truly need temporally and spiritually.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Unlike Solomon, when we face problems and questions on how to handle life situations, we turn to ourselves, to others, while turning away from the One who is best suited with knowledge and power to help and provide what is truly needed.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Know that Jesus is always about the Father's business of providing for our temporal and spiritual needs and graciously fulfills those needs through the Means of Grace

Subject Sentence: Jesus is about the Father's business in His house for you

Introduction: Who Do You Turn to When Trouble Strikes?

Well, here we are beginning a brand-New Year: 2026. This is the time we'd like to turn the page and leave behind the problems of the previous year, as well as the ways we didn't handle those problems all that well, or perhaps didn't handle them at all. It's the time when we try to make a fresh start through resolutions and plans to do things differently than last year. It's a noble thought, but at the same time we know that resolutions and plans fly out the window after the first couple months of the New Year, if not sooner.

Some of that is just the way we naturally handle problems and issues when they come up. Many times, our general reaction is to turn inward, looking to ourselves saying, "How can I handle this problem? How can I get through this?" When we find insufficient resources in our own head we might begin to look outwards. Now, having to go to another human being for advice and support can be a hard thing for a self-made American man or woman. A much better place to turn in this day and age is the internet. As many of you know, you can find all kinds of self-help videos that walk you through not only how to fix things with your hands but can offer advice on how to repair emotional and relational problems too.

Barring that we still may turn to a friend or resident expert and ask their advice and opinion. But we do this reluctantly with this mantra running through our mind, "***The Lord helps those who help themselves.***" It may surprise you to know that saying is not a quotation from Scripture, but from Benjamin Franklin who was himself quoting one of Aesop's Fables.

There is an opposite reaction people sometimes have which is to do nothing; to kind of shut down, unable to move forward out of depression and hopelessness over what appears to be beyond our ability to address and fix. Sometimes that is coupled with a sense of entitlement that moves us to think that it's the government's or some other authority's job to come and take care of it all for us while we do nothing and change nothing. After all, we just want the problem or issue to go away, not to have to change the way we do things or the way we live and handle issues.

Where is the one place we don't turn to right away that should be our first place to turn? To our God. And why is that? Sometimes the reason is we don't want to bother Him with the small stuff. We think, "I can handle this", or "I should be able to handle this. I don't want to wear out my favor with Him." There is also the matter of control. We want to have control over our life and all things connected with it. Turning to anyone else, even to God is admitting we don't have what it takes, that we are not in control, and that is a scary thing to face.

Perhaps you have at one time, or another, lifted up your problem to the LORD in prayer, stating what exactly it is you think should be done. Yet nothing happens. He seemingly doesn't answer in the way and time frame we want Him to. It may seem like a cell phone call where you are talking with someone, there name is still on your screen as the call being connected, but no one is responding, because one of you has no service at the moment, or in all actuality the call has been dropped.

Learning a Lesson from Solomon

Perhaps we can learn a lesson from Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, except for Jesus. Where do we find him when our Old Testament Lesson begins? He is at the established "High Place" where the LORD God was worshiped before the temple in Jerusalem had been built. What is on his mind? What is he stressed about with his large number of sacrifices? He is stressed about his fitness to be the next king succeeding his father David over the people of God, the great nation of Israel. Israel had grown to be a powerful kingdom, blessed by the LORD under the reign of David. Solomon knew he had some big shoes to fill. He had already made some tough decisions such as dealing with his brother Adonijah who was scheming to steal the throne from him. Solomon had him put to death. He also banished the high priest who supported his brother and was ready to anoint him king against David and God's wishes. And at his father's request he had Joab, the former general of the army under David killed. The reason being Joab disobeyed David's expressed orders and killed one of David's sons as well as another military leader out of jealousy. He also sided with Solomon's brother in his attempt to be crowned king instead of Solomon.

Where does Solomon turn for help in ruling God's people? He turns to the LORD Himself in worship. And the LORD comes to Him and in a remarkably gracious gesture invites Solomon to ask how the LORD might bless him. Solomon could've asked for any number of blessings for himself. The LORD God is actually giving him a blank check to fill in. But instead of thinking only of himself, he thinks of the needs of others, the people of God, and confesses his inadequacy to be the king over them. In his request Solomon seeks not his own glory but to glorify God as God's king over God's people.

And what does the LORD do? He honors this unselfish request, blessing Solomon with great wisdom and discernment, greater than any other king had at that time or before him. And the LORD doesn't stop there; He gives Solomon the blessings he could've asked for but didn't: great riches and honor.

What can we learn from Solomon? Not only is the LORD God the first one to seek out for help with those things that are beyond us, but to seek Him out where He promises to be found, in the place where He is worshiped. And especially when our requests are unselfish, aimed at how we can help, bless others, we can be assured He will answer. He gives us what we need, in ways we didn't expect, and often more than what we asked for, all in His time and His way.

How Can We Know He Will Answer? A Lesson from Paul

But how can we know He will answer our call for help? There have certainly been times in my life prayer seems to be like a phone call where there's no one else on the line, just dead silence. In a world where everyone plays favorites, and getting help can depend on who you know, it's easy in midst of worry and strife to think that God just doesn't care about me or my problems like He does others.

Ephesians 1:3-5 ³ **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,** ⁴ **even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love** ⁵ **he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,**

Paul has a great word for us in our Epistle Lesson. You should never see yourself as burden to the LORD, or an afterthought, or a side-project that He involves Himself in when He's not busy helping anyone else. How important are you to Him? He knew you before you were born. He chose you to be His very own before He even created the world. He desired so greatly that you belong to Him that predestined you to be His baptized child, working out every detail to make that being His child became the reality of your life.

Ephesians 1:7 **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,**

He knew that by your thoughts, words, and actions you would be unworthy to be His child. He knew your desire for self-control that puts you as ruler over your own heart and life in place of Him. He knew you would doubt His ability or desire to help. He knew you would seek help from others before Him. He knew you would let depression rule the day instead of His promises and His word. He knows how we desire the quick fix to our problems that don't require us to change anything that causes the problems in the first place.

Because of this He sent His only Son to be your Savior, your Redeemer, the one who paid the price to ransom you out of the life you and I earn for ourselves: one where we are ruled and condemned by sin and therefore separated from our Creator God now and for eternity. He saved you from that life by paying the price that was His body and blood, given and shed for you on the cross. All that would stand in the way of you being His precious child, a member of His family has been paid for and removed forever. In Christ He made you good enough to be His very own.

Find Help Where Jesus is Always About the Father's Business

All this being said, where is it that we should turn for help, for comfort, for support during the hard and trying times? Well, most certainly to our Lord in prayer. Because of all Jesus has done for us we have a direct line to Him 24-7. And our Lord God is certainly powerful enough and capable enough to answer and help anytime, anyplace, anywhere.

But remember what we learned from Solomon, the wisest man ever to live. The place to go and receive that help we seek, the help that only God can give, is the place where He promises to be, the place where fellow believers gather for worship, the place where His real presence is in Word and Sacrament, here in His Church.

Remember what Jesus told His parents in our Gospel Lesson when they were dealing with a huge problem, one that is beyond the likes of what we deal with most days. To them had been entrusted the care and keeping of the Messiah, and they had lost Him. For three agonizing days they searched everywhere for Him. And where was He? The last place they thought of looking: the temple in Jerusalem. Does that sound familiar? Isn't that a lot like us when we are faced with a problem? Have you ever been so busy trying to solve it, so worried about it, that you don't feel you have time to go to Him in prayer, read His Words to you, come to the place where He promises to be in a way He is not anywhere else?

Luke 2:48-49 ⁴⁸ **And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."** ⁴⁹ **And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"**

"Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" It's interesting to know that in that verse the Greek word that is usually translated as "house" is not there. Neither is the Greek word that is translated as "temple". What Jesus is really saying here is broader than just being in His Father's house. It certainly means that. But it also means that He must be about His Father's things, His Father's business. That's what He was doing there. He was asking them questions that moved them to think about what God's word really says and giving them the kind of engaging answers that could only come by the wisdom of God. In a manner very respectful for His age He was growing their faith and knowledge of God while hearing from them their thoughts and issues.

Jesus is still about that in our day, here in this place. How much more should you and I make God's house the first place we turn to find His help? He provides help that may not be exactly what we think we need, but help that is greater than a temporal band aid, help that draws us closer to the One who is mighty enough to handle all our problems in ways we could never foresee.

Conclusion

As you go about the business of living your life and dealing with the daily struggles, where are you turning for help and support? Where should you turn? Certainly, we should never just sit on our hands and do nothing. Yet the axiom that "***God helps those who help themselves***" is neither Biblical or completely truthful" God helps you not because of what you can do, or have done, but because of His great love for you, as most clearly expressed in Jesus' death and resurrection for you.

No matter what is going on in your life He wants to hear from you. He wants you to pray to Him anywhere and everywhere. At the same time, He wants you to open your ears to His word and listen to what He has to say to you. And He wants to spend time with you, wherever you may go, and especially here, where He is really and truly present in Word and Sacrament. Through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace He equips you to handle the stresses and problems of the day. And He equips you with strength of faith, patience, godly wisdom, and hope, so that you remain close to Him, even when His answer doesn't come according to your timing and in the way you expect it to. Perhaps, like Solomon, He has greater plans for you, a greater answer for you, greater gifts than you could think to ask for. Jesus Christ, Your Savior, is always about the Father's business in your life, the business of keeping you in steadfast faith to enjoy the greatest gift, the greatest blessing: eternal life to come. Amen.