

Written Copy: Luke 2:46-50 "How Well Do You Know Him?"

2nd Sunday @ Christmas

Sunday, January 2nd, 2022

Text: Luke 2:46-50

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?" ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.

The text's intent

This incident demonstrates to us that, on one hand Jesus was in an outward sense a typical and obedient Jewish boy in His growth. But unlike other children His age He grew in a theological and Biblical understanding that was far beyond normal, although He didn't flout it as other children might. Then came the trip to Jerusalem for Passover when He was 12-years old, when He stayed behind instead of returning as was the plan with the group Mary and Joseph traveled with. After a 3-day agonizing search, they discover Him in the last place you would expect to find a boy His age, in the Temple. Jesus is engaging in theological and Biblical dialog with the Bible teachers. While He is doing this in a respectful manner of a child with His elders, the depth of understanding and perception He displays in His questions and answers amazes them. Mary and Joseph, as they discover this scene are flabbergasted at this aspect of their son they had never realized before. And Mary reacts to the anguished fear that had filled their search up to this point. But Jesus responds pointing out what both Mary and Joseph should have known from what had been revealed to them from the Lord about their special son. There was no reason to fear for His safety, for He was under the watchful care of His Heavenly Father and was at the temple because it was necessary for Him to be in His Heavenly Father's house about His Father's business. He returns with them and continues to be the obedient child He is called to be by His Heavenly Father, growing in wisdom and maturity. Mary, for her part, did not forget this but treasured it up in her heart along with the other amazing things the Lord had revealed about this special child of hers.

Focus Statement:

Just as Jesus was patient and loving with His parent's lack of understanding, so also, He is with us. He comes to us in His Word and Sacrament so that we might gain a deeper theological and Scriptural understanding of who He is, and therefore grow in faith concerning His mission to be God incarnate, Savior of all mankind, and especially of us.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Although the truth of who Jesus was: God incarnate had been revealed by angels to Mary and Joseph, they were unable to hold a practical knowledge of what this meant. Although we have the witness of Scripture, we also are unable to grasp the full truth of Jesus life and mission, and a functional working of what it means to us. And at times we fail to make use of the revelations given in His Scripture because it is not always a necessity for us to be about His Father's business and in His house.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Confess that despite all our previous encounters with His word in Confirmation, Bible Study, and worship, make use of the ways that He comes to deepen our knowledge and faith in Him and His mission of salvation as Immanuel, our Savior.

Subject Sentence: The Father desires to reveal His Son and His mission

Introduction: The Hermit in the Colorado Hills

Have you ever stopped to think, “How well do I really know the special people in my life?” There is a story about a man who lived a solitary hermit like existence in a small cabin deep in the mountains of Colorado. He had a family that lived not too far away in Boulder Colorado, but they rarely if ever visited him, or invited him to join them for special occasions like Christmas. This was especially true when he grew older and was unable to drive at night, and they were reluctant to drive up to see him. Then the report reached them that he had passed away. So, they came up from the city to collect whatever valuables they might find. What they found was an old shack with an outhouse beside it. Inside the shack, next to the rock fireplace, was an old cooking pot and his mining equipment. There was a cracked table with a three-legged chair standing guard by a tiny window, and a kerosene lamp that served as the centerpiece for the table. In a dark corner of the little room was a dilapidated cot with a threadbare bedroll on it. They gathered up some of the old relics they thought might be worth something and left the rest for whomever might happen upon his shack next. But because they had never really gotten to know him, unknown to them, they left the real treasure behind; a treasure far more valuable than they could’ve imagined.

What Mary and Joseph didn’t know about their Son

How well do you really know those around you? How well did Mary and Joseph know their oldest son? To them, by all outward appearances to them He was a normal 12-year-old boy. If there was anything exceptional about Him, it would’ve been His faithful obedience to them as His earthly mother and father. And so it was that when He did not leave with them to head back to Nazareth at the end of the Passover Feast it caught them by surprise. People travelled to and from Jerusalem for the festivals that required their attendance in caravans made up of family and friends. In those days people looked after the children of friends and family. Because everyone knew everyone else it would not have been necessary for “helicopter parenting”: hovering over your child and keeping him always in sight, especially a 12-year-old boy who was on the verge of the age of accountability. It would’ve been natural to assume Jesus was with the other children of His own age engaged in the activities that would interest kids on such a long journey. And after all, He was always obedient.

So, at the end of a day’s travel, after leaving Jerusalem, when it was time to regroup and set up camp, Mary and Joseph called for Jesus. It was only then they discovered that He was not with the group, and that no one had seen Him since they headed out from Jerusalem. Thus began the ordeal of heading back and searching for Him; a three-day ordeal in which the fear and panic grew day by day. They would’ve searched all the places in Jerusalem that would’ve captured the attention of a 12-year-old boy. Then they came to the least likely place they expected to find Him, and there He was, safe and sound at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Luke 2:46-47 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.**

He was in the midst of Bible Teachers who were amazed at His Biblical and theological understanding, especially considering His age. Now being an obedient child who was respectful of His elders, He would not have been teaching and contradicting these men over their incomplete and sometimes faulty understanding and interpretation of God's Word, as He would do in His ministry as an adult. But He did marvel and amaze them with His superior knowledge as well as His ability of practical discernment and application of what this knowledge should mean to God's people. He amazed them with the perception shown in the questions He asked them as well as His answers, perhaps leading them to new understanding and realization by the very nature of His questions. He asked them questions that made them think, ponder, and discuss, just as He would do later in His ministry as an adult. Just as He would do with Mary and Joseph when they found Him.

Luke 2:48 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."**

As Mary and Joseph come upon Him, they are even more flabbergasted at this scene than these Biblical teachers. First of all, that they find Him there after 3-days, safe and sound, despite all they feared might have happened. Second by the depth of the conversation He is engaged in with these learned men; what other 12-year-old boy could captivate their attention in such a manner. And lastly by what they perceived to be His out of character disobedience and uncaring attitude in remaining behind without their permission. Filled with these emotions Mary speaks a word of consternation and scolding, "***How on earth could you put your father and I through this? Why did you disobey us and stay here without our knowledge or permission?***" And it is here that Mary and Joseph show they really don't know their son as well as they should've.

Luke 2:49 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?"**

What they failed to realize and remember; the knowledge they failed to put into action, is who this 12-year-old boy's Father really is. His Father is the Heavenly Father; therefore, they had no reason to stress of worry about His safety or whereabouts. In fact, as His parents, they were but an extension of the watchful care that was provided Jesus by the Father's angels and His own constant presence. Jesus is saying to them, "***There was no need for you to worry or stress. I am fine. And in fact, I am right where I need to be, in My Father's house going about My Father's business.***"

The Necessary Business The Son Must Be About

It was necessary that Jesus live a life of obedience to God's laws, one of which was to honor His earthly father and mother. And He did that perfectly. But here we see Him keeping the two commandments that supersede this one: 1. To fear, love, trust, and obey God above all things, and 2. Gladly and actively hear and engage in the study of God's Word in His house. Jesus remained behind in obedience to the Heavenly Father's will and plan. In doing so He provided the presence of and witness to His being more than just a human boy. He was giving divine witness that He was in fact God incarnate. This witness was for all gathered in attendance, the Bible teachers, any others gathered around, Mary and Joseph, as well as you and I here today. But Mary and Joseph were unable to understand the reason why this was necessary because, despite being His parents, they didn't understand who He really was, and therefore couldn't understand why certain realities in His life must occur.

Luke 18:31-34 ³¹ **And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³²For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."** ³⁴ **But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.**

His disciples, who followed Him and lived with Him for three years had the same lack of understanding concerning who He was. Therefore, they could not grasp why His destiny in Jerusalem that final Passover was necessary, why it must happen, why He must suffer and die. He had come to earth, God incarnate, not just to be Mary and Joseph's dutiful son, but to fulfill the role that the angels announced of Him at His birth: to be Immanuel-God with us. He came to fulfill the meaning of His name: Jesus-Yahweh saves. He came to be God incarnate who would suffer and die for the sins of all mankind, in order to save them all, in order to save you from the condemnation of eternal suffering and death and deliver you over into His kingdom, His merciful and loving reign and rule that means God is with you now, and forever in eternal life. Mary didn't understand this, and neither did His disciples, until He opened their eyes to it in the resurrection. Then they began to understand who He really is, why He came, and all that He accomplished was for them, and is for you too.

How Well Do You Know Jesus?

How well do you know Jesus; who He is and what He came to do? You certainly have a more complete revelation of Jesus at your grasp than Mary, or His disciples did at the time. We have all the divine wisdom of the four Gospels and Paul's Epistles, all divine revelation of who Jesus is and why His life, death, and resurrection are necessary. You've studied it in Confirmation and heard about it in countless sermons of the past. Perhaps you've been lulled to think that you already know all there is about Him. But do you? The professors at the Seminary, even those who have written Commentaries on the Books of the Bible confess they are still engaged in continued learning and contemplation of what God's Word has to reveal about our Savior: who He really is to us, and who He has made us to be.

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 as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

There are those things you've heard and studied; deep things that deserve continued contemplation and continued study. Things such as the richness and love that are these spiritual blessings poured out by the continued presence of the Holy Spirit who washes us and keeps us blameless before Him. Contemplation over these blessings that we do not earn or deserve, yet the Father intended, planned, and put into action even before you were born, before the foundation of the world, so that you would receive these gifts earned by His Son through your baptism. That He would continue to work through the means of grace to keep you in this wondrous faith to life everlasting. Things such as the wonderful and supernatural love that is God's motivation for these gifts, a love that we will not fully grasp this side of eternal life, which the Holy Spirit continues to reveal to you even now.

Psalm 139:1-6 ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me! ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Such is the knowledge that our God has concerning you and I, knowledge that is too wonderful for us to completely take in. Knowledge that comes from a love beyond our ability to completely understand; yet a love and knowledge that the Holy Spirit desires to give to you every time you study His Word, every time you receive His Body and Blood in the Sacrament. Considering how great is the gift the Spirit wants to give; shouldn't we take advantage of every opportunity to receive it that He offers? How great is your desire to receive this wonderful gift of increased knowledge and faith?

Conclusion

As the relatives of that solitary hermit were leaving his shack for the last time, they encountered his neighbor on the road heading towards them. This man had seen fit to check on the hermit, make sure he had what he needed, and even more important spend time visiting and talking with him. The neighbor asked them if he could have their permission to help himself to what they'd left behind. Hiding smiles and snickers they told him to go ahead. When he reached the dilapidated cabin, he walked over to the table, bent down, and pried up one of the floorboards beneath it. And there he found the treasure that the hermit's relatives had missed, the treasure that the hermit had told his friend about and promised to him. The treasure that was all the gold the hermit had discovered over the past 50 some years; worth enough money to build a palace. That treasure could've been the hermit's relatives if only they had taken the time to get to know him as the neighbor had done.

Our Lord has an even greater treasure for you that He desires to reveal to you through His Word and Sacrament. It's the salvation He purposed, and earned through the gift of His Son, and has presented to you through the work of the Holy Spirit. And with that the wonder, knowledge, and love that He has to give you, along with the realization of who you are as His precious child, and what that means for your life now, and your eternity to come. And the forgiveness that continues to flow to you for all the times you don't make use of all He offers you by the means of grace. I hope and pray that these gifts are worth your continued and increased presence in worship, and time spent studying His Word. He knows you inside and out. How well do you know Him, and His priceless treasure that is His gift of love to you? Amen.