

12-26-21

Sermon- Losing Jesus

Scripture- Luke 2:41-52, CTW- Psalm 148

Hymns- 42, 162

Theme- We love to tell this story because it shows the human side of Jesus that we can all identify with when he nonchalantly dealt with Mary's panic over losing her son for three days. Does He deal with us the same way when we "lose" Him?

I. This Year, Let Us Connect the dots...

I am sure many of us have wondered about Jesus' early life and upbringing. Matthew leaves the child Jesus after his parents returned to Nazareth and picks Him back up more than 25 years later.

Mark doesn't pick up the story until Jesus came to John for Baptism. John gives no historical details in His prologue other than the "Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."

A. Many speculative accounts arose in the centuries that followed to try to fill this gap in the record. But these are far removed from the time of Jesus and of little historical value. There are accounts of Jesus striking a bully dead, and Mary had to intervene to bring the dead boy back to life.

There are accounts of Jesus making clay pigeons and making them come to life. There are accounts of the infant Jesus directing Mary and Joseph on their way to Egypt, and other similar accounts.

Luke's account here is of vital importance as it is the only contemporary account of a part of Jesus' childhood. Despite numerous challenges, Luke has proven to be a very accurate writer.

B. The passage begins with the family making their yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of the

Passover which was commanded by God for all Israelites to attend. The book of Deuteronomy said they were to gather at the place where He had chosen. This proved to be the city of Jerusalem.

As Jesus had to be obedient to the entire Law, it was to be **expected** that He would be there. Mary and Joseph were faithful to come to the feast.

The text goes on to say that Jesus was 12 years old at the time. This is the time of Bar-Mitzvah in which young boys transitioned from childhood to adulthood.

We don't know for sure how far back the custom of Bar-Mitzvah goes, but it seems to be the context of what we see here.

C. This is a ceremony where the lad was examined by the Rabbis and elders in the community to see if he was sufficiently instructed in the Torah. This is a similar practice to confirmation in the church. Today, this examination is done in the local synagogue, but it might have been done in Jerusalem if the parents were able to get there.

Whether formally or informally, we can see that Jesus was found in the Temple dialoging with the teachers there.

What is out of the ordinary here is that Jesus was seated in the midst of the teachers, and the other teachers were standing around listening to Him. Instead of being questioned, he was asking them questions.

One would have expected the young Jesus to have stood, and the teachers sitting and questioning Him. Whether or not it started this way, we do not know.

If so, Jesus proved Himself to be far above them in learning to the point they were willing to take a seat and receive instruction for Jesus.

They were absolutely amazed at His learning. The older Jesus would be accused of being the opposite, but at least here, they were willing to listen.

II. The Frantic Search and Jesus' Response.

A. Whether you are a parent or not, you can all identify with the terror that Mary and Joseph must have been experiencing!

They had started away from Jerusalem with the group of relatives and acquaintances and had assumed Jesus was in the group. As travel could be dangerous to individuals due to highway robbers, they travelled in groups for safety and also for companionship.

So at the end of the day when they thought Jesus would return to them for the night, and He did not come, they started looking in the group for Him. An increasingly frantic search resulted in the horror that He was not there.

Having no other alternative (**cell phones had not been invented yet**), Mary and Joseph undertook the dangerous journey alone back to Jerusalem in the hopes of finding Him. What a shock, and also a great relief, it was when they found Him in the Temple!

However, being glad to have found Him, they seemed to then show some annoyance at Him. Mary scolds Him and says "**Don't you know we have been searching for you?**" Here they act as any parent would. From their point of view, Jesus had been foolish and disobedient. He had put Himself and His mother and Father in jeopardy.

B. But Jesus gave them a cryptic answer which they could not understand. "Why were you searching for me? Why didn't you know that I must be in My Father's house?" In other words, they did not need to spend three days looking for Him. They should have come directly to the Temple.

The word “must,” Greek. is a strong word, often used as a Divine imperative. So Jesus said he had been **especially called** by the Father to come to the Temple and do what He was doing. It was part of the mission He had been sent to do.

Here we come to the great mystery of the two natures of Christ, the human and the Divine. The question therefore becomes “What did Jesus know, and when did He know it?”

As God, He would have to know everything from the beginning. As human, he had to grow in his knowledge. As the text says that Jesus grew in knowledge and maturity. The mystery is not how a human does these things, but **why would Jesus as the Son of God need to learn anything.**

C. How aware was the young Jesus of His divine nature? Was this time the time He became aware of who His Father was?

It is interesting that Luke shows Jesus after His baptism and entry into public ministry **as being led or driven by the Holy Spirit.** Why didn't Jesus who is God, the Son, do miracles in His own power? Needless to say, this has been a source of contention in the church.

III. The Truly Divine Nature of Jesus

A. It is best to paint the divine portrait of Jesus and the human one side by side and say both are true, even though we can't put them together due to limitations in human thinking. John in His Gospel shows more of the Divine portrait while affirming His humanity, and Luke writes the human portrait while affirming His Deity.

So here, we have the portrait of a very exceptional young boy whose ability astonished the elders. You might picture him like Mozart, the child prodigy, in that respect, even though Jesus was far beyond the young composer.

The hand of God must have been upon Jesus for Him to have amazed the Rabbis in the Temple. But Jesus would prove Himself to be far more than that. It was not the time to fully reveal Himself.

So He went home with His earthly parents and submitted Himself to them until the proper time. There it says he grew in grace or favor with God and with man.

B. When we look at this passage, we see a similarity with John 2, where Jesus turns the water into wine at the request of His mother at the wedding feast. Jesus is kind, but let's His mother firmly know that the time of her authority over Him has come to an end.

The cryptic statement "My time has not yet come" shows this. One needs to fast forward to the 19th chapter of John to the cross where He addresses His mother by the term "woman."

We also see in John 13, that the hour being talked about was the hour of the cross, where He would fulfill the will of His Heavenly Father.

So in different ways, Luke and John both show the transition from obedience to earthly parents commanded by the Law and obedience to the purpose of the Father.

The underlying message here is that even though Jesus' calling was unique, it still applies to us as well. Children are still called to be obedient to their parents, despite what modern psychological thought might have you believe.

Young people are not to assume autonomy until they are of age. Jesus was considered to be an adult at 12 in His culture, and we are supposed to believe that they are adults at age 18 in this country.

In Jesus' culture, obedience to the patriarch in the family was expected **even after coming of age.** So Jesus remained in **subjection to Joseph** until He was about thirty years of age.

Whether Joseph had died at this point, or recognizing the divine call upon Jesus, let Him go, we cannot determine.

But the truth for us is that we cannot have a stable society where children rule their parents and make decisions for the family, such as where they should attend church, or even to stop going to church altogether.

Christian parents need to take spiritual responsibility over their children, even if their child is a prodigy.

We also learn that the call of God should still override all.

Jesus was not called to be a carpenter or whatever trade "tekton" means. God had called Him to a special ministry. It used to be that the call to ministry was an honorable profession which parents desired for their sons.

That does not seem to be the case now, partly because of corruption in the clergy, the expensive education requirements, and low pay in relation to many other occupations.

As a result, many parents greatly discourage their children from ministry. This is not a new problem though. Martin Luther's father who was a rising peasant, scrimped and saved to send the young Martin to school with the intentions that he become a lawyer.

Luther would then be able to provide for his kinfolk and parents in their old age. It was a great shock when Martin became a monk sworn to a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the church.

And that was not the end, many of the world's greatest pastors, such as Charles Finney the renowned revivalist, left the practice of law to spend his life in service to God. I am in good company!

Remember in Luke 9:60, Jesus Himself told the man who said he would follow Him when his parents were dead that he should leave the dead to bury the dead. Jesus had called the man, and he declined it, making the excuse of obeying his parents.

IV. So What Can We Conclude From This Passage?

A. That there does come a time in every Christians life, where we must put the will of the Father over the will of an earthly parents. If you feel the need to attend to the calling of God, and you are of age, you must obey, even if your earthly parents and significant others disapprove.

Of course, you need to examine this calling, and be willing to submit to others who will examine it as well. Test the waters, pray, discern, and listen for the voice of your Father in heaven.

To all Christian parents, grandparents, husbands and wives, I say that you have been gifted by God with your child, even as Hannah was gifted by the LORD with Samuel. As a result, she gave the young boy up to the ministry, realizing that God is over all.

B. We should also realize that like a child is to be subject to his or her earthly father, you are to be in subjection to the will of your heavenly Father, and even more so.

You have a responsibility to talk with the person answering the call, pray about it with them, and be subject to God's decision on the matter. He knows best, and He does have a better vision for us, regardless of our age and earthly desires.

Since this is the dawn of a New Year, let us all resolve that we will endeavor to draw closer to God's unique vision for each of us this year!

Amen? Let us pray...