

## **“Discover the Christ Who Is about His Father’s Business”**

Luke 2:41-52

Pastor Jon Haakana

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today we conclude our series where we have discovered in a renewed way, the Christ of Christmas. Today we will actually use a text traditionally used on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas, the story of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12, found in the latter verses of Luke chapter 2. This reading will give us new insight into why Jesus came, and more insight into our lives as children of God.

Early in life, we begin to develop expectations. We learn from our parents and other significant people in our lives how we and others are supposed to behave, the difference between right and wrong, and in general an “expectations” mentality. As we grow and mature, this understanding of what should be in different aspects of our lives and in relation to others and the world will find us disappointed at times. Reality does not always coincide with our expectations in life. Sometimes our views and attitudes in this regard need to be changed in order to embrace what God wants us to see for the future.

We know that Jesus did not enter this world to fulfill human expectations. Mary and Joseph had expectations for their son, Jesus, yet Jesus had to be about His Father’s business and adhere to the will of God and the ultimate mission to redeem mankind and the world. The great news is that our hopes and expectations for an abundant life and finally, eternal life, are fulfilled in Christ.

### **TRAINED AND NURTURED**

No one knows when Jesus realized that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, and what that entailed. We know that introducing himself as the Son of God to his grade school classmates probably wouldn’t have won him any friends. “Yeah right; get outta here.” We have several stories of Jesus’ childhood in writings that were never accepted by the Church. Our Gospel reading today is the only canonical story of Jesus between his birth and the beginning of his ministry, a span of about 18 years. Certainly, he has had a glimpse of who he is by the time he was twelve and this scene takes place. Jesus clearly knows that he is to be about his father’s business, but he may not know exactly what that business entails.

No matter his inside connections to God the Father it is important to note that Mary and Joseph made sure that Jesus was raised in the religious traditions of the people of Israel. They observed the Passover Feast by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem every

year. As a proper Jewish family, we assume that they also observed the many religious rituals and traditions that were customary during that period of history. Perhaps one of the reasons that Mary was chosen to be the mother of God, and Joseph his adoptive father was because the Lord knew that they would bring up their child within the community of faith.

During Jesus' first twelve years he heard the story of the Exodus over and over again. The Exodus is the central historical event for the Jews. When Jesus heard this story, he learned about God's steadfast love and how God moved in history to answer the prayers of his people and bring them into the Promised Land. Jesus' actions were based not only on his relationship with God the Father, but also on his understanding of God's steadfast and overwhelming love.

In this way it is similar to the story of Jesus' death and resurrection for Christians. We are amazed and overwhelmed whenever we reread or hear the story of how Jesus died for us, even though we didn't deserve it, and rose again from the grave to redeem us and deliver us from sin, eternal death, and the power of Satan. In this way, God moved in history to deliver us, his people and bring us into the Promised Land of heaven. Whenever we hear the story we better understand and appreciate God's steadfast and overwhelming love.

## **PRIORITIES**

As a human being, as well as the Son of God, Jesus was obviously a gifted theologian and had an interest in religious subjects. His gifts and talents naturally led him away from Joseph's vocation as a carpenter and toward that of a rabbi and teacher.

Based on his talents, and passions, along with the love of God of which he had heard, Jesus determined that he had to be about his heavenly Father's business. He needed to spend less time in the carpenter's shop and more time in the temple precincts. The truth that he was the Son of God, the Messiah—the one who was chosen to save all of humankind—that knowledge would mold and shape his life. With the knowledge of who he was, Jesus decided that he would be intentional about the direction of his life.

At the same time, Jesus was still obedient to his parents. After spending some time with the renowned teachers and rabbis in Jerusalem, he returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. His life with them was lived in the shadow of who he was and what he was called to do.

## **A YEAR OF GROWTH**

We are in similar positions to Jesus. We too have heard of God's love and the story of

Jesus life, death, and resurrection. In our baptism and our relationship with God we have become children of God and God's lights and witnesses.

We are invited to see the center of our lives as being about our Father's business. This is a vastly different perspective than viewing religion as simply something that we do on Sunday. God nudges us to allow the understanding that we are people of God and servants of God to mold and to shape who we are and what we do. Such knowledge should affect how we live out our vocation, the type of parent or child we are, our spending priorities, and our outlook on life.

No matter where we are in our walk with God, God continually invites us to take another step of faith, to grow in our love and commitment, to expand our service. Comfort and convenience are never God's goals for us—faithful obedience is.

An interesting cartoon shows a fourth-grade boy standing toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose with his teacher. Behind them stares a blackboard covered with math problems the boy hasn't finished. With rare perception the boy says, "I'm not an underachiever, you're an overexpecter!"

If I trust in the God of Scripture I'm no longer led by MY righteousness and holiness. Instead I'm trusting a God who is so holy and so righteous that my tendency will be to build my life around Him (rather than Him around me). I'll use His standards of right and wrong -- not mine. I'll build on His morality in my life -- not mine. I'll build on His expectations for me... not mine.

AND I know if I trust in Him in these matters... I will be blessed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus doesn't necessarily want us to stick around the church more, or do more churchy things. These are good things, but they do not exhaust the breadth of living an abundant life. He does want us to understand what God has done for us, who we are, and what we are about. That knowledge is to mold our lives and to enable us to be open to whatever paths of ministry God might will for us. All this to God's glory and honor. Let's be about our heavenly Father's business each and every day. In Jesus...

Amen