

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

GOSPEL – Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Festival. ⁴³When the days had ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Since they thought he was in their group, they went a day’s journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.”

⁴⁹He said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father’s business?” ⁵⁰They did not understand what he was telling them. ⁵¹He went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵²Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.



Mary & Joseph’s favorite Christmas present seemed to be lost.

- ✓ Horror stories of lost presents abound on Christmas, like airlines losing packages on the luggage conveyor belt.
- ✓ A man in Denver, named Jerry Claus, lost everything in his RV one Christmas week in a fire.
- ✓ A friend named Sam, who worked where the guy parked his RV, found and purchased a used Winnebago and gave it to Jerry him outright, fully functioning kitchen and power generator.

After going down from Nazareth, crossing the Jezreel Plain, and hiking up the Shephelah hill country, Mary and Joseph ascended the mountain to Jerusalem

- After singing 15 special psalms and perhaps waving palm fronds on the way
- After sacrificing the lamb and spending a week celebrating the Passover

Jesus was nowhere to be seen. The Savior of the human race seemed to be lost.

- We’d like to know more about Jesus’ “lost” years, when He grew in wisdom and stature.
- But all we get is this one, which gives us plenty to think about.
- Parenting, obedience, and growing in the knowledge of God.
- By this account, we are confirmed in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and His place is the temple.

We start to understand ***All The Fuss About The Boy Jesus***

I. God doesn’t want us to stop pondering Him

II. Jesus hasn’t gone anywhere we can’t find Him

I. Jesus remained in Jerusalem, His parents unawares.

- He was still under His mother's authority as a son of the covenant, still a youth, not a man.
- But perhaps He got to talking to one rabbi who decided to quiz Him in the Torah.
- Impressed by His answers, maybe the one rabbi called others over, and more and more gathered to listen in, playing stump-the-confirmation student.

It was universally amazing.

- They "stood outside themselves," they were "driven outside their senses."
- Everyone fussed over Him, "amazed at His understanding and answers."
- He could more than keep up with the rabbis. He could make comparisons and connections.
- He drew the thoughts and themes of Scripture together.
- So the student became the teacher.

This lost boy couldn't lose their attention.

- The mystery of Jesus as a boy is that He learned like any other 12-year-old.
- He grew in knowledge just as He grew physically.
- It was as though God had amnesia, relearning everything He had already known since eternity.

We can get lost in theology and doctrine.

- We reach our intellectual limits when we can't grasp that Jesus is true God and true man.
- We may even become disinterested.
- Christmas may seem as though it's just for kids, but we don't always remember the Baby became Lord.
- The student becomes the teacher.

But ***God doesn't want us to stop pondering Him***

- God wants to draw us close as the boy Jesus drew the rabbis with His understanding.
- He wants to teach us and keep us learning.
- Peter says to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus."
- Jesus would one day tell the parable of the sower; when seeds whose roots wouldn't grow any deeper, because of the rock beneath the soil, are like those believers who refuse to go deeper in their faith.

If you need comfort when you haven't trusted God enough to hunger for His knowledge in His Word;

- Trust that Jesus Christ learned all that was necessary.
- Trust that God knows the plans He has for you, to bring you to Himself by His Word and sacrament.
- Trust that Jesus knows "all things."
- And you will find a hunger for a knowledge of Him.
- "*Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*" (Gal 3:2 NKJV)
- "*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of God.*"
- Fuss over His all-knowing grace; fuss and hunger and thirst for His informing Word.

II. Three days' search until His parents found Him at the temple.

- We can gain a sense of how they felt.
- According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children [2015], roughly 800,000 children are reported missing each year in the U.S. (2,000 children per day).
- 115 each year are child "stranger abduction" cases, meaning the child was taken by an unknown.
- When flood warnings showed up on our phones for the first time, when Amber alert was new;
- Horrible things happen out there.

They didn't have Amber alert, but Jesus wasn't really lost.

- As amazed as the rabbis in the temple were, so were His parents astonished to find Him there.
- (Note: Not relieved, but astonished.)
- Like the rabbis grappling with their astute 12-year-old, Mary & Joseph didn't get it even after He explained why.

But it seems from Jesus' words like they should have known where He was the whole time.

- I don't know how this mix-up could have happened for Mary and Joseph.
- I don't know if they had just expected Him to follow routine.
- I do know that Jesus had a sort of "dual custody" between Mary and God the Father, whose house was the temple.
- And He had spent more time with his mother.
- Of course His mother taught him at a young age about God and we assume they had a regular weekly worship life on the Sabbath.

But imagine spending time learning about one of your parents, your Father, without actually spending equal time with Him at His house.

- Remember what Jesus' business would be—bringing the rest of God's sons and daughters to Him, "bringing many sons to glory."
- Seems like Mary and Joseph didn't need to spend three days looking for Jesus, but they should have figured out exactly what He was up to and where He was.

Do we go looking for Jesus, wondering if we've really found Him?

- Do we seem closer to God on Christmas, but then wonder what happened to all the peace and joy?
- Have you felt as if you lost the best Christmas present ever ... Jesus?
- Maybe we even feel as though we are lost or that we have lost everything.
- Thank God it doesn't matter how we've felt or where we were.
- ***Jesus hasn't gone anywhere we can't find Him***

As surely as He promised to be made man, fully human, as Mary's Son in Scripture, so surely has He promised to stay with you.

- When you've needed a friend, He has reconciled you.
- When you've sinned and sunk into doubt, He's fought for you and forgiven you.
- When you've needed a win, He has the victory for you.
- When you've needed a defender, He battled the darkness.
- When you've needed a protector who will neither slumber nor sleep, He's there for you.
- *"Never will He leave you, never will He forsake you."*

You know where to find Him when you think you have lost Him.

- Maybe that's when we've left a few Sundays out when we could have gone to church.
- But He's here at His Word. He's in His promises.
- He's here among His believers, wherever 2 or 3 gather in His name.
- He's in this bread and wine, given and poured out for so many.
- He's in your adoption papers with His Name on your forehead in water and Word.

You are not lost.

Nothing important is truly lost in Christ.

And He's not lost. But He is worth the fuss. Amen.