

Christmas 2A, 2011

Text: Luke 2:40-52

Title: Where is Jesus?

+ INI +

All parents are a little nervous, especially with their first child. New parents are constantly afraid that they might do something wrong, and mess up their child for life. They want their children to grow and develop normally- physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They don't want their children to get hurt or sick. They are afraid their kids might wander off or get in an accident or get hurt by a stranger.

Those of you who are parents might remember the fear that lurks in the back of your mind when you don't hear your child making any noise at night or early in the morning. Are they still asleep, or has something happened?

Imagine how nervous Mary and Joseph must have been to be the parents of the Son of God. The Savior of the world was entrusted to their care. How many nights had Mary stayed up watching her baby sleep? How many nights did Joseph wake up in a cold sweat with nightmares about Herod and his soldiers? How many times did they panic and freak out when they thought something was going wrong? Imagine the nervousness and fear.

Yet despite their nerves, their child grew up normally. Our text begins by saying, "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him."

First, Jesus grew and became strong. He was a strong, healthy boy. He ran and played with His friends. He wasn't small or sickly or weak, but He was a strong, healthy boy. Mary and Joseph must have been proud.

Second, Jesus was filled with wisdom. He was a smart kid, always in the top of His class. He did His homework, scored well on His tests, and His teachers loved Him. Imagine going to parent teacher conferences with Jesus as your son. He was a brilliant kid. Mary and Joseph must have been proud.

Finally, the favor of God was upon Him. Jesus was a spiritual child, also. He never complained about going to the synagogue. He always learned His memory work. He always knew the right answers, it was clear that He had a relationship with God. Mary and Joseph must have been proud.

Despite all of their fears and their worries, Jesus was a healthy, smart, and spiritual boy, everything that Mary and Joseph had hoped for.

Since everything was going so well, it would have been easy for them to get a little comfortable, a little complacent. Jesus never got into any trouble, He never disobeyed His parents, He was no

trouble at all. So it would have been natural for Mary and Joseph to give Jesus a little freedom, and not to worry about him quite so much. Eventually the fears and the worries subsided.

So if Jesus was out with His friends, they didn't worry, it's Jesus, what sort of trouble will he get into?

When Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem for Passover, they didn't worry too much about Him. They didn't even worry when they had been on the road all day and they hadn't seen him. After all, it's Jesus, He must be fine.

Until they start looking, and asking around. Have you seen Jesus? Wasn't He with you? And all they got were blank stares and heads shaking, "no."

That's when the panic set in. That's when the "what-ifs" started. What if Jesus got lost and wandered off? What if Jesus was kidnapped by slave traders? What if Jesus had an accident and got hurt?

And so they rushed back to Jerusalem and started a frantic search through the city. Finally, after three days, they found Jesus in the temple.

Mary and Joseph had lost track of Jesus. They thought that He was with them, that everything was fine, but in reality they had wandered off without Him. They had forgotten who He really was, and what He was here to do.

What about you? Have you become complacent? Have you just sort of assumed that Jesus would be around somewhere, even if you haven't seen or spoke to Him in awhile? Have you taken Jesus for granted?

It's easy for us to do. When our faith is new, it's exciting, but also a little nervous. Am I doing everything right? I don't want to mess up. I want to nurture and care for Jesus the best that I can.

But after awhile it's easy to get complacent and take Jesus for granted.

I don't need to pray that often, Jesus will still be there for me when I need him.

I don't need to read or study God's word, I know all the basics, all the important stuff, everything will be fine.

I don't need to worry about my life or how I live my faith. Jesus will forgive me, no matter what, so I can just do what I want.

I don't need to help those in need, someone else will take care of it.

I don't need to contribute any more at church, somehow the bills will get paid and everything will be fine.

I don't need to talk to other people about Jesus. Someone else will do it.

And so we live our Christian lives on autopilot. We just keep doing things the way that we always have. We just assume that everything will work out in the end and be fine. What's Jesus going to do- abandon us? Run away? He'll always be there, no matter what I do.

But then comes the moment of panic, when the fears come back with a vengeance. Something happens in your life and you have a crisis. It could be your health or the health of a loved one. It could be poverty or another hardship. It could just be sin. And you start to realize that you haven't heard or seen Jesus in quite some time. Where's Jesus? You ask.

That starts a frantic search, usually in all the wrong places.

Finally, Jesus is found right where He's been all along, here in His Father's house.

Jesus is the Son of God, and you'll find Him here in God's house.

This is where Jesus still is, today. He is here with His word and with His body and His blood. But that's not all.

Notice how the story ends. After Mary and Joseph find Him, Jesus goes back home with them to Nazareth. He doesn't stay in the temple, but He goes with them.

Jesus will go back home with you, too. He will be with you in your home, in your life, too.

Don't leave Jesus here. Don't leave Jesus at church. Take Him with you.

Take Jesus' words with you. Read them, meditate on them, and they will bless you throughout the week.

Take Jesus' actions with you. Live Jesus' life of obedience to His Father throughout the week.

Take Jesus' forgiveness with you. Remember all week long that you are forgiven, and then love and forgive those you meet in the week ahead.

Yes, Jesus is here, in His Father's house, but He goes with you, to your house, too.