**Luke 2:40-52**

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. **41** Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. **42** And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. **43** And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, **44** but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, **45** and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. **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. **51** And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

**“The Building Project Promised By God”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Today is the last Sunday after Christmas. It brings closure to the early life of Jesus. What we hear today of the young boy twelve years of age is the final picture of Jesus until years later where John the Baptizer proclaims Him the Lamb of God. Of course, the empty space between Jesus’ childhood and when He began His ministry is silent about those roughly eighteen years. Some demanding answers get lost in ancient texts outside of Scripture. These stories portray miraculous acts of God’s Son that are by no means humble. A person can easily go off course with such false glory to who Jesus is and why He came.

St. Luke makes it his goal to leave us with a sure foundation in the Gospel. Jesus was not lost, but found to be exactly where He was to be. He said, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” Being at the temple in Jerusalem was important, but there was more. Another way to translate His Words is to say, “I must be among the things of my Father” or “I must be about my Father’s business.” The last account of Jesus at age twelve already tells us He is the Son of the Father. Likewise, since it was Passover, He was listening and asking questions that certainly dealt with the salvation of God. As Christmas comes to a close for us once again. You can count on Christ to be about the Father’s business for you.

Mary and Joseph had the Law of God as part of their business. The custom for Jews during Passover meant traveling to Jerusalem. This was not an option. Moses commanded, “You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, but at the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice…” (Deuteronomy 16:5-6). Of course, after King Solomon built the temple with wisdom given by God. Jerusalem would be the place from now on to celebrate the Passover. Of course, as important as it was to go to the house of God. Joseph and Mary had to head back to their daily routine in Nazareth.

Life is back to business as usual for us. We know how Churches swelled with people from the Christmas celebrations. Charitable giving and offerings in December are always up compared to other months. Now with the start of 2015, plenty have also resolved to do this or that differently. Maybe it is to be healthier, kinder, more giving, or to deal with bad habits that are just hard to break. Perhaps God’s Word has hit a nerve for the need of a more spiritual life in our family like Mary and Joseph. The writer from Hebrews does say, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (10:24-25). As we now have straighten out our business guess it means full steam ahead.

Of course, while Joseph and Mary returned home, Jesus made it His business to turn them back to Him. Having got caught up in their travels to home. They missed how Jesus decided to stay behind in Jerusalem. Worse than embarrassment was the deeper desperation to find this son God had entrusted to them. The number one priority of being a parent consumed their lives. It must have seemed like forever until three days later they found Jesus at the temple. Mary described the pain of it all, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” His reply gave a sharp break between man under the Law and the Word now become flesh to save sinners. Jesus said, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” The fourth commandment was important, but God told a loving mother and adoptive father to repent and believe in Him.

We all know what it means to be lost. Maybe we remember the lonely feeling as a child saying, “I want my mom and dad.” Maybe we have been that parent panic-stricken to find my child. Worse than naively getting lost is when the most vital things we care about go missing. This includes all kinds of concerns be it bodily health stripped suddenly out of my hands or of someone else I love. It can be the shock left after a divorce or the absence felt after a spouse died. Troubles all around keep cry out missing due justice from terrorism, to corruptions, to abortion, or even to child trafficking. Let alone, the Devil attacks our business by turning our doubt against God. Does God still care about my suffering? Are my works good enough to meet all the demands of life? What if I fail in the responsibility God entrusted to me? The only escape is to return to Christ. St. Paul said, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses…”

Mary and Joseph found God dwelt among them in their business. They were to believe in the only Son sent by the Father. Jesus made it His business to be the Savior. He was the true son of David greater than Solomon and the temple. Instead of despising God’s Word, the youthful Jesus sat with the teachers in all wisdom “listening to them and asking them questions.” Mary and Joseph following the custom of Passover finally were to confess Him who alone was the sacrifice. Joseph likely died before seeing this fullness, but Mary witnessed God’s Son on the cross. Simeon had told her, “a sword will pierce through your own soul” (Luke 2:35). The teachers and people amazed today would years later turn against Jesus. He made the Father’s business to be His faithful service saying, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

The greatest gift is God dwells with us in all our business. Here is what the apostles make known saying, “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). God has made His presence known for all time in Christ and now creates His own kind of people “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” By Word and Sacrament Jesus makes it His business to be the God of our salvation. Baptism has given us new life in His Name to return to Him day by day. He still comes to speak the comfort of forgiveness to all our obligations of life. The true Passover lamb lets us even eat and drink of His sacrifice. He gives the assurance that all doubt, fear, and distress meet their answer in Him. God is not far from us but faithfully abides in love for those lost without Him.

Jesus submitted to His parents to fulfill the Law, but now He seeks to dwell in lives by His fullness from the Gospel. Mary had to be a mother, but she “treasured up all these things in her heart.” We can abide in God’s grace and the promise of His Word while we go about our business. You can count on Christ to be about the Father’s business for you. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.