

⁴¹ His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; ⁴⁴ but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶ Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Luke 2:41-52 A 12/30/18 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Hebrews 2:10-18 Psalm 1 Resp. Ps. 111
Hymns: 706, 709, 92, 85 (1-3, 13-15)

SEE IN JESUS GOD'S SON AND YOUR SAVIOR

Dear fellow believers in Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Savior,

My pastor when I was growing up had a black and white abstract picture of Jesus. When he first showed it to me, I couldn't make any sense of it. He held it up for me and pointed out an eye and the mouth and the beard. But try as I might, I just couldn't see it. Other people who looked at it could see Jesus' face, and that just bothered me all the more that I couldn't. My pastor told me to just give it some time and it would become clear to me.

When Jesus was a boy, every year His parents would go to Jerusalem, the capital city and religious center of the Jews, for the feast of the Passover. This was somewhat like our Synod conventions in that the faithful would travel from all over to get together for fellowship and friendship, and for worship and growth in God's Word.

When Jesus was twelve, Mary and Joseph took Him to Jerusalem with them for the Passover. When the festival days were over, Mary and Joseph set off for home. Unbeknownst to them, Jesus stayed behind. Mary and Joseph were traveling with a large group of family and friends and other acquaintances, so it took them a whole day before they realized that Jesus wasn't with them.

Any parent can understand the panic that hit Mary and Joseph. They hurried back to Jerusalem to search for Jesus. There were hundreds of thousands and even millions of people in Jerusalem at these festival times. Finding Jesus was truly like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

Years ago our family was shopping in a mall. We were all walking together in the main walkway, keeping an eye on each other. One second our little two-year-old was right with us. The next second he was nowhere to be seen. We were at a four-way intersection in the mall, which was packed with people. We split up and could cover three of the four directions. But wouldn't you know it, our son had gone the fourth direction. Controlled panic immediately set in. Stories of what has happened to some children who got lost ran through my head. If I had had to search for my boy for three days like Mary and Joseph had to, I would have been a basket case. I hurried to the information center. Some nice people had taken him there, thank the Lord. There he sat gulping back tears, receiving the grateful love of his family (and some stern warnings).

Finally *“after three days [Mary and Joseph] found [Jesus] in the temple.... So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’”* Poor Mary and Joseph had been worried sick. Jesus was twelve years old, plenty old enough to know the effect His disappearance would have on Mary and Joseph, especially after three days!

Jesus told them, *“Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”* We’re told, *“But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.”* Jesus is the Son of God, and as such, the Bible says, is *“without sin”* (He. 4:15). Therefore He could not have done anything wrong by not telling Mary and Joseph where He was. Mary and Joseph had been thinking in terms of Jesus as their Son. It was a harsh way for Jesus to show them, but they had to grow in their understanding that Jesus is first of all God’s Son.

Jesus had been *“in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.”* At the time of the Passover celebration, many learned rabbis gathered in the temple at Jerusalem to discuss religious matters. Although He is the Son of God, Jesus showed proper respect for His elders by not lording it over them or dominating the conversation. Even at twelve years old, can you imagine those supposed Bible experts discussing Scripture with the Son of God?! The Boy’s wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures astounded them. The rabbis knew a lot about the Scriptures, but they didn’t have a true understanding of the Scriptures. They knew a lot about God, but they didn’t know God.

Mary and Joseph were good Christian parents. We’re told that they *“went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.”* Only the men were commanded to go to these festivals. But Mary, a pious believer, also regularly went along. She and Joseph never missed. They loved to go to God’s house and worship, and they raised Jesus the same way. Jesus didn’t cause His parents grief as children do who don’t like to go to church. He loved and honored God’s house, and that gave His parents joy. *“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”* Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Third Commandment for us sinners. That was part of *“My Father’s business”* Jesus referred to in the temple.

When Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem after Mary and Joseph left, it shows the trust they had in Him. Jesus had never given them any cause for worry, but perfectly loved, honored, and obeyed them. After Jesus had finished that part of His Father's business in the temple, He went home with Mary and Joseph *"and,"* we're told, *"was subject to them."* *"Honor your father and mother, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* Jesus honored and obeyed His earthly parents, perfectly fulfilling the Fourth Commandment for us sinners. This too is part of *"[His] Father's business."*

How could Mary and Joseph have understood that Jesus had to be about His heavenly Father's business in this way? They didn't at the time. *"But His mother kept all these things in her heart."* It was one more thing that showed Mary and Joseph that Jesus isn't just Mary Son, but also the Son of God! When Gabriel informed Mary she would give birth to God's Son, although she couldn't understand how that could happen, we're told, *"Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart"* (Lk. 2:19). When she didn't understand what Jesus meant when He said He must be about His Father's business, we're told, literally, she *"treasured all these words in her heart."* It was God's Word that gave Mary her understanding of Jesus.

The Bible says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Ro. 10:17). If something in the Bible doesn't make sense to us, if we'll treasure it – ponder it in our heart – it will. Faith humbly lays aside all questions and objections and is open to all that God's Word says. It is by faith in what the Bible says that we understand Jesus. By faith we don't just know about Jesus. We know Jesus.

"Then [Jesus] went down with [Mary and Joseph] to Nazareth, and was subject to them.... And [He] increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." As true Man during His earthly ministry, Jesus grew in wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures. Jesus perfectly obeyed all of the Law's commands and Commandments in our place. Jesus perfectly obeyed all of His Father's will for our salvation, to the point of giving His life for our sins on the cross.

"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" – which is the work of our redemption. These are the first words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. How fitting that in His first words Jesus speaks of being about His Father's business to save us. The very last thing Jesus said just before He died was, *"It is finished!"* (Jn. 19:30). Jesus finished all of His Father's business, and we are saved!

I kept staring at that abstract picture of Jesus my pastor had. All of a sudden it became clear to me. There was the face of Jesus, as plain as day, just as I had been told.

Christian friends, keep treasuring God's Word in your heart. Always look for Jesus in the Bible. Through His Word we see Jesus, believe in Him, and are saved. Amen.