

The First Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord
St. Luke 2:41-52
January 12th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

My Father's Business

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who in mercy hast established the Christian home among us: We beseech Thee so to rule and direct our hearts, that we may be good examples to children and servants, and not offend them by word or deed, but faithfully teach them to love Thy Church and hear Thy blessed Word. Give them Thy Spirit and grace, that this seed may bring forth good fruit, so that our homelife may conduce to Thy glory, honor and praise, to our own improvement and welfare, and give offense to no one; through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When we last saw our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke he was in the temple as a baby at forty days old. The Evangelist St. Luke fast forwards us to today's Gospel reading where our Lord + Jesus is now a Boy of twelve years old. He was now a "son of the law" according to Jewish tradition. He had passed out of the years of childhood, and was allowed to take part in the celebration of the Jewish festivals. Just as He was found in the temple for the first time as a forty-day-old Baby, He is now found in the temple as a twelve-year-old Boy.

This is now the proper place for our Lord + Jesus to be found. As a "son of the law", He must be about His Father's business. Simeon had spoken about this child when He was forty days old that He would be the cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel. Anna, the prophetess, told about Him to all those who sought redemption in Israel; all those who came to the temple to seek redemption through the sacrifices brought to the temple to appease the wrath of God for sins. Here we see the Boy + Jesus sitting amongst the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

This is the proper posture for students, especially for students who are children. He is not there putting on an air of superiority or showing off His great knowledge. But He is respectfully learning from them all they can teach Him. He is listening to them. He is respectfully asking questions of clarity. This is how we should be as students; deferring to the teachers of the Scriptures. Learning the Word of God was part of His Father's business. The Word of God is part of the things of God. It is in this that we also should spend our time.

The business of the Father is not just found in the temple, it is found wherever the Word of God exists; it is to be found everywhere. This is actually a poor translation. The literal Greek phrase is "the things of My Father." The Lord + Jesus must be around the things of His Father. The English translators want to supply some object for the word in Greek that can only mean "things." We have here "business." Other translations have "house." But the Holy Ghost leaves these "things" unspecified for a reason. Our

Lord + Jesus must be about all the “things” that His heavenly Father is about. Certainly, the sacrifices performed in the temple are part of the Father’s business, but the Father’s business is more than just the sacrifices. He is in charge of the whole universe.

Sitting in the temple and learning the Word of God from the teachers—learning how the teachers understand the Lord God and Who He is—is part of the business—the things—of the Lord + Jesus’ Father.

When the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph find Him in the temple they are shocked by the scene. The English word “amazed” does not quite carry the magnitude of their amazement. This is something they had never seen in their Boy. Both of them had received proclamation from an angel about Who this Boy was going to be, but we can gather from the Evangelist St. Luke’s omission of the last twelve years that He lived an exceptionally ordinary life. We will not see our Lord + Jesus again until He is thirty years old. Again, we can assume from the silence of all four of the Evangelists that His life was an ordinary life. He was subject to His parents in all things. He lived a normal life increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.

So, for Him to be found in the midst of the teachers in the temple both listening to them and asking them questions, revealing to His earthly parents His great wisdom and understanding of the Holy Scriptures it is “amazing” to them. It is shocking to them, because they had never seen this from Him. It not only amazed His parents, but “all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in her shock and amazement does not know how to respond. She just spent three days looking for her Son “anxiously.”

People make a big deal about how He is found by His parents in the last place they looked. Of course, this is the case, why would they go on looking if He is already found. You always find what you are looking for in the last place you look. You found it, so why do you need to go on looking? When they looked in other, more logical places (at least to them), first and did not find Him their anxiety increased with each place where He was not where they thought Him to be. Then they find Him where they least expected Him to be, in the temple revealing His knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

One thing that this reading from the Evangelist St. Luke brings out is that St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary went to the festival of the Passover in Jerusalem, every year. As you remember from our study in Bible class there were three festivals that the men of Israel were required to go to present themselves before the Lord God where the temple was (and at the tabernacle of meeting before the temple was built in Jerusalem): Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. Only the men were required to go. The fact that both of our Lord’s parents regularly go to Jerusalem reveal that they were devout and religious parents. They raised their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord God. They set a good example of how one should follow their religion. The parents of our Lord + Jesus set a very good example.

We can assume that they did not leave the children at home. But now that our Lord + Jesus is considered a “son of the law”; He also is required to go to the three festivals, and this is His first time that He is required to go. To be found in the temple in front of the teachers listening to them and asking them questions is not what His parents expected. It is certainly the hope of every Christian parent that their children would continue in the faith that has been instilled in them. But when St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary find their Son in a position that they have not seen—with an understanding of Holy Scripture that they had not witnessed—it is shocking and amazing.

The Virgin Mary finding this scene does not know really what to say, other than that they had sought Him anxiously. They had not expected this scene. The response of our Lord + Jesus to His mother is not one of rebuke. He is not chastising His parents for looking in all the wrong places first.

His response is of equal surprise as His parents. We are told by the Evangelists that these things had been revealed to His parents by the angel Gabriel, but we are not told whether these things had been shared with the Boy + Jesus. We can assume that because He lived a normal life, His parents let Him have a normal life and did not burden Him with these proclamations. We can gather this from the fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary “kept all these things in her heart.” She pondered them in her heart by herself. She did not share her thoughts on these things with other people. At least until St. Luke came asking her about these things, for she is the one who provided the Evangelist with an eyewitness account as He testifies to in the opening verses of his Gospel.

The Boy + Jesus knows Who He is, and what His purpose is, even though it has not been shared with Him by His parents. Where else is He to be than about the things of His Father? Our Lord + Jesus came with one purpose: to fulfill the Law of God for mankind as a man and to suffer and die on the tree of the cross for the redemption of mankind.

The temple was the place where the sacrifices were made for the redemption of the people. Through the shed blood of animals, the wrath of God was appeased. We last saw our Lord + Jesus in this place of redemption as a forty-day-old. Now we see Him at twelve years old in the temple learning from the teachers in the temple. His understanding of man’s understanding of Holy Scriptures is increasing. His understanding of what it means to live as a human is increasing. His understanding of living under the Law of God is increasing.

The next time we see our Lord + Jesus He will be thirty years old and will be at the beginning of His earthly ministry of revealing Himself to mankind as the One True Messiah. The work that He does in these first thirty years is the work of living a normal, human life. He lives a life just like we live our lives. He does not live an extraordinary life. He does not live in castles with kings. He does not live among the religious scholars. He lives just like any of us live. He lives a life of labor; the labor of a carpenter just like his earthly father. And He lived the religious life that was no different from any other devote Jewish family of His time. He worshiped and studied the Word of God just like any of us.

Just like Him we too should be found doing the things of our heavenly Father. We should find ourselves often in the place where our Lord + Jesus offers us the redemption that He won for us on the tree of the holy cross. Here in this place through the means of grace, our Lord + Jesus grants us forgiveness, life and salvation. In our homes, we should also live a devout, holy life just like our Lord + Jesus did; studying the Word of God, praying, and raising our children in the Christian faith. For the redemption of the whole world is found only the Lord + Jesus. Let us be found where He is found, and let us lead others to the place where He is to be found, so that all those who come here may find the redemption from their sins that our Lord + Jesus lived and died to give to us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, when a child, wast seated in the Temple in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, so rule us, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit that, following Thy example, we may love the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honor dwelleth, diligently seek the same, hearing Thy Word with gladness, and faithfully keeping it to the saving of our souls; O Thou, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!