

The First Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord  
St. Luke 2:41-52  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## The Boy Jesus Tarried Behind in Jerusalem

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before 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.

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

St. Luke the Evangelist relates in his Gospel two things that may escape our notice at first glance. It is easy, afterall, to focus on the Boy + Jesus being in the temple and being sought by His parents. His obeying of the Fourth Commandment—to honor Thy father and mother that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth—is readily seen. This pericope even ends with the Evangelist St. Luke telling us that our Lord + Jesus was subject to His parents, while He lived with them in Nazareth growing up. It is certainly a simple task to behold the Lord God Who is Creator of Heaven and Earth placing Himself under His own Law by becoming man, and fulfilling that Law perfectly as a man. Even the Law of honoring and obeying one's father and mother.

There are, however, two things that we easily pass over. Pun intended. The reason for the visit to Jerusalem is for the Feast of the Passover. This of course is also a part of the obedience to His earthly parents that the Lord + Jesus fulfills. He went with them to Jerusalem, every year, for the Feast of the Passover. But there is a deeper implication that St. Luke is making. You may remember me saying during the season of Advent that St. Luke's Gospel begins with a priest, the priest of Zacharias, and ends with a Lamb, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. St. Luke's Gospel began in the temple of the Lord God where the angel appeared to Zacharias while he was offering incense. The temple is also a key element to the Gospel of the Evangelist. For it is in the temple where priests sacrifice lambs for the remission of sins of those who in repentance offer

up the lamb in exchange for their sins.

St. Luke had already relayed that our Lord + Jesus had first been in the temple when He was forty-days-old. Again, in obedience to the Law and custom of the Jews, which we will hear about on the Festival of the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today, we find the Boy + Jesus, Who is twelve-years-old, once again in the temple of the Lord God. The temple was the place where the Lord God met His people. It was the place where He dwell with His people, and offer them the gift of forgiveness of sin through their penitential act of offering a lamb for their sins.

Now the Lord God dwelt with His people in the Person of the Son of God. Now the Lord God met His people in their own flesh. He lived among us as one of us. The True Temple, the Lord God bearing our flesh, Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, comes to the temple made with hands. The Son of God comes to the house of His Father. The house where the heavenly Father intended to be a Father to His children who came to them humbly and desiring forgiveness.

Our Lord + Jesus has suddenly come to His temple, the Messenger of the covenant that in Him alone is life and salvation, in Whom we delight in, but let us not forget why the Lord + Jesus is in Jerusalem; why He is in the temple. He is there during the Feast of the Passover. The Feast that has so many allusions and tie-ins with the crucifixion. What St. Luke is doing is directing his readers to the event that wins salvation for all of mankind, especially those who believe on the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. St. Luke tells us that our Lord + Jesus, even when He was twelve-years-old, was preparing for the true Passover. When the Lamb of God would be sacrificed at twilight on the tree of the holy cross for the sins of the whole world, so that the punishment that we deserve on account of our manifold transgressions might pass over us. So that He might take upon Himself, bearing our flesh, the punishment for sins which we so richly deserve.

This is further emphasized by the Evangelist St. Luke when he tells us how long the Lord + Jesus was in the temple. How many days did his mother and father search for Him? They found Him in the temple after three days. The Boy + Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, the place of the temple, for three days. The Boy + Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem for three days. With this phrase that can be glanced over quickly, St. Luke directs our focus to the death and resurrection of our Lord + Jesus. This is the whole purpose our Lord God becomes flesh. It is why our Lord + Jesus is born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. It is why Wise-men from the East came and worshiped Him presenting to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. He came to place Himself under His own Law, fulfill it perfectly as a man, and offer up His innocent and perfect life as a ransom for all of mankind on the tree of the holy cross.

He would then tarry behind in Jerusalem—in the grave—for three days. So that He could rise again from the dead, and burst open the grave and the tomb of all those who cling to Him in faith. In other words, the Evangelist St. Luke presents to us in this Gospel Reading for the First Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord both the obedience to the Law by the Lord + Jesus, and His sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. We are shown in this brief pericope the life and death of our Lord + Jesus. He comes to His temple to be among His people. He takes upon Himself our flesh to be among us, His people. He comes robed in humility to win for us salvation from sin, from death, and from the power of Satan.

It makes one wonder what the Boy + Jesus, being twelve-years-old was asking the teachers about in the temple. What was He hearing them and asking them about in the temple for three days? We are not told, but would be a safe bet in my estimation that the focus was centered upon the coming of the Messiah. Who the Messiah was to be; what purpose was His coming. That the Messiah was to suffer and die and be raised again on the third day, was surely a main topic. For that is what the Lord + Jesus preached when He began His ministry at thirty-years-old. He proclaimed that He must suffer

and die and be raised again on the third day in order to atone for the sins of the whole world, so that all those who believe on Him might have life and have it abundantly.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not pass over what St. Luke the Evangelist would have us learn. That the Boy + Jesus tarried in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Passover for three days in the temple. The Lord God has come to His people and He dwells with them not only in their flesh, but in the temple where the Lord God made clear He would meet His people to bring them forgiveness of their sins.

We also have a place where we may meet our Lord + Jesus. He tarries here with us in this place by His Word and Sacraments. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name to hear the pure preaching of the Word of God, and to receive the Blessed Sacraments according to His institution, He is tarrying there with us. In this house of the Lord God, the Lord + Jesus both hears our sins, and forgives us. He asks us to open our ears and hear about our salvation in Him alone. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly for us. He has ransomed us by His death on the cross from eternal death and damnation. Let us cling to Him in faith, and rejoice that through Him we have life and forgiveness.

For our Lord + Jesus comes to us here in this place in His Word and Sacraments. He comes to give to us the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. By the simple means of water, word, bread and wine, He invites us to obey His command to take and eat; His command to receive forgiveness of sins from Him. His commands are not really commands for those of us who cling to Him in faith, for we desire to obey Him. We desire to receive from Him the gifts He has to offer us. Therefore, my dear friends, let us be about our Father's business of receiving the gifts of salvation that His Son + Jesus has come to present to us. And let us rejoice that we may tarry with our Lord and Savior in this place until He calls us from this vale of tears to tarry with Him in Heaven for all eternity. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, 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!*