

“The Search is Over”

Text: Luke 2:46-49

At our request, we received a GPS for Christmas. We realized that for travelling purposes one of those would be nice to have. When we were on a family vacation in Wisconsin several years ago we were lost. We followed computer generated directions and they really made no sense, since we were going around in circles. We finally found our way by asking a farmer and his wife. Our son, on the other hand, found it right away because he had one of these devices.

As the Magi sought the child Jesus, they had a searching locator also. It was the star that they followed. They followed it to Jerusalem and inquired of King Herod where the new king was to be born. The chief priests and the scribes told them where he was to be born and that was in Bethlehem

Some years later, Joseph and Mary were searching for the young Jesus. Any of you who have had a child wander off or run away from home, share their sense of relief. The search was over for them on this occasion. As Jesus answered them regarding where he was, he gives the answer for all who seek salvation and where he can be found. Like Mary and Joseph we can know that-

THE SEARCH IS OVER

- I. God has kept his promise to you**
- II. You know where Jesus can be found**

I.

A. St. Luke takes us from the presentation in the Temple to the young boy Jesus at age 12. This was the age that young boys began to take their place in the religious community of Israel. The verses preceding tell us that Jesus is no ordinary boy. Both Simeon and

Anna testify that he is the one that Israel had been anticipating, the Messiah.

Simeon promised, “*Behold this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed,*” (Luke 2:34) Anna gave thanks to God and said that He was the one all sought for the redemption of Jerusalem. The many prophecies of the Christmas season point to Jesus. They speak of His coming into the world, the manner in which he will come and the reason for his coming.

The joyous message of the angels told it all on that first Christmas evening: “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*” (Luke 2:11) God has kept His promise that He first made to Adam and Eve in paradise and continued on through the prophets. He has sent His Son into the world as your Savior!

B. Verse 40 says of Jesus: “*And the child grew and became strong; filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.*” Our gospel lesson for today points to that very fact. As a young boy, Jesus was already about that work. All Jewish men were required to attend Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles as part of their religious observances. As a pious Jew, Joseph would have been in attendance adding to the fact that this was what amounted to the Bar Mitzvah of Jesus.

As we follow through the gospels and the life of Jesus, we see that Jesus is very obedient to the law. Jesus himself said, “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*” (Matthew 5:17) Jesus perfectly fulfilled everything that His Father had commanded and He did it for you.

God’s desire from the very beginning has been the salvation of the world. It is common for people to think they can accomplish this on their own. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we know. There is a great emphasis in the cultural celebration of Christmas upon the good deeds of people to those who are not as fortunate as they. Certainly as we live out our Christian faith we can show this concern for St. Paul tells us: “*So then, as we have*

opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10)

While caring for others and living in an appropriate fashion is important for Christians, the key emphasis has always been and should always remain, Jesus Christ. The good news of Christmas is that God has kept His promise to His people of old in sending His Son into the world as its Savior.

People are constantly searching. They search for a meaning to their lives through possessions and status. They search for a spiritual relationship through the various religions of the world outside of the Christian faith because they appeal to their intellect or promise peace and security on earth. Some even search for Jesus through means other than the ones He has outlined in the pages of Scripture. As Jesus answered Joseph and Mary, He said, “*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my Father’s house?*” Recently I read that the law of the search is that the first place to look is the last place you would expect to find what you are looking for. The search is over for both them and us for we know where Jesus can always be found.

II.

A. As parents we can identify with Mary and Joseph, having lost the young Jesus in the massive crowd. They wondered where he could have gone to or whom he was with for these several days. We all know that we shouldn’t worry, but often forget to trust in God’s providing and decide to fret instead.

I remember a discussion in Bible class some years ago. One of our members asked my father if he still worried about me. This question was asked against the backdrop that I was grown and had found my purpose in life. My father answered, “Yes.” Upon visiting one our shut-ins several years ago, she commented that she was glad for my visit especially for her son’s benefit because he didn’t attend church regularly. She was 95 years old!

This may well echo the sentiment of Joseph and Mary on this occasion. After searching for Jesus for several days, Mary asked, “*Son, why have you treated us so? Your father and I have*

been searching for you in great distress.” There was a great fear on their part about the possibility of their lost son. Jesus assures them and us as well that His location or presence should never be in doubt.

As God provided for His own Son, so He provides for us as well. His hand was very evident in the life of Jesus from birth to death, carrying out His purposes.

B. Jesus told His parents where He was to be found. He was about His father’s business. As we have closed this old year and begin the New Year, that is a good goal for us as well. Obviously we can’t be about our Father’s business as well as Jesus. He is the perfect, sinless, Son of God. The same grace of God that went with Him for His growth goes for us as well.

Verse 52 following our text concludes: *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”* As we seek to serve God, He provides the means for the word and sacraments for our growth. While the world make many offers and enticements to us, true growth and service comes as we seek Him where he may be found and find joy in the service He gives to us.

This is all possible for us because of Jesus coming into the world as our Savior. God’s word promises this to us and the birth of Jesus accomplishes this on the way to accomplishing our salvation. C. F. W. Walther wrote: *“What happened at Bethlehem was the fulfillment of that eternal decree of the heavenly Father. As soon as His Son became man, the unbearable burden of all humanity’s sin was laid upon Him. Therefore, this atonement for sins, by which God’s offended holiness and righteousness were satisfied and men were reconciled to Him, was already as good as accomplished.”*

The prophet Isaiah tells us: *“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.”* (Isaiah 55:6) We know where Jesus can be found, there is no need for searching. Instead we are strengthened by God’s grace and grow in Him! In Jesus name. Amen.

