

Looking for Jesus Everywhere
Pastor Morgan Murray
West Valley Presbyterian Church

Luke 2:41-52 NRSV

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 43 When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search 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 When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." 49 He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Core

Jesus knows who he is, even as he is growing in wisdom and stature

Call

Remember who you are, and remember that you too are growing... even if doing so disappoints other people!

Compel

Feel self-compassion

This is, in a sense, the end of the "infancy narratives" though no 12-year-old I know would like being called an infant. Like Mary's song, it a story that only Mary could tell. Why might she tell it, and why would Luke include it?

Mary tells it because she treasured it in her heart. It's a story that is funny in hindsight, but not at the time.

Luke tells it because, throughout his gospel, people have experiences with Jesus that don't fully make sense at the time. Jesus does the unexpected. He surprises us, throws us off balance.

READ TEXT.

What we can notice from this bittersweet little story?

Jesus knows who he is. His dual identity as Mary/Joseph's son, and the Father's Only Begotten Son. At twelve, even while he is still considered just a kid, he is actively living into that identity.

Mary says in the NIV, "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." But in the NRSV it begins with, "Look" or lit. "Behold." Like Mary, we often come to Jesus and say "Look at me! Look what is happening to me, how what you are doing Jesus is not working for me!" Jesus instead points to the Father, and calls us to do likewise.

For Parents: It's one of the most challenging parts of our calling. We celebrate that God claims our kids as His own in baptism, but it still disorients us when they start living into that calling. They want to give their nice things away to others who need them. Or they would rather spend Thanksgiving serving the homeless than staying home with us. They get older and tell us they want to serve God in dangerous places or take low or non-paying jobs in ministry after we've worked so hard to get them into good colleges!

Jesus knows his life's purpose. To be about His Father's business. In Luke's gospel the Temple plays a central role. Zechariah's vision, Simeon and Anna's prophecy, now this. From now on Jesus will be challenging his contemporaries to make real the promises that go with the temple. If they don't, the Temple itself will be destroyed.

As Jesus' disciples, we too can follow his example to grow in wisdom and stature. Some people are uncomfortable with the last words of this story. Luke sees that out of the conviction that the human maturing process even in perfect form involves not only growth in size but also development in wisdom and in the capacity to execute that which is pleasing both to God and to one's fellows.

We assume he's not involved in what we're doing, not realizing that we've gone off and left him and his priorities behind. If we search for him we will find him, about his Father's business. It is then that we discover that we too have an identity as Children of the Father that needs to be matured.

Makes us think about when we've lost something precious, or when we've taken Jesus for granted. If we sense a lack of his presence, we may need to go searching for him in prayer, scripture, sacraments, and not to give up until we find him again.

We must also expect that when we find him, he will not say or do what we expect. He must be busy at his Father's work. So must we.

Having you been looking for Jesus everywhere, when it fact he's right where you should expect to find him... about his Father's business?