

Jesus Is Still Present In His Temple

January 5, 2025

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Luke 2:40-52 ⁴⁰ And the Child grew and became strong in spirit¹, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. 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 mother¹ 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.

Today is the twelfth day of Christmas. It is the last day of Christmas, but it is still Christmas. Many people have already taken down their Christmas decorations. Some people are quick to take down their decorations even though Christmas isn't over yet. That of course is a matter of customs. The real problem isn't how quickly you put away your Christmas decorations, but whether you put Christ away with them. Some people are just as quick to put Christ away and forget about him after Christmas is over.

While it is not fair to say that Mary and Joseph forgot Jesus, nevertheless Jesus himself makes it clear that they should have known where to find him. Even after the Christmas decorations are boxed away Jesus is still found in his temple, that is among his people wherever the word is preached.

Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

The temple plays a very important role in the gospel of Luke.

The first account that Luke relates to us is Gabriel appearing to Zacharias in the temple. In the last verse of Luke after the ascension the apostles were **"in the temple, praising and blessing God."**

It is in the temple that Anna and Simeon meet the baby Jesus and prophecy about him. Jesus comes to the temple again at the age of 12 in our text. In the temple the Pharisee receives judgement and the tax collector grace and mercy. Jesus filled with zeal drives out the buyers and the sellers from his father's house. During holy week Luke relates how Jesus taught in the temple.

Yet both our text and the gospel of Luke make it clear that what is important is not the physical building, but that Jesus is among his people through the preaching of the word.

Our text says, "**Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?**" Another way to translate this phrase would be, "**did you not know that I must be among the things of my father?**"

The picture is one of a child in his father's workshop surrounded by his father's tools. The child is practicing with his father's saw and hammer. Except this is the son of God. The tools of his father are not hammers and saws but word and sacraments.

What is Jesus doing in our text? He is teaching the word and listening to the word. The word of the Lord are the tools or the business of his father. Just as David was found in the field watching his father's sheep. So, Jesus was found in the temple going about his father's business.

At the time of our text those things were in the temple in Jerusalem, therefore that is where Jesus is. They do not remain there. Jesus himself removes them and scatters them throughout the world. In the books of Acts Luke talks about how the word went out from Jerusalem. The apostles begin there in Jerusalem, but they go out into all the world, and as they go out Christ goes out with them in his word.

Isaiah 2:3 For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Jesus is in his temple, but his temple is not in Jerusalem. His temple is wherever the word is preached, and the sacraments are properly used. There is his temple and that is where we find Jesus.

How foolish for his earthly parents to fail to realize that is where he must be. How foolish of us to forget that it is still necessary for him to be found there in his word and sacraments.

Just like we are sometimes a little too quick to put away our Christmas decorations, so also, we can be a little too quick to put away Jesus. Christmas is over and we are quick to get back to our lives, instead of carrying that joy of Christ's birth with us. Church services are over, and we are quick to get back to our living rooms instead of carrying Christ with us.

What does Mary do? She carries all these things in her heart. Many scholars assume that because Luke keeps repeating this phrase, this indicates this is his source. How does Luke know all these things? Because Mary carried them in her heart and shared them with him so many years later.

Be like Mary carry these things in your heart, and do not be so quick to put Jesus away.

Jesus is in his temple with power.

The people are amazed, but what are they amazed at? There are no miracles here, no star in the sky, no angels singing. They are amazed simply at his teaching. Long before the miracles Jesus is teaching and listening to the word of the Lord. Jesus is among his people with power, not the raising of the dead and the healing of the lame but the teaching of his word.

This is another major theme of the gospel of Luke. Not just that Jesus is in his temple but that he is among his people.

Gabriel tells Mary that "the Lord is with you"

Zacharias proclaims "he has visited and redeemed his people"

Jesus told the thief "Today you will be with me in paradise"

Jesus walked with the Emmaus disciples.

The Lord is with his people in the teaching and preaching of the word.

This is why we used to begin our services with "The Lord be with you," and the congregation responds, "and with your spirit."

There is wisdom in that response because although we want the Lord to be with all his people, we especially want the Lord to be with the pastor's spirit so that Christ's power is shown through the word that pastor preaches

The Emmaus disciples say of Jesus:

Luke 24:19 who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

Luke tells us in Acts concerning Stephen:

Acts 6:10 they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

Concerning Saul who was then named Paul we read:

Acts 9:22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

That opening greeting which we probably say without thinking is an expressed wish that our pastors also would likewise be filled with wisdom. We pray that the Lord will be with his spirit. It is not physical strength the pastor needs but spiritual strength. We pray that we would find Jesus not only present but present with power through our called workers. Ultimately however Jesus is present not in the strength of the pastors preaching but in the word of God.

Again, we say this phrase all the time, but we forget that Jesus is present in his temple. He is present this morning. He is present in the word that we hear and the sacrament that we are about to receive.

Today is the 12th day of Christmas. Some of you may have already put away your Christmas things. Some of you might be doing it this afternoon or later this week. Vanessa if I let her will wait till March, but don't put away Christ when you put away Christmas. He is still present in his word and his Sacraments. Carry these things in your heart. Amen.