

COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH GOD LUKE 2:40-52
2nd SUN AFTER CHRISTMAS

JAN 3, 2016

⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³ And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵ and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching 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 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were on a journey.

Not just a journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem and back
but journey most parents and children take
from place where children are kept close to parents,
parents keep telling them what to do & help with homework,
and child believes my mom & dad know everything
to place where parents can't help with homework any more
because they don't understand it
and it may be something they have never studied.
and you can't tell them anything
and they don't want to be seen with parents because
they are convinced parents don't know anything.
and parents shake their heads at children, thinking
I just can't understand what's going on with them.
Until arriving at place where parents wait for children to come by
to help them figure out an electronic device or website.
and the children think "I would like to talk to mom or dad
about this because they know a lot.
Along the way they come to point I remember being at
when I told physics teacher, "I just don't understand this.

And he replied, "good, because you don't learn anything new unless you first don't understand.
This is also journey we need to constantly travel with our heavenly father, journey toward better understanding.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WAYS FOR US.
JESUS CAME TO UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE IN SALVATION.
WE COME TO GOD'S HOUSE FOR UNDERSTANDING.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WAYS FOR US.

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Mary & Joseph were on a familiar path.

They went to Jerusalem every year, familiar with route.
They went with group of relatives & friends from Nazareth, were familiar with relationships & routines.

Jesus was too. At home he probably went off for day with friends or cousins, came home at supper time, and it seemed natural for him to do that now too.

But even familiar path can take unexpected turn when you are not paying attention.

Before you know it, everything is bewildering & frightening
When Jesus doesn't come for supper, they panic,
It takes them another full day to retrace steps.

Day after they get back, third day, there he is in temple.
Their heads are still spinning. They don't understand why this happened or Jesus' explanation or anything.

All of this happens during celebration of Passover, annual reminder that God called Israel on journey, starting with strange things, plagues, unleavened bread, blood splashed on doorframes, walking through sea, journey on unmarked path to place they had never been.

Journey on which they did not know the way
except that God was with them, leading them.
Journey that would finally end in the promised land.
God has called us on this journey as well.
We also are part of a group, a church family.
Greek word for group in v. 44 is "synod"
means a group traveling together.
As we go along, we can get used to familiar things,
which we may have known from childhood,
familiar people, words, hymns, routines.
Familiar can be good except that we may not pay attention
to what things really mean, what we are really saying.
so we don't realize how much we don't understand.
And we can be distracted, like people driving
while talking or texting on a phone,
and before we know it, the unexpected happens,
we turn a corner and life throws a surprise in our way.
There is an accident, sickness, loss of job, loss of loved one.
We had assumed Jesus was with us as we went our way
but now it has gotten dark & we don't know where he is.
It can be frightening & confusing. It seems we don't really know
or understand things we assumed we did.
We struggle to remember what God said, what we said,
what we were doing and what it meant.
Text reminds us it is time to go back, go back and find Jesus.

JESUS CAME TO UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE IN SALVATION.

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.

⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Although Mary may have doubted it at times like this,
I think Jesus' parents trained him well,
sent him to synagogue school & helped with his homework.
and he was star pupil at bar-mitzvah, completed at age 12.
which meant now he was a grown man.

He was an amazing boy, amazing teachers in temple & parents.

But along the way he had discovered something
that may have amazed him at first,

which he later explained to disciples was in plain sight
but they didn't see until he pointed it out:

that the whole scriptures, all the writings about
kings & shepherds & sacrifices & priests & prophets,
was all about him. It all pointed to him as the messiah.

Luke doesn't tell us what Jesus was discussing with teachers
in temple when his parents found him.

But he did tell us it was Passover. Wouldn't that be topic:
the need to be set free by God's miraculous power,
the lamb whose blood saved children from death,
the miraculous bread that came down from heaven.
passing through water of sea that drowned enemies.

All of this shows that God's way to life is through death.

His way of salvation is through suffering of substitute.

Jesus understood who his real Father was, so he understood
what he had to do and where he had to be.

His place was the temple, the place of sacrifice.

His place was under the law, to fulfill it perfectly,
and so his role was submission, including submission
to his parents, so he went home with them.

But he too would return to the temple every Passover
until the Passover when he was the sacrifice,
the perfect lamb who's blood saves all from death.

So, when we don't see Jesus with us,
in times of difficult duties, struggle and stress,
in times of suffering and loss, fear and death,
this is exactly when Jesus is with us.

We discover this when we look for him where he is to be found.

WE COME TO GOD'S HOUSE FOR UNDERSTANDING.

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Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up
according to custom.

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teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not
know that I must be in my Father's house?"

And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

Today we install the officers and board members of our church
who are to be about the business of God's house.

They will need understanding of God's word and ways.

But just as Jesus was still doing what Father had for him to do
when he was back in Nazareth, working, learning,
growing in favor by the way he dealt with people,
we all live as our heavenly Father's children in all we do,
at home, at work, at school, with friends.

So we too keep seeking Jesus & seeking to understand him,
and our search brings us all back to this house.

because this is where we find him in his sacraments,
Here is the miraculous bread and the blood of the lamb
which frees us from death and slavery to sin.

Here is the water which we & our children pass through
that drowns the evil one.

Because of what Jesus went to his place to do in our place
so we can come to our Father's place in heaven.

But we also go from this house taking Jesus with us.

After the Passover God traveled with the people,
showing his presence by the cloud at the tabernacle.

Then he was to be found in one place, temple in Jerusalem
where everyone had to go for worship.

Then God was found again in a tabernacle,
traveling with the people in the person of Jesus.

Now the place God is found is his word in the Bible
which we can carry with us everywhere in our hearts.

Like Mary, we may not yet fully understand them,
but we need to keep treasuring them in our hearts
because, like Mary, we may forget or overlook
things we should already know.

God's word, such as today's Epistle, points out

God has made known to us the mystery of his will in Christ.

His purpose is to redeem us & give an eternal inheritance
by adopting us, by his grace, through Jesus.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WAYS FOR US.

to regularly walk with him without taking for granted.

JESUS CAME TO UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE IN SALVATION.

He knew he had to submit & sacrifice for us as our savior.

WE COME TO GOD'S HOUSE FOR UNDERSTANDING.

Here are his word & sacraments which lead us
through this life with him to life in the heavenly temple.