

January 2, 2011

SOLI DEO GLORIA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

Good Shepherd, Novi

**LUKE 2:41-52**

**SEEK FOR JESUS WHERE HE WILL BE FOUND.**

*In the name + of Jesus.*

The Passover celebrations had ended. The caravan of relatives and friends was making its way back to Nazareth in Galilee. After a day of walking, the families settled down. Mary and Joseph waited for Jesus to find them. He did not come. So they went to find him. Going about from one family to the next, Joseph and Mary learned that no one had seen him. Jesus was missing.

Now, any parent would be panicked if their child was missing. Joseph and Mary must have been mortified. After all, Joseph knew that this was not his child. The angel had told him that Mary would be carrying Immanuel, God with us. Jesus was no ordinary child, but the Savior of the world. Joseph had been entrusted with the care and protection of God in the flesh – and now he was missing! Mary also knew that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. But unlike Joseph, this *was* her child! His flesh had come from her flesh – flesh that would one day redeem the flesh of all mankind. The Son of God, the Son of Mary, was missing!

So Joseph and Mary retraced their steps. They hurried back to Jerusalem and scoured the city, looking for Jesus. **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.* (Luke 2:46)** When Jesus was questioned by Mary, his answer was given with a combination of surprise and innocence: **“Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”** (Luke 2:49) In other words, Jesus was exactly where we should expect to find him. Seek for Jesus where he will be found.

Where is Jesus to be found? The answer to that question is crucial. In fact, your salvation rests upon it. That is why it is alarming that we go looking for Jesus and for God’s truth in places where we will never find it. And yet, we are convinced that God must be there. Perhaps we think it just feels right. But God does not come to you through feelings. Or maybe you had a dream that spoke a message to you. While the Lord has delivered his word to people through dreams in the past, he has not directed us to turn to dreams anymore. **God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. (Hebrews 1:1)** And his Son has not told us to turn to dreams or feelings, but to the Scriptures. There, God’s word is not based on what we perceive, but on what God actually says. Seek for Jesus where he will be found.

Jesus was found in the temple **sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. (Luke 2:46)** He was studying the Scriptures because he yearned to hear his Father’s voice. This is your Father, too. It is he who has created you, who has given you life, and who sustains your life. He reveals divine truth to you in the Bible.

But your Father can say some things that you don’t like. It is not that your Father is cruel or bitter or vicious. It is that your Father in heaven is holy. When he speaks to you, he tells you what his holy will is. His word is not just advice; it is truth. It is what you are to trust and to follow joyfully and willingly. But his truth exposes your sin. He

shows you that you do not willingly do what is good and right. You delight in what is evil and godless. This is one of the reasons you turn a deaf ear to God. You do not want to be exposed as a sinner and a fraud. You do not want to sit and eagerly ask, “What does the Lord say?” so that you may trust and follow it. Instead, when God exposes you, you retort, “Why does the Lord say *that*?” We don’t want to be about our Father’s business; we want the Father to keep his nose out of our business.

God will expose you to be a sinner and a fraud one way or the other. If you reject God’s Word now, you will face God’s righteous judgment when he publicly rebukes and condemns you on the Last Day. There, before all the world – before all mankind who has ever lived! – you will be shown for what you are. There will be no second chance. There will be no hope. There will be no escape. You will be shown a sinner and damned for it. Therefore, heed the word of the Lord now. Yes, the Lord exposes you as a sinner and a fraud. It is true, so do not deny it or ignore it. Humbly confess your sins. Acknowledge that God is right and repent. Then you will hear and see a God who reveals not just sin, death, and hell in you, but forgiveness, life, and salvation for you.

Joseph and Mary found Jesus sitting in the temple. **“Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49)** Seek for Jesus where he will be found. He is at the temple. Where else would he be found? For, he is High Priest who makes the sacrifice for your sins. He enters the Holy of Holies with blood to atone for your sins. But he does not come with the blood of animals. He comes with his own blood which is holy, precious, and innocent. Jesus is at the temple because he is the Lamb who is presented as your substitute. He is the Lamb of God who is slain for the sins of the whole world. He is the Paschal Lamb whose blood has been sprinkled on you so that death, damnation, judgment, and wrath pass over you. Jesus is at the temple because he is the true and living temple. He is where God comes to dwell with his people – Immanuel, God with us and God for us.

Seek for Jesus where he will be found. He does not come to us in dreams or feelings. Neither does he come to us in theories. Jesus comes to us in tangible, visible, taste-able, and smell-able forms. His presence is not a mere spiritual feeling. His presence is real. Your flesh and blood Savior gives you his body and blood in the Lord’s Supper. It is the crucified and risen Savior whom you taste and see, eat and drink, ingest and absorb. In this way, you participate in the body and blood of Christ. You taste and see your salvation. You eat and drink eternal life. You ingest and absorb what is holy so that you will be holy and blameless before your God. This is Jesus’ work – the salvation of sinners.

Seek for Jesus where he will be found. He is about his Father’s business. He is God who creates what is good and holy out of nothing. Jesus has done this through your baptism. Jesus took you, who confess that you are nothing, and he has made you a new creation. Your goodness does not come from you; it comes from Jesus. Your hope does not come from your works; it comes from Jesus’ works. He forgives. He delivers you from death. He saves you from hell. He will send his angels who will no longer guard the way into Paradise, but will escort you back in.

If you seek comfort, hope, forgiveness, and salvation, there is only one place you can look – and that is to Jesus Christ. There is no other source of forgiveness and salvation; therefore, there can be no other source of comfort and hope. And if you will seek Jesus and all of his gifts, then you must go where Jesus says that he will come with his gifts.

Jesus did not come as an idea, but in flesh and blood. And so also today, Jesus does not come in ideas or dreams or feelings, but in tangible ways – in word and sacraments. There, Jesus is at work, carrying out his Father’s business of creating and sustaining, loving and blessing, delivering and redeeming. This is where Jesus is found and, therefore, where your salvation is found.

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**