

# “Home Alone”

Luke 2:41-52, I Samuel 2:18-20, 26,  
Psalm 148, Colossians 3:12-17

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From the Pulpit

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*Let us pray: Let your words be heard by our ears,  
addressed to our hearts, and moving for our souls. Amen.*

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A grandson asked his grandfather where his grandmother was? The grandfather said, “It is the first Friday of the month. She is with her high school girlfriends out for dinner.”

A daughter asked her mother, “Where’s Dad?” The mother says, “He is with his guy friends at the Senior Center for the monthly Euchre tournament.”

It is Sunday morning? Do your children know where you are? Or, better yet, it’s Sunday morning and do you know where your children or grandchildren are?

That was the problem Joseph and Mary had; they didn’t know where their son was. “I thought he was with you?” “I thought he was with you?”

At Christmas time many families will gather around a large table for eating. Sometimes not everyone can fit around the table and sometimes there is a kiddie table. You know you have arrived as an adult when you finally can’t put your legs under the kiddie table and you are “bumped-up” to the grown-up table.

It is an awkward thing to sit at the kiddie table with kids who eat food that is stirred into mush. It is a difficult thing to be an adolescent, trying to be a little more sophisticated than you once were and seeing a four-year-old cousin

chewing food with her mouth open. Or, a three-year-old cousin deciding he didn't like the ham after all and spits it out on his plate.

As if acne and racing hormones are not enough for an adolescent, you have to eat with these rug rats. It never fails that one of them needs to have a diaper change. A parent is called over and suddenly you don't feel as hungry as you once were. It is difficult because you feel alone because the adults think you are not an adult and you know you are not a child anymore.

That was the stage where Jesus was. At thirteen, a male would worship in the men only section of the Temple. You could worship at the men only section because you were considered a man.

We think kids grow-up too fast today. But back then, in Jesus' day, they grew-up even faster. At thirteen, Jesus would be considered to be a man and an adult.

When Joseph and Mary ventured to Jerusalem, over the river and through the woods, they were keeping the Jewish law. The Jewish law stated that anyone who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem must be in the city for the Passover holiday. Traveling was dangerous, so people, family, neighbors and friends traveled in caravans.

Women and children would leave first and the men would tear down the tents and pack for the journey. The men would catch-up to the women later in the day. At the end of the day's journey the tents would be pitched and food prepared.

After the holiday gathering, Joseph and Mary would meet their caravan at a designated spot. First, the women and children would leave. Then, the men would tear down the tents and pack for the journey. Later, the men would catch-up with the women and children.

It was at the end of the day's journey Mary saw Joseph, "Where's Jesus?" "I thought he was with you." "I thought he was with you." "I thought he was

with you, and the other women and children.” “I thought he was with you, and the other men.”

We’ve seen this scene and heard all this before. “Attention shoppers, will the lost parents of Jax Smith please report to the service desk where he is waiting for you.”

Against the dangers of traveling alone, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem. They hoped Jesus was safe, and they must have tried to convince themselves he was safe. But all those stories they have heard and we have heard, too.

It took them three days but Mary and Joseph found Jesus. There he was in the Temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All were amazed at the understanding and answers of Jesus.

Now, notice the comment of Mary. She does not yet consider Jesus a man. Mary says, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” Jesus said to his mother, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” For Mary, this was her baby. For Joseph, this was his carpenter’s apprentice. For us, we begin to see the fully human side of Jesus, mixed with his Jewish religion and divine connection to God.

I am going to take this a step further and suggest that there are two kinds of obedience to God in this Reading of the Gospel. The parents of Jesus had religious beliefs and practices which put boundaries upon them. They practiced their faith with the intention of being pure and obedient before a holy God. They didn’t have goals, just a faith that kept them at an arms-length. They were faithful Jews, good people who didn’t know where their son was.

The approach of Jesus for obedience to God was very different. Jesus sought God’s love and presence whenever and wherever it could be found. He was a grateful participant in what God was doing in his life and the lives of those

around him. Jesus was about the redemptive work of God and in one sense he had no choice but to do the will of his heavenly Father.

I know that some of you gather on Sunday morning because you just don't feel right if you're not here. It's always a lower attendance Sunday the Sunday after Christmas; but you are here. If you were to stay at home, you would feel like you were home alone. If it's Sunday morning, you are in church. For some it is religious beliefs and practices, and that can be very good. For others it is seeking to be in God's love and presence, and that can be very good, too. Either way, I am glad you are here. I am sure God is glad you are here, too.

Sometimes in the holiday rush we feel like we're missing something or someone. We look to our family and friends, and our attitudes about Jesus are conveyed with something like, "I thought he was with you?" "I thought he was with you." It's that lost feeling like the three days Joseph and Mary searched for Jesus and our three days from Good Friday until the Easter resurrection. Then, we discover the presence of Jesus among us in this place of worship.

And Jesus says to us, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Amen.

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