

Mary Did You Know?

Text: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Colossians 3:12-17 (Series C, 1st Sunday after Christmas) Ps.148

Luke 2:41-52

*"Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?"
But they did not understand his answer. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth,
where he was obedient to them.*

This morning, we find ourselves few days removed from Christmas, by gone the hustle and bustle of the season, we find that we must get on with things. Some of you may have enjoyed some time off work or some special time with family, but for most of you tomorrow it's "back to work."

In today's Scripture passage we find Mary and Joseph in a similar situation. They have made their trek to Bethlehem, Mary delivered baby Jesus, they were visited by the nearby shepherds, and now it is time to move on.

After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to have Jesus circumcised and then three weeks later go to the temple to take part in three different Jewish ceremonies.

You might wonder why the Bible mentions these. If you're like me you would rather get on with the story. Ok, Jesus is born, now let's move on to where he starts doing miracles and walking on water!

But these details are very important because they teach us not only about Mary, Joseph, and Jesus' life as a child, but about how each of us, no matter what stage of life we're in, can be faithful to God, and that's going to be our topic this morning.

If I had been looking for my daughter or son for three days, I'd have exploded. But Mary and Joseph ask, "*Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.*" I wonder how Mary *really* said it.

More important, I wonder why Mary and Joseph looked for Jesus in all the wrong places. Why did it take them three days to figure out that Jesus must be in his Father's house and about his Father's business?

Had things been ordinary for so long -- *no more angels, adoring shepherds, and OT prophecies* -- that the mystery surrounding their son's birth had begun to fade like a dream?

Or maybe Mary and Joseph were aware of what their son would become, but figured that was years away. Maybe Mary and Joseph simply failed to see that their baby was growing up.

Like Mary and Joseph, we cannot or do not want to see that our Jesus is growing up even as we grow up. Our Jesus is growing beyond our childhood, beyond our children's childhood. Our Jesus is growing beyond our expectations. Arriving in the temple, Mary saw only her boy.

She couldn't or wouldn't see that Jesus had grown. Eager to be a good mother, always pondering the events that led up to and followed Jesus' birth, Mary wasn't ready to "lend" her Jesus to God. Perhaps she just wanted to keep her firstborn close to her.

Maybe she simply wanted to delay the symbolic sword that Simeon announced would pierce her own heart as it took the life of her son. Looking upon Jesus and seeing her baby, Mary asks, "*Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.*"

And Jesus answers, "*Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?*" These same questions face us this week after Christmas, as peace and goodwill fade and Christmas leaves so many of us wanting. With Mary, we ask, "*Why have you treated us like this?*" We ask ourselves; we ask our families. We ask the church and we ask God, when our expectations are shattered.

And Jesus answers, “*Why were you searching for me?*” We know, he’s about his Father’s business. But we are not ready to let go of our expectations and give our Jesus to God. We are not ready to accept that Jesus did not come to fulfill all our expectations.

He is not to be found in sentiment for the way things used to be or the way we wish things could be. Jesus is about the future. Jesus was born and lived and died and rose to be about God’s business of putting an end to our searching by making plain the way to God, even if that means shattering our expectations.

After the dialogue in the Temple, Jesus returns to Nazareth and is obedient to his parents. But it is clear that his priorities have changed. Jesus’ primary concern is not the will of his parents but the will of God and the mission that God’s will involves.

The good news for us in this week after Christmas is that, like Mary and Joseph, *our search has ended*. Jesus shows us the way to God. The scary part, perhaps, is that our search doesn’t end where we expect. Mary and Joseph searched three days for Jesus, and on the third day found him alive and well.

But they didn’t find him in the expected places -- the *safe confines* of his extended family or the *familiar company* of travelers. After three days, Mary and Joseph found Jesus alive and well in the Temple at Jerusalem among the teachers of the law, the very company where it all will all end as Jesus is tried, convicted, and handed over to be crucified.

Mary and Joseph find Jesus alive and well after three days in a place they didn’t expect. This sounds like *Easter*. Yes, Luke’s hint here is of resurrection. Jesus, dead and buried, is raised on the third day, and there is a new temple, Christ’s resurrected body. Our searching will come to an end in new life, meaningful life, the life God intends, but not the life we expect.

But that’s *Easter*. For now, Jesus returns to Nazareth. He disappears back into the fabric of his hometown. For perhaps two more decades Jesus is out of sight, far removed from the centers of religion and politics, in the company of ordinary people, just like us.

Here Jesus continues to grow “in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.” The good news is that this description of Jesus is the description of every child of God, no matter what our age. We all will grow spiritually as we respond to God’s love.

Our text today is a simple one – *straightforward* and *clear*. It gives us a glimpse into Jesus’ early years, even here, at the age of twelve he is the obedient Son of his heavenly Father, and of his parents. His obedience took him to death on a cross, so that we who are disobedient might also become God’s perfect sons and daughters.

Mark Alan Lowry a song writer and singer put this text into a beautiful song called *Mary did you know?*

- Mary, did you know, that your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?
- Mary, did you know, that your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?
- Did you know, that your Baby Boy has come to make you new?
- This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.
- Mary, did you know, that your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?
- Mary, did you know, that your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?
- Did you know, that your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?
- When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?
- Oh Mary did you know... The blind will see, The deaf will hear,
- The dead will live again, The lame will leap,
- the dumb will speak, the praises of The Lamb
- Mary, did you know, that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?
- Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?
- Did you know that your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
- The sleeping Child you're holding is the great "I am"

The apostle John tells us in his Gospel that Jesus is *the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it*. As the Spirit of Jesus lives in our hearts, let us release that light from within, be the change we want to find in others.

Though we believe in grace upon grace received from Jesus, our Christ, the Word made flesh who lived among us. Let the first Resolution be: Begin at the Beginning and follow the Light. As John says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Jesus, let us begin again with You in this this coming Year. **Amen.**

December 26, 2021