

March 31 - The Sixth-Grader

[Luke 2:41-52](#)



It is his first recorded Passover.

The Temple is generally described with breathtaking stones and the scents of

heaven. Incense rises as the prayers of Israel ascend to the God of the universe. The different spaces of the Temple are places that priests or other people can have access to that same God. Devout, religious men are commanded (if you live close enough) to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem at least three times a year. The Passover is a high, holy time. Redemption and freedom from the Egyptians are memorialized in all that they do. Lambs are slaughtered and eaten. It is a time of awe and fellowship.

He is twelve. If you don't remember what that looks like, it is your prepubescent, un-bearded young man that should be still wet behind the ears. He arrived with his parents in the city, along with family, friends, and other pilgrims along the way. They sang the Psalms of Ascent along the way, filled with joy that at least they could still do this despite the Roman menace.

Jesus arrives with his parents. I like that plural. I always feel like Joseph just kind of disappears, but he is present here. He takes "his" son into the wash and wonder of all that is that "Holy Week."

The temple is bustling. Crowds careen into one another. For those of you old enough, it is like the "Black Friday" shopping day (the day after Thanksgiving) that happened in yesteryear. Hopefully kinder though. Not as murderous with the Tickle-Me-Elmo dolls. (That is going to hit with only a few people. Sorry.)

At some point, when the festival is over, they're going to leave without him.

Approximately twenty-one years later mom is going to leave without him again, but this time in much worse circumstances. It really was a “Black Friday” both figuratively and literally. But that is not this day.

When we read this section, we’re drawn to the fragility of parenthood. The nightmare of losing a child because you were negligent in physically bringing him back with you, resonates. The moment you have someone to love like that; you begin the process of worry. It just happens. You can’t help it. This section is not about our feelings in relation to Jesus’ parents.

Jesus is not any twelve-year-old. He is Jesus of Nazareth, sure, but truly his house is in Jerusalem. The ones who surround him on that day begin the process of marveling at this backwoods boy whose mind was as sharp as the cosmos. He listens and questions amongst the teachers, and shockingly, understands and answers. The teachers are flabbergasted. He is a theological savant. They probably know young men who know bible stories, but this kid knows things like he attended Hebrew seminary.

He *is* the Hebrew seminary.

“What does this mean?” the Lutheran in us asks.

I think, for our holy week, it is this. When Jesus asks, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” we are to receive that with resulting astonishment also. He calls the Temple his Father’s house. Joseph is standing right there. A swift look around at the temple versus their carpenter’s hut must have cut them to the quick. Twelve-year-old conversation probably flood back into their minds. “What is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:20)

Here, the lost is found where he shouldn’t have been lost. It just seemed to be happening so soon. Gathered into his parents arms, Jesus goes back to Nazareth and obeys them. The Fourth

Commandment comes to life. Creation will be in submission to futility. (Romans 8:20) Spirits will be in submission to the name of Jesus. (Luke 10:17) Surely, all things are in subjection to him. "For God has put all things into subjection under his feet." (1 Corinthians 15:27.)

Even at this moment, all things were in subjection to a twelve-year-old and a thirty-three-year-old. And the eternal, loving God who drew all men to himself when he was lifted up. (John 12:32)

This is who the centurion stares at.

Truly.

Jesus, we can't quite wrap our minds around it, but truly You are fully God and fully man. What a beautiful truth. Amen.