

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Theme: At Home with God

Maybe it’s because I grew up in the 90’s, but in my mind one of the best Christmas movies of all time is *Home Alone*. I’m sure most if not all of you are familiar with that movie, but allow me to refresh your memory. Kevin McCallister is an 8-year old kid whose large family is at his house because they next night they are going to leave on a family vacation to Paris over Christmas. After a dust-up, Kevin is sent upstairs to the attic to sleep without supper. That night heavy winds damage the electrical lines and the power to the McCallister house is knocked out. In the maddening rush to make it to the plane on time in the morning the entire family doesn’t realize until half-way over the Atlantic Ocean that no one ever went up to the attic and woke Kevin up. Meanwhile back in Chicago Kevin wakes up to an empty house and realizes that he is home alone.

The entire family, especially Kevin’s mom, tries desperately to make it back to Chicago as soon as possible. In the meantime two robbers, known as the wet bandits, decide to rob the McCallister house and Kevin is forced to defend it. He does so successfully and is able to clean up the entire mess before his family arrives home on Christmas morning.

Today in our text, we see Jesus having his own “Home Alone” moment of sorts. Like any God-fearing family 2000 years ago, Mary and Joseph traveled down to Jerusalem every year for the Passover. This was one of the three major festivals held each year that God commanded every Jewish man to attend. So every year Joseph went and he always took his family.

No doubt there was always a big crowd that came from Nazareth and Galilee. They traveled with friends and family, neighbors, and acquaintances. Jesus was 12 years old. He had never been any trouble to his parents before and many of the people they were traveling with people they knew well. So when Jesus wasn’t with them when they started heading back to Galilee they didn’t think anything of it. But when they stopped for the night they looked for Jesus and realized he wasn’t there. They hurried back to Jerusalem. For three days they looked all over the city and found nothing. Finally they went into the temple and there Jesus was—talking to the teachers of the law and asking them questions.

Mary and Joseph were upset and when Mary saw him she said something similar to what many mothers might say in such a situation, **Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.** “Why have you treated us like this?” What is it that Jesus did to Mary and Joseph? Did he talk back to them? Did he blatantly disobey them? Did he lie to them and say he was going to walk with friends and instead go back to the Temple?

Of course not. We know that Jesus never sinned—not once. He was perfect and holy and never went against God’s Word and that includes obeying his parents or causing them any sort of harm in anyway. And yet, what do we see Mary doing? Literally she says, “why did you do to us in this way”—or, “why did you do this to us?” She is essentially accusing him of mistreating them—she accuses him of sinning against them!

So Jesus replied—with the first words spoken by Jesus recorded in the Bible, **Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?** Jesus wasn't talking back to them or making some sort of snarky comment. He is gently rebuking her by pointing out the truth—that they should have known where he was. But they didn't understand what he was saying. Why not? They should have known. We heard Gabriel's announcement to Mary last Sunday. On Christmas Eve we heard Luke chapter two and where we are told that Mary **treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** Both Mary and Joseph knew that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit; they were told that he would be called the Son of God. Elizabeth called Mary, **the mother of my Lord;** and the angels announced to the shepherds (which they most certainly told Mary and Joseph), **a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord.** They knew these things and even treasured and pondered them; and yet 12 years later they are scolding Jesus, essentially accusing him of sin and are confused when he refers to the Temple as his Father's house. They should have known better—Jesus told them so. But we often do the same thing as Mary and Joseph. We know what God says in his Word. We hear them again and again. We are reminded every Christmas, every transfiguration, every Easter, and so on that Jesus is true God and true man. We know how God wants us to live our lives. We know that he created the world and that salvation comes by grace through faith in him alone. But we forget or we deliberately ignore what he says in his Word.

We get caught up in certain sins and ignore what God says about it in his Word. Eventually we convince ourselves that what we are doing is just fine. We listen to what society says is right or wrong; we know all the evidence science gives in pushing its theory of evolution; we pay careful attention to philosophers and others who mock the existence of God or the deity of Christ. And then we begin to have our doubts—is what God says is true? What if he is lying about this one thing is he lying to me about something else? What if the Bible isn't his Word, than what use can I make of it? And so we not only doubt God and his Word but we begin to question certain parts or the legitimacy of all of it.

Mary and Joseph should have known better, but they forgot. Nevertheless we see that Mary **treasured all these things in her**

heart, just as she had done before. No doubt, everything would come together for her after Jesus rose from the dead.

As we said on Thursday, we do well to follow Mary's example and treasure all these things in our hearts. But we have an added blessing that Mary and Joseph didn't have. We have all of these things written down for us. When we have our doubts, when we have questions concerning God and his Word, all we have to is return to the Scriptures and let God speak directly to us! And so we ponder his Word on a daily basis!

Let's go back to the only words of Jesus recorded in our text. He says, **Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?** Jesus was in the temple. The temple that belonged to God. Jesus is clearly contrasting Mary's words, **Your father and I...** Jesus is reminding them that Joseph wasn't his father, God was. He is the Son of God who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is God himself!

And yet, what does John tell us about Jesus in verse 52? **Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.** Jesus, although he is God, grew in wisdom and stature—the almighty and eternal God grew up! Jesus isn't just God, he is also fully man. Mary was his Mother after all. Both God and man at the same time. God humbled himself and became like one of us in every way—even to the point that God had to grow up both physically and mentally!

After his parents found Jesus, notice what he did, **Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.** Because his parents wanted him to go, he went with them back to Nazareth. And he obeyed them. Everything that they told Jesus to do, he did. He was never naughty, he never forgot, he never messed around when he was to do some work, he was never inconsiderate, or loud when he was to be quiet, he never picked on any of his brothers and sisters.

Jesus, true God, obeyed his parents perfectly. He created them. As God he ruled over them. But he so humbled himself that the almighty and eternal God obeyed his earthly parents no matter how meaningless or frivolous the task.

Jesus obeyed his parents for us. From his birth on he willingly and perfectly obeyed his parents so that he could perfectly obey God who commands us to honor our father and mother in the fourth commandment.

None of us here have perfectly obeyed our parents—not for one year, or week, or even a day. And many times when we actually did what they wanted us to do—cleaning our rooms, eating our vegetables, saying we are sorry to our siblings we only did it with a grudge. We only obeyed them because we were afraid of the punishment we’d receive if we didn’t obey them. But not Jesus, he not only obeyed his parents perfectly; he never complained or whined. He obeyed his parents with a smile on his face—that is, willingly and cheerfully because in doing so he was obeying his Father’s will.

Again, Jesus did this for us. So that by his perfect life he could save us. Years later, on the cross, Jesus took our sins upon himself and suffered the eternal punishment that we deserve. But he also gave us his perfect life. His holiness was credited to us, which wouldn’t have been any good for us if he hadn’t perfectly obeyed his parents when he was 12! So Jesus did this for us so that he could save us! And now because of Jesus and through faith and him we are considered pure and holy in the eyes of the Lord! And because of Jesus’ victory over death we know that we too will rise from the dead and on the Last Day he will take us to live in his heaven—his home.

Motivated by Christ’s love for us and the salvation that he freely gives us we now strive to follow his example. First off we strive to obey God’s Word by obeying our parents and others in authority over us. Instead of questioning them, obeying them begrudgingly, or not obeying them at all, we strive to obey and honor them because in doing so we obey and honor the Lord.

And we also strive to obey the example set by the 12-year old Jesus. Where was he? He wasn’t wreaking havoc around town, he wasn’t protecting his house from a couple of two-bit criminals. No, he was in the temple—the house of his Father listening to the religious teachers of the day and asking them questions. Jesus grew not only in common knowledge, but also in the wisdom of the Lord and in his own Word! He thus obeyed the first three commandments by worshiping the Lord and making him the number priority in his life. And so, even when Jesus was lost, he was at home with God.

May we follow his example. May we be at home with God on a regular basis. May we be “at home” while we are in this house of worship, or may we be “at home” with God as we read his Word in our own homes. Sure, there are times when we will fail to do so, but that

why Jesus lived a perfect life—to give it to us that we may be perfect in the eyes of the Father.

Really, even though Jesus was lost and alone in the sense that he was separated from his earthly parents, he wasn’t really alone. He was at home with God. It was necessary for him to be so and in this way he saved us and will take us to live with God in his heavenly home. Amen.