

**RIGHT WHERE I NEED TO BE**  
**Christmas 1 – December 26 & 30, 2018 (s755.doc)**  
**226 – (707 in place of Gloria) – 501 – 41 – 64**  
**Pastor Thomas Fricke**

*“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he was saying to them. –Luke 2:49-50*

**[blank screen]**

One of the greatest compliments a dad can receive is to hear somebody say of his son: “He’s just like his father.” That’s a good thing. So I felt pretty pleased the day, years ago, when I was in a restaurant holding one of our sons in my arms...and somebody came by and said, “Oh, you can’t deny him. He looks just like his dad.” It’s a compliment. The kid is “just like his father.”

“Just like his father.” That’s something the Scriptures lead us to explore today as we think about Jesus, the Christchild. He’s human, just like us...but at the same time he’s God...just like his father. We find him as a young boy, twelve years old, but not acting the way you’d expect your typical twelve-year-old boy to act. He’s **in the temple**, in his Father’s house. And he’s **listening to the teachers**, listening to and learning God’s Word...and astonishing the Rabbis with his questions. He’s seeking to understand his Father’s will for his life.

It’s **where he needs to be**.

As a child of God...and as a father...I can draw some conclusions from that. If Jesus needed to be in his Father’s house—**if that’s true of God’s own Son, our Savior**—then it’s especially true of me and my family. I need to be in my Father’s house, too. And I need to know that whenever I’m here in church, then I’m...

**RIGHT WHERE I NEED TO BE**

1. **It’s here that I learn to know God’s plan for the world.**
2. **It’s here that I learn to understand his will for my life.**

---

In the third chapter of his gospel, St. Luke says this fascinating thing about Jesus. He says, “*He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph...*” (Luke 3:23).

You caught that, right? “*So it was thought...*” You can understand why Luke says it that way. Jesus was **thought** to be the son of Joseph, because **how else** would Mary have had a child? People presumed that Joseph was the father, because Mary was his wife and Jesus was their son. That’s the way things work. But you can also understand that Luke is saying more than just, “This is what people were thinking about Jesus.” He’s saying, “Jesus was the son, **not** of Joseph—as everybody thought. He was **the Son of God**. In the person of Jesus, **God came to earth** in human form.”

**[image of baby Jesus]**

We call it the miracle of **the Incarnation**. God became our brother. He was fully human and like us in every way, except without sin.

Now, that raises some interesting questions. Jesus was **God** and yet he was also **human**. How did this “fully-God-and-yet-fully-human” thing work in real life? What did his parents have to do for him?

- Like any parents, they needed to feed their baby...
- Like any parents, they had to change his diapers...
- When his life was threatened, remember, they had to escape to Egypt to protect him from the murderous intent of King Herod.

And what did Jesus do for his parents? Did he do any little miracles to help out around the house? We get a clue in the gospel of John, where it says that the miracle of changing water into wine was *“the first of his miraculous signs”* and that *“he thus revealed his glory”* (John 2:11).

Yes, **Jesus was God—fully God**, with all the power of God. But **he was also fully human**...and as a man, he chose **not** to make full use of his divine power and might—not all the time. It wasn't until his ministry began, not until after his baptism, that he began to use his power as God. And then, he did it only for two purposes: never for his own benefit, but always and only to help people in their need and to show that he really was God. He was fully human, **just like us**, but he was also fully God, **just like his Father**.

**[blank screen]**

Each year, Luke tells us, Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. Now, when Jesus is twelve years old, they go as usual, and after the celebration is over they head home...but Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem. At first, his parents don't miss him. They assume he's just among the other travelers, so they don't even worry about him.

But when he doesn't show up that evening, they grow concerned. They look for him among their relatives and friends but still, they can't find him. So Joseph and Mary travel all the way back to Jerusalem to continue their search...and it's not until **three days later** that they finally locate Jesus. **[Jesus in the temple]**

He's in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, discussing the Scriptures with them.

Joseph and Mary don't know what to think. “Son, why have you done this to us?” Mary says. “Your father and I have been worried sick, and we've been looking for you everywhere!” But Jesus simply asks, *“Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”* (Luke 2:49).

Jesus is there to learn. He's there because, even though he is **the Son of God**, he is also **truly man**. He's there because in his humiliation, he set aside the use of his power and wisdom as God and bound himself to be just like one of us. Joseph and Mary are worried and look everywhere, when all the while, **Jesus is right where he needs to be...in his Father's house**.

Think about that, parents. You have an awesome responsibility—to bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord. It's your responsibility to bring them to worship, to let them attend Lutheran School or Sunday School, and to bring them to catechism classes. It's your responsibility to make sure they understand God's Word. They may already know the basics: Jesus lived, died, and rose for me. But it all needs to be reinforced—each week...every day. It's good for them to be here, in their Father's house. **[blank screen]**

---

Jesus knew the basics, too. But as a child, he needed to learn what the Scriptures had to say in detail about his role as the Savior of the world. I don't think it's too much of a stretch for us to imagine that his questions focused on what the prophets long foretold about the coming Messiah. What did they say about his life? What did they say about his death?

It was all vitally important for the One...who *“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45) and who would one day pray, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done”* (Luke 22:42).

*“Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”* he said. If it's true of him, then it's **especially** true of me. I need to be here, because **it's here** that I learn to know my heavenly Father's **plan** for the world...and **it's here** that I learn to understand his **will** for my life.

- When someone I love dies and I'm lost in my loneliness and grief...
- When I have problems in the relationships in my life...
- When it seems as if the world is falling apart...
- When I need direction for my life..

It helps me to see the big picture...to understand the world from God's point of view...to know how it all turns out in the end. **[blank screen]**

---

These past weeks we've had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

- With prophets of old we have yearned for his coming...
- With angels, we have rejoiced at his birth...
- With shepherds, we have knelt beside his manger...
- **And with his earthly mother**, we have treasured up all these things and pondered them in our hearts.

But it all makes sense for us only if, **with his heavenly Father**, we understand the purpose for which he came. **[Jesus on the cross]** Though he was God, he came as a child; the almighty Maker of all came to die.

---

Today, we find ourselves once again in our Father's house. **[image of cross]** Perhaps we have wondered: Is it really necessary to be here **yet again**? Am I over-doing it? Is it just too much?

Let me answer that question like this: We all know how Luke, chapter 2, begins: *"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world..."* (Luke 2:1). But it might be good for us to note how the great Christmas chapter ends: *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"* (Luke 2:51,52).

- If Jesus, in his humanity, grew in wisdom, then there is no question that I need to do the same.
- If in this new year I dedicate myself to listening to my Father in his Word, if I let him speak to my heart, then I will be blessed.
- If I come...again and again...to be fed spiritually, then...I'm right where I need to be!

AMEN.