

Sermon Topic: Don't You Know I Have To Be In My Father's House by Pr Wendy Chiang-Cheong
 Sermon Text: Luke 2: 41-52

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it,⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Child, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.⁵¹ And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Big Idea: Jesus doesn't ever seem to do or say what is expected. Each time we think we've figured him out, he overturns our preconceived idea of him. Today's text reminds us not to look for Jesus in the wrong places. If we don't want to misunderstand Jesus, we've got to get back to listening to Him in the Father's house.

Introduction: How my dad left me behind after sports day when I was 5 years old. My dad did not look for me ☹️

But when Jesus went missing, Mary and Joseph searched for Him. This is not a lesson on 5 ways not to lose your child. It's much more.

Context:

- ✓ As a devout family, Joseph & Mary attended to the Mosaic Law dutifully
- ✓ Observed the Passover yearly in the Temple
- ✓ Devout Jewish fathers bring 12 years olds on pilgrimage to become familiar with requirements of Jewish laws.
 - By 12, Jesus devoted to the law, could dialogued independently with teachers and displaced them with his wisdom
- ✓ Those days, pilgrims travelled with extended family to temple by caravan. Women + children travelled separately from men. Mary & Joseph each could assumed Jesus travelled with the other parent.
 - Only logical to know Jesus was missing when they met up later.
 - Only logical to search Jesus amid family and acquaintances who travelled together.
 - Logic did not bring them to Jesus. So they headed for Jerusalem.

Key Lesson:

- Not careless parenting – Jesus was not “missing” since he intentionally stayed behind (vs 43, 49)
- But careless presumption of who Jesus is – our missing Him, looking for Him in all wrong places and with all wrong ideas

The experience between Mary and Jesus serves as a model of our relationship with Jesus:

- Perhaps unknowingly we might have left Jesus behind and become very unsettled
- Perhaps we have lost touch with Him.

A. MAKING OUR WAY BACK TO JESUS: MARY'S QUESTION

“Child, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.”

- We could hear Mary's **assertion** (child), **interrogation** (why) and **blame** (behold).
 - You're but a child. Your duty is to live in dependency on us. Why do you cause us great anxiety?
- What had happened between time: Jesus at 6 weeks infancy and 12 years teenhood?
 - Perhaps Jesus' years of obedience to common household tasks made Mary believe this dutiful boy would become a carpenter.
 - Perhaps 12 years is a long time to forget God's priority in Jesus.
- A long time had also transpired between the 1st day we know Christ till now. We, like Jesus' parents could be:
 - Absorbed in good things but not necessarily attuned to the God thing.
 - Recognise our responsibility but not recognise God in our midst.
 - Preoccupied with a pious life but lose touch with Christ's preference for our life.
- A life inattentive to Christ is oft' filled with great frustration and grief. It oft' assert its rights before Him:
 - When life turns out differently, we are tempted to follow Mary's narrative:
 1. Isn't it your duty to...
 2. Why are you the cause of my ...
 3. Why do you treat me this way?
 4. We interrogate, blame and misunderstand Him

Spiritual Truth: IF WE DON'T WANT TO MISUNDERSTAND JESUS, WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO LISTENING TO HIM IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

B. MAKING OUR WAY BACK TO JESUS: JESUS' QUESTION

“Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?”

As Jesus addressed his mother, He addresses us. He used questions:

- To help us produce self-understanding.
- To promote change and growth.
- To keep us involve in the search for answers.
- To surface our ignorance and lead us to truth.

Why...Did You Not Know?

Mary did not know because she:

- Presumed Jesus to behave a certain way
- Presumed Jesus understood their worry was caused by him not acting a certain way
- At which point did she detached herself from the reality that her son is no ordinary person?

But Jesus reversed her presumption:

- His primary concern was not his parents' will, and for the fact, not our will
- His priority was his unique sonship to God that required a devotion to God that is greater than family ties

SPIRITUAL TRUTH: IF WE DON'T WANT TO MISUNDERSTAND JESUS, WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO LISTENING HIM IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

C. Application: What happens when we cannot comprehend Jesus?

What would Jesus do with us (vs 51,52):

- He comes home with us despite our lack of comprehension.
- He dwells with us despite our difficulty to let go of our expectations of Him.
- This is grace. This is love.

What we must do (like Mary in vs 51,52):

- Work out things in our heart and mind.
- Live out faithfully despite our inability to understand some things.
- Make room for Jesus to grow bigger in our life.

Conclusion

Jesus' work is not one of axe and hammer in Joseph's workshop. His work is to unite with the Father. To turn souls from darkness to light. From death to life. From the power of Satan to God. We must cease to command and admonish Him. We must unlearn the disrespectful way we relate to the Son. We must ensure not to look for Him in all the wrong places. If the Son's priority was to be in the Father's house and about His Father's interest, it should be our priority too.

Spiritual Truth: IF WE DON'T WANT TO MISUNDERSTAND JESUS, WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO LISTENING TO HIM IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did your parents mention your first few words as an infant? What were they?
2. What do you think was the emphasis of Jesus' reply to His mother?
3. In what area in your life do you struggle to comprehend Jesus' intention?
4. In what ways have our passion for God in our hearts grown dimmer over time?
5. Can we pray for one another, asking that God will fill us anew with that child-like delight in Him? That we might take pleasure in Him as our loving Father, our self-giving Saviour, and our just and justifying Lord?