

Christmas 1C [Dec. 28, 2003] (A Sermon by Rev. Ron Friedrich)

Pastor Ron Friedrich's mother tells about one time when he was a baby, the family got ready for a vacation trip. Mom, Dad, and the older boys were busy packing. Finally everyone was in the car, and they drove away.

After several minutes, Mom tried to remember if she...

- ✓ turned off all the electric lights,
- ✓ checked all the water faucets,
- ✓ closed all the windows,
- ✓ locked all the doors.

Suddenly she noticed something. She shouted, "Where's Ronny!" They forgot Baby Ron!

They hurried back home and found him still sleeping in his crib. Ron never knew anything was wrong.

In our story today, Mary and Joseph, with family and friends started their long 90-mile walk home from Jerusalem (in the south) to their home in NAZARETH (in the north). But they walked all day, and then couldn't find Jesus. Imagine their fear, worry, anxiety, hurrying back to Jerusalem during the night.

But same-as Ron's parents found their son safe in their house, Mary and Joseph found their boy, Jesus, safe in His house, the temple. It seems Jesus didn't think anything was wrong.

Jesus told Mary and Joseph, "Why did you search for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house? Didn't you know that I must do my Father's work?"

Dr. Luke translated Jesus' words in the Greek language as,
"I must be in my Father's things,"
or "in my Father's ISSUES,"
or "I must be in the things that concern my Father."

Mary, Joseph and their friends came to Jerusalem to visit the temple and celebrate the annual PASSOVER. When their celebration was done, they left.

But Jesus' business there in that temple was-not finished. 12-year old Jesus got into deep discussions with the priests and teachers. ...discussions about what? The Dr. Luke doesn't say what. But we can guess they didn't discuss weather,
or politics,
or sports,
or the economy.

And we can guess they didn't waste time complaining and gossiping about other people.

If we want to try guessing what Jesus and those "teachers" did discuss, we only need to read 20 years later what Jesus Himself taught to the people,
to His Disciples,
to the PHARISEES and priests.

The priests and Pharisees taught about God's Laws.
Jesus taught about our RELATIONSHIP, fellowship with God.

The priest and Pharisees worried about in how they appeared(seemed) to other people.

Jesus taught us -- or it is better to say, Jesus showed us the things that concerned God's heart.

Faith in God,
Love for God,
Love for other people,
Service for other people,

Jesus taught us to
recognize our sin -- those things that breaks God's heart,

Jesus taught us to
confess our sin
and trust God's forgiveness.

Jesus taught us to
trust God to help us in our times of need.

Jesus taught us to
help other people in their times of need.

Jesus taught us to
forgive our enemies,
the same as He already forgives us.

We see through the life of Jesus, that the priests and teachers forgot many of these "ISSUES." So if boy-Jesus -- Himself True God -- wanted to discuss these questions with the priests and teachers, of-course they were confused and surprised. Jesus made them think again about important things.

And Jesus also makes us think about the things that are important to Him... the things that are important to God.

Too many times we look for God in the wrong places.
...same-as Mary and Joseph.
...same-as those priests and teachers.

Same-as Mary and Joseph, we sometimes become angry and frustrated with Jesus, because He doesn't go our way. He is-not on our time schedule.

Same-as Mary and Joseph, we sometimes must stop,
go-back,
give-up our plans, our efforts, our goals,
and then we remember what is really important... and what is important to God.

Now... the story about Jesus, Mary, and Joseph continues. Jesus went-back north to Nazareth, with Mary and Joseph, to their house. And Jesus lived obeying Mary and Joseph, no-matter they didn't fully understand. In future time they will.

Dr. Luke reports that mother Mary never forgot what happened, and what her young son told her that day in His house, the temple.

Jesus told Mary, as He tells us, that we will always find Him in His Father's work.

Jesus says that now He makes our bodies His holy temple. And He comes to do His work in us.

Amen