

December 27, 2009 Sermon 1

Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Whose Son is he?

Think about what feelings you would have if a young child wandered off. (Examples) If you are a child (for we are all someone's child – whether we are parents or not), think of what it would feel like to be left behind by your parents or how you would react to parents who think you are lost, late coming home, or when you actually think that you are fine. There are those of us who actually have painful memories of being left behind and forgotten by someone who is supposed to love them.

Today, we have a story about parents and a child who they initially think is lost – Jesus. Luke is the only gospel to tell a story of Jesus' childhood – and this is the story.

Here are the questions: Who is Jesus and who are his parents? Who is ultimately his Father? Who is Jesus for you and who is ultimately your Father?

Uncertainties and speculations surround the childhood of Jesus. Oh, if you look for them, you will find some interesting stories about Jesus' childhood, but for the most part, the scriptures are silent. These verses from Luke break into that silence and give us a glimpse of the time that Jesus was a "tween" (yes, I said it, "tween," that title that means not quite an adult, but not really a child. Jesus is a tween and we find him amidst the ordinariness of life. (How does God break into the daily routine of your life?)

Whose Son is he?

As a child of the flesh, Jesus is the son of Mary and Joseph. Here's some proof: They care for him, raised him, loved him, etc. They share their spiritual habits with him and are keepers of the Jewish law. They have traveled to the Temple on Passover, which is where we find them in this story, even if the road is dangerous. They are parents that are with him in the ordinariness of his growing up.

As a child of the Spirit, Jesus is the Son of God. When he is in the Temple, he is there listening and questioning the teachers and his wisdom grew. All who heard him in the Temple are amazed at the "tween" who sounds like he has a PhD in biblical studies.

Being the Son of God, he wonders why his parents were concerned about where he would be – did they not know that he would be in his Father's house, going about his Father's business? What does that mean anyway? It ultimately means being a servant to all in need. Did this child, Jesus, know that? Does it matter? I don't know, but he was gaining wisdom and

understanding. It is interesting that only a few days ago we celebrated his birth at Christmas and here he is, twelve years old in the Temple. Isn't it amazing how quickly children grow up?

What does this mean for us and who Jesus is? For us, Jesus can only be both the son of Mary and Joseph and the Son of God – born of the flesh and born of the spirit – and birthed in grace. Grace that we receive from Jesus. Martin Luther explained our need for Jesus best in this quote to Phillip Melanchthon:

“If you are a preacher of grace, then preach a true not a factious grace; if grace is true, you must bear a true and not a fictitious sin. God does not save people who are only fictitious sinners. Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly, for he is victorious over death and the world. As long as we are here we have to sin. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness, but as Peter says (2 Peter 3:13), we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. . . Pray boldly – you too are a mighty sinner.”

It's after Christmas, so now what? Who is Jesus to you? Are you ready for a “grown up” Jesus? Or are you setting your lives on “spiritual cruise control” until Easter? Do not panic, thinking that Jesus is lost – Jesus is here. Your identity is that of a child of God, no matter what your age. Wherever you are, you are in the house of God. Now, go about your Father's business. Forgive and love one another and tell them of God's son, Jesus. For Christmas is not over – it has only begun.

Helpful Resources: textweek.com; southern hills text study; various commentaries