

26 December 2021 – 1 January 2022 Luke 2: 41-52

Looking for Jesus

Read the passage from Luke. It is written below.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

Bible notes

In the verses surrounding today’s Gospel reading (2.40 and 2.52), Jesus is presented as being filled with and increasing in wisdom. In the Bible and within many cultures, wisdom is often seen as the gift of older people, but here it is present in a younger person. His elders are ‘amazed’ at his understanding and clearly have much to learn from the youngster among them.

For Jesus, wisdom is, in part, realising how much more he has to learn – hence his eagerness to spend time learning with and from his elders in the Temple. He grows in wisdom by asking and listening. In passing, it is worth noting that, while it may be oblique, there is within the text an affirmation of those who share their wisdom with and teach the tenets of faith to younger people in particular.

Jesus also has the grace, humility and wisdom to continue to learn from his parents – with Luke commenting that he was obedient to them when they returned to Nazareth. In part, no doubt this was due to the devotion of the couple that Luke alludes to when he says that they went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover every year (v.41).

We don't know much about what Joseph made of all that had gone on. Maybe he does the stereotypical 'man thing' and worked it out in his shed. Luke presents Mary as the spokesperson for the couple. In echoes of the Christmas Day Gospel reading, Mary 'treasured all these things in her heart' (v.51). She too continues to grow in wisdom through this reflective process of pondering, wondering and treasuring – realising that when it comes to looking for Jesus, he will be found about his (heavenly) father's business.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

The thing is, Jesus didn't think he was lost. He was doing what came naturally. He was learning – and, it is implied, teaching – more about God, his Father. He was growing in wisdom, even though he 'ought' to have been with Mary and Joseph. Perhaps Jesus – like many of us – needed to engage in order to learn, and vice versa. But Mary and Joseph didn't (yet) understand what being 'Son of God' actually meant for them, and they were understandably upset. Indeed, what does it mean for us who are also children of God? Are we 'engaging in order to learn' today? And from what we learn and experience together, are we equipped and empowered to engage with others, with the world, as disciples of Christ? What do we need to do today to become obedient to our heavenly Father?

Reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues of sharing.



Questions

- What significant something you have learned from someone older than you?
- What is something significant you have shared with someone younger than you?
- How can you ensure you don't lose sight of Jesus and his wisdom in this busy season?

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

A prayer of praise

Praise to you, Lord God, for the care of Jesus' parents.

Praise to you, Lord God, for his family and friends.

Praise to you, Lord God, for the nurturing and teaching he was given.

Praise to you, Lord God, for your unending, enduring guidance.

Praise to you, Lord God, for calling us to be your people.

Praise to you, Lord God, that we are people of faith.

Praise to you, Lord God, for the names we read and the faces we see and the lives we share.

Praise to you, Lord God, for ever and for ever.

Amen.

A prayer to end the Bible study

Wise and loving God,

you have used prophets and teachers, young and old,
to teach us more about you.

Help us never to stop learning,

and to grow in wisdom, as Jesus did, every day.

Amen.