

“Did you leave Jesus behind?” Luke 2:41-52 Sunday within Epiphany 2025

Dear fellow saints, very little information is given of Jesus' childhood in the scriptures. Here Luke gives us an incident when Jesus was 12. In our passage we have the story of Mary and Joseph going with Jesus to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When they were finished observing the feast of the Passover they immediately started for home. They journeyed for one whole day before realizing that Jesus was not among the group that they were traveling with. They retraced their steps all the way back to Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple discussing spiritual matters with the doctors of the Law.

What I want you to see is this here are two people who probably love Jesus more than anyone else on the earth at the time. Mary his mother and Joseph his stepfather. However, despite their love for Jesus, they left Him in the temple back in Jerusalem. I want us to notice a few things this morning.

First, lets look at the speed of the return. Notice that Mary and Joseph were in hurry to get home. They did not linger in Jerusalem. They had accomplished their religious obligation and did not want to hang around the church house any longer than they had to. That sounds like most Lutherans, doesn't it? We can't wait to get home, to eat Sunday dinner, to watch the ball game, to go check on the cows, or to go to the mall in Stratford. We can't wait for the chance to shed our formal church clothes for something more comfortable. We can't wait to get outside. Mary and Joseph were in such a rush to leave the church house that they left without Jesus. Jesus was in no rush. He stayed behind in Jerusalem Obvious by the following verses He was interested in what he heard. Because when Mary and Joseph came back and found Him, Jesus was listening to what the men of God had to say and was asking questions of them. Sometimes we need not be in such a rush to get out the door of the church but mediate and reflect on what you just heard and ask the preacher questions. Any true man of God is not afraid of

“Did you leave Jesus behind?” Luke 2:41-52 Sunday within Epiphany 2025 questions because that shows that somebody was listening to what he had to say. Many times Christians fail to hear God because they always in a rush going nowhere. What a sad situation Mary and Joseph left Jesus behind in the church house and they did not even know it. How many times do you leave the church building without Jesus and don't even know it?

My second observation is that Mary and Joseph took it for granted that Jesus was with them somewhere amongst the group they were traveling with. They just assumed Jesus was around somewhere. How many of us Christians do exactly the same thing. We take Jesus for granted and assume that He is with us even when we show no interest in Him. Can you imagine here a two people who loved Jesus probably above anyone else at the time and they went a whole day without thinking about Him. Without missing Him. How can any one of us get through the day without Jesus. Oh! some of us think we can, by the way we neglect our relationship with Him. If you love someone that you are always thinking about them and checking in and seeing where they are at and how they are doing. My dear friend if you think you can go through a day without Jesus then you are in store for a day trouble and turmoil. How can you begin your day without Jesus. We do exactly that when we fail to begin our day with prayer and Bible reading. You just cannot suppose anything. If you want Jesus to be real in your life that you need to spend sometime with Him. How many of us feel the effects of going without water and food for the day. You become irritable and cannot focus in the physical realm. The same thing goes in the spiritual realm because Jesus is the water and bread of life. We only start looking for the Lord when some trouble hits during the day. Then we want to treat Him like bell hop to come to our aid. We get tired of carrying the bags and decide that we want Him to carry the bags. The Word of God tells us that Jesus is to have the preeminence

“Did you leave Jesus behind?” Luke 2:41-52 Sunday within Epiphany 2025 in all areas of our lives. Jesus should be constantly on our hearts and minds. If he was then our behavior would reflect it - Amen!

Thirdly, when Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus is not with them, notice where they look first - "among their kinsfolk" Mary and Joseph were his parents and responsible for his welfare and safety - not their extended family. As Christians, we are responsible for maintaining and developing our individual relationship with Jesus Christ. So should not be looking for Jesus among our family or friends. Jesus is not someone that you just take Him somewhere and then just dumped off and leave so you can go off and have your fun. Jesus is not supposed be a latch key child in your life.

Fourthly, it is obvious that Mary and Joseph were looking for Jesus in all the wrong places because they did not find Him. They did not find Him with family or friends. They did not find Him playing Hockey. They didn't find Him in front of a Nintendo switch. They didn't find Him at the movie theatre. They didn't find Him at the mall. Jesus was not any ordinary child. He was God and man. It finally dawns on Mary and Joseph to go back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. They finally realized that they had left Jesus behind. That is what some of you need to do is realize that you have left Jesus behind. No, I do not mean that you lost your salvation – we are saved by faith in our baptism - but you lost the relationship that you once had. In other words, "You have left your first love" You sometimes leave out of church so quickly that you leave him behind.

Fifthly, it took Mary and Joseph three days to find Jesus. Instead of realizing that he would surely be in the church house because Jesus loved to be in the house of God. Instead they spend three days looking for Jesus. They probably went the Christian Bookstore of Jerusalem - No Jesus. They probably went to the Christian Rock Concert - No Jesus. They probably rode the Sunday School Buses

“Did you leave Jesus behind?” Luke 2:41-52 Sunday within Epiphany 2025 of Jerusalem. They found a lot of fun and games but - No Jesus. As they entered Jerusalem they saw a great big banner which read, "Come and Join Us this Sunday for the Walk for Jesus" They said "Surely we will find Him there" So, they joined in but - No Jesus. After Mary and Joseph exhaust looking for all the possible places Jesus could be, they said, "Let's try the church house"

Sixthly, Notice what Mary and Joseph found Jesus doing - He wasn't there chewing gum and sucking on candy. He wasn't there passing notes back and forth. He wasn't there distracting the other children and their parents. He wasn't constantly getting up and down to go to bathroom. He wasn't in Junior Church. No, we are told they found Him, "in temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking questions." He was there in the church house learning as much as He could about the things of God.

Finally, when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said why did you do this to us? Your parents! We were looking everywhere for you! We see here that Mary is being a typical mother. She scolds her son for staying behind and worrying them. But I want you to notice Jesus' response. Jesus basically responds and says "Where else did you expect to find me?"

What we want to see is we can get so rushed and frazzled that we can leave this church building without Jesus. Whenever you come to the church building you should never be in a rush to leave. Part of your worship is just to sit and reflect on what the man of God just said. Being in the church building should strengthen our relationship with Jesus and cause us to appreciate Him that much more. To not want to leave Him behind. We are often the last ones to arrive at church and the first ones to leave out. Worshipping God is not suppose to be convenient. You are not here to give God the bum's rush then hit the door. I hope no one here would ever go a day's journey like Mary and Joseph only then

“Did you leave Jesus behind?” Luke 2:41-52 Sunday within Epiphany 2025 realized that you left Jesus behind. Remember, if you do where to find him in the church building about His Father’s business. My friend that is what you should be doing while waiting for the Lord to return. Be about your Father’s business. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.