

Lost at Home

Come Home for Christmas: Part 6 “Lost at Home”

Rev. Cameron D St. Michael – December 26, 2021

1st Sunday After Christmas

Readings: 1 Samuel 2:18-20; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Reflection: Psalm 148

Greeting: In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, full of grace and truth. (*John 1*)

Prayer: Eternal God, you have given us the greatest of joy through the birth of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Your light has broken into the darkness and your love has been made known to us. Let us sing your praises and glorify your name. Let your hope guide our hearts in all that we are and all that we do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 148

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 148 NRSV)*

We read the words of Psalm 148 and hear of praising the Lord. That we see all creation praising the Lord for all that he has done. That we are surrounded by God’s work. Do you see God in the world all around you? Do you take comfort knowing that you are a part of God’s great doings? Do you praise the Lord for all he has done for you? Do you sing his praises to others? How do you share in the joy of God’s gifts for you?

Prayer: O Lord, we celebrate the home we have in your gracious love. Let Christmas be a reminder of your mercy and grace, of your gift of salvation. May we know that we are never lost in your care. We are thankful that we may lift up our prayers to you on this day, knowing that you hear the earnest plea of our hearts. We pray that your light and love bring peace to the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our first reading for today comes from 1 Samuel chapter 2 verses 18 through 20.

Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD"; and then they would return to their home. Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people. (1 Samuel 2:18-20 NRSV)*

Our next reading for today comes from Colossians chapter 3 verses 12 through 17.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:12-17 NRSV)*

Our last reading for today comes from Luke chapter 2 verses 41 through 52.

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth,

and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor. (Luke 2:41-52 NRSV)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

So, yesterday was Christmas. And here we are again. It feels like I just saw you here! Now know, I'm going to say this right off the bat: it's easy to feel a little lost right after Christmas. Advent is all of the preparation building up to Christmas and then on Christmas Eve we come together, and we sing, and we celebrate. And Christmas morning comes and goes. And here we are, the day after Christmas. No longer in a season of preparation, no longer the anticipation and the waiting. Where are we really? So, it's fitting that today we have a story about Jesus getting lost. At least everybody thinking he was lost. The older I get the more I can relate to Mary and Joseph being pretty peeved at Jesus for wandering away. They make their annual trip to Jerusalem. They do this every year, so they know what to expect. But when Jesus is 12, they go up and Jesus stays behind without telling anyone. Thinking he was with them somewhere in the group, they travel for a day. Then they notice he's gone. So, they go back, and they search for three days before they find him. Now I don't know about you but searching for three days would make me a little testy too. But there's Jesus sitting among teachers at the temple, listening and asking questions amazing everybody around him. And so, Mary comes up to him and wants to know "What do you think you're doing? Do you know how worried your father and I have been? Why did you do this to us?"

Now I have to say something here about the reply. And the reason is because the translation is sort of the best guess at putting it together properly. Our reading today was "Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?" Which I think is an OK translation. Sometimes it says, "about my Father's business." In the Greek, there's no house, there's no business. The wording is actually rather vague. For me, one way that you might be able to translate it that I think works would be "Didn't you know I'd be into my father's stuff?" First, it might sound a little funny, but I think sometimes we get caught up in the location and not so much what he's actually doing. It's not so much that he needed to be in the temple. It's that he was discussing God stuff with the teachers at the temple because that's what he was interested in. That was his focus.

But Jesus goes back with his parents and doesn't seem to worry them again like that. Now what's interesting is the way that this tale ends because it talks about Jesus increasing in wisdom and in years with divine and human favor. You could actually translate this line the same as our last line from Samuel. "Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and with the people." There really is a direct echo of what Samuel was like as a child growing up. Samuel was the prophet and priest that anointed first Saul and then David as king. In today's reading, it was him as a boy serving in the temple. And his mother would come to see him every year and bring him a robe. His parents made an annual visit to Jerusalem. While Samuel was there, he grew in wisdom and he grew in years, and he found

favor with God and the people. We get a tie in there. Samuel was a devoted servant to God. And while he was in the temple, he grew up and grew smart, and God and the people liked him. And we get an echo of that in Luke. Jesus went home instead of staying in the temple, but he still grew in wisdom and in years and he was liked by the people and God.

Now one of the reasons that I like this story is that it gives us a picture of something between a baby and a grown man being baptized in the Jordan. But it's also interesting because everyone thinks Jesus was lost. But he wasn't lost in his eyes. He knew exactly where he was. He thought he was where he should be. He seems just as baffled by his parent's question as his parents are by his answer. And it was that feeling that reminded me of sometimes how it feels right after Christmas. Are we still preparing? Are we still celebrating? Are we back to normal? Are we all on the same page? And it is easy to hit a funk and to feel lost right after the holiday celebrations. And maybe it's because we're asking too many questions or have too many expectations. Maybe it's easy enough just to ride the tide out. Let Christmas last a few extra days. Keep singing your Christmas carols. Leave the tree up until it feels like it shouldn't be there anymore. Keep making Christmas cookies. Keep celebrating as long as you feel like you should. Because the day may be gone but the feeling never should be. Maybe that lost feeling is because we try to bundle up all of that excitement and all of that joy and release it on one day and then think we're back to normal.

Jesus continued on from here. He didn't leave the temple and go back forgetting everything. He kept growing. Maybe that's the lesson we need to learn so that we don't feel lost at home after Christmas. Maybe Christmas isn't a feeling that we bundle up and experience on one day, and once it's out it's out and we're done, and we pack everything up again and wait until next year. But maybe all that preparation is so that it builds up so that it lasts, and it carries us through and till the next time that we come to see a babe lying in a manger. Maybe all that goodwill should be something that builds us up so that we keep going with it. That maybe we let it grow. We let our joy grow in size and strength. That we let the charity and goodwill, the love of Christmas, carry with us so that we grow in divine and human favor all year.

So, if you are lost, wondering what comes next in this new year that is upon us, with Christmas already starting to fade behind us. I say don't let it fade. Let that bright and shining star lead you on into a new year with new experiences, knowing that when we walk with Christ we are never truly lost because we know we have a home in him. So let us take comfort in that knowledge. Let your love grow all the year through. Carry Christmas with you. Because the miracle of Christmas is that our Emmanuel, our God with us, is still with us now and will always be with us. And when he is with us we are never lost, but we are always home. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: O Lord, the God who saw fit to walk with us, we thank you that you judge us not by the perfection of our actions. We know that we fall short, both in what we do and what we fail to do. Help us, as individuals and as a congregation, to trust you and follow where you lead. Help us to proclaim the Good News and to live it. Help us in our weakness and forgive us. May we remember your love and redemption are forever with us, born to call us home. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Come Home for Christmas

Our Advent/Christmas series is *Come Home for Christmas*. Advent is an invitation to celebrate Christ coming into the world, a reminder that God is with us. We celebrate the longing for God's kin-dom, the true home in God we hope for. The invitation for all is this: Come home for Christmas.

November 28th – *Time to Go Home* – Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 5th – *The Fear of Home* – Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 12th – *The Joy of Home* – Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 19th – *The Blessing of Home* – Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

December 24th – *Welcome Home* – Isaiah 9:2-7; Isaiah 11:1-4a,6-9; Luke 2:1-20

December 26th – *Lost at Home* – 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

January 2nd – *The Light of Home* – Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey
Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells
Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart	Ronnie Winstead	Annie McMorris
Dwight Parsons	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gable	Sage Martin
Dalton McFarland	Darrell Quick	Ruth Ann Finley	Sandy Starwalt
Jodie Bunch	Gene Laymon	Tom Finley	Family of Jim Nichols
Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd
Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Sue & Bob Smyser
Family of Bob White	Family of Sonya Bickers	Laura Carlen	

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