



**Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue
in the City of New York**

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www.SaintThomasChurch.org

Sunday, January 3, 2010

The Second Sunday after Christmas Day

Festal Eucharist

at 11:00am

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A Sermon by
The Reverend Jonathan M. Erdman
on
Saint Luke 2:41-52

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*A SERMON FOR
THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY*

In the Name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

As Mary watched him on the cross, she was losing him again. Jesus' mother looked on. Pilate's soldiers compelled her son to carry weight of the cross. When he fell, she could not go to him. As he was lifted to its awful height, she could not bring him down. As he gave his last breath, she lost him. She lost him again.

Years before, Mary and Joseph had lost him. It was a full day's journey away from Jerusalem, and the awful realization came. He was gone. They had lost him: the boy they loved, the boy they carried in their arms as a child. He was gone. They lost their son: a boy who angels guarded, a boy who God promised. Mary and Joseph had lost God's son.

All the proclamations and promises given by the angels had told them who he was. God sent his angels to warn them of Herod's wrath. His birth was celebrated by shepherds, angels, and magi alike. He was to redeem God's people. In addition to all of the worry of a mother and father, who loved their son, Mary and Joseph had lost the most important child in all of God's creation.

After three days of searching, they found him. There was the boy. Sitting in the temple, Jesus was teaching. Jesus answers Mary and Joseph. "How is it that you sought me?" Jesus answers as one who was never lost. Depending on the translation, Jesus continues, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" or "that I must be about my Father's business." Mary and Joseph thought he was lost. But even as a boy, teaching in the temple, Jesus was not lost. He was finding the lost.

Jesus ministry, the business of his father, is seeking and saving the lost. Luke tells of a lost sheep – found, a lost coin – found, and a lost son – returned. In the garden, Adam and Eve hide from God. The sad words spoken by God show the loss. In the garden God calls out "Where are you?" In Jesus Christ, God calls out "I will find you." Though the Gospel begins with Mary and Joseph seeking, it is God who finds.

The shame of Adam and Eve and the worry of Mary and Joseph show the fallen nature of human life. Through willfulness or carelessness they had lost the most precious thing. In losing God, they became lost, and for a time Mary and Joseph were unaware that anything was amiss. They had become preoccupied and distracted by other things. They assumed that everything was all right.

There came a moment when they realized that Jesus was gone, and in the temple, though they did not understand it, Mary and Joseph began to see that they were lost, and that through Christ, God had found them.

We might think that we need to find God, or that we have found him. We might think that we have to find our own way. Yet we need to let him find us. The realization that we are lost can come suddenly. We come to the moment of Mary and Joseph – the moment of knowing we are lost and are in need.

And Jesus answers, “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business. Mary and Joseph thought they had lost the child of promise. They may have feared the promises lost with him. But even then, he was not lost. He was at work. The promises were already unfolding in the young boy teaching in the temple. Mary and Joseph did not lose Jesus. God found them.

Mary did not lose Jesus on the cross. On the cross, Jesus was still about his father’s business. Though we had lost him, on the cross, and in his resurrection, Christ found us. For three days Joseph and Mary searched for their son. For three days Mary’s son seemed lost in death. For eternal life, Mary’s son has found us. Amen.