

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter beginning at the forty-first verse, and we read in Jesus' name:

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; ⁴⁴ but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶ Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His

understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Heavenly Father these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

Solomon wrote down in the book of Proverbs (22:6), "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Many of us here today have been blessed with this opportunity and also this task of

training up a child in the way that he should go. And if we are honest, not many of us have been perfect examples of doing this.

Some of us have children who no longer come to church. Some of us have children who are living in open and blatant sin and we are too afraid of hurting their feelings to talk to them about it. Some of us have children who have walked away from the faith... and we ignore it as if nothing has happened.

Train up a child in the way he should go... many of us have attempted to take that challenge, and many of us have failed. However, when we look at the text before us today we can see a family who did not fail in this task... of course they had the perfect child. Jesus Christ is indeed the perfect child who was born to Mary and Joseph and He is the perfect child who lived and died for you. And though Jesus was busy being perfect for each and every one of us He still found time to be “about His Father’s business.” Dear friends, I pray that with the help of God, we too, can ***be about our Father’s business.***

It is a very hard thing to admit when we have failed our children and yet at times each and every one of us does it. We were supposed to pick them up after practice... and we forgot. We were supposed to have a “Daddy-Daughter” date with them... but work got in the way. We were supposed to be there for them when they needed us... but television and other distractions got in the way.

Mary and Joseph were supposed to be watching Jesus... and they failed. While they were coming back from Jerusalem they just figured their child was with the rest of the family as they went a day’s journey before noticing He was gone... And then panic hit. The same sort of panic that hits you when you are in a store and you look down and your child is not longer at your side. That same panic that hits when your kid is playing outside and you hear the tires screech to a halt. We know that panic and it is life changing... and it was for Mary and Joseph also.

You can just sense their panic and dismay as they are looking all over for their child and He is no where to be found. So then they must make a day's trip back to Jerusalem searching on their way and scouring the city... during a feast... it would be like having to walk around Green Bay looking for your child while not knowing where he is... while a play-off game were going on. This was not an easy task to undertake and yet they had to find their child. And finally they did... at the temple. They found Him sitting in the temple listening to teachers and giving answers to them.

Wow... not that He was listening and giving answers that we'll get to in a minute, but wow that they found Him safe and sound. They found their Son and now they could breathe a huge sigh of relief.

Isn't that what we do when we find that lost child? Isn't that what we do when we realize that the skidding car was not because of our child? Isn't that what we do when that child is back in your protective care?

And yet when Mary and Joseph found Jesus He asked them, why they were looking for Him... didn't they know that He would be about His Father's business? Mary and Joseph knew who Jesus was, but man if their earthly concerns and worries did not kick in.

And what about you? Train a child up in the way he should go... when you lose a child is that a reflection on your parenting? When you worry about car tires screeching, is that a reflection on your parenting? I would say that there are indeed times when things can go wrong and are out of your control, a curious child, a drunk driver... but what about when your child wanders from the faith? What does that say about your parenting and about your training that you were supposed to prepare that child with.

Traditionally, this text is to show us the benefits of a Christian education. We can see that benefit when we look at Jesus, who being the perfect Son of God, went to His Father's house so that He could be about His Father's business.

Do your children know that they too can turn to God our heavenly Father? Do your children know that God is always waiting for them? Do your children know the life-giving message that is only found in the Bible? Have you trained up your children properly?

While there are surprises and accidents... nothing can take away our responsibility as parents and as children to learn and know the word of God. And though He was God, Jesus was still found at the temple learning and gaining insight from those around Him. He spent three days learning and gathering knowledge from the “smart” people of His day... but He did something more, He taught them. Jesus was able to answer questions, not just ask them, and provide answers that would shock people... and all of this He did at the age of twelve.

So far in this Epiphany season we have seen a baby who was born for us, a baby who was circumcised for us, a child who was worshipped and declared the king of the Jews... and now we have a child who is going

to the feasts for us and who is listening and answering while in church... Jesus is continuing to perfectly fulfill the law for us, and He does not stop there.

Jesus’ entire life is one of perfect law fulfillment: never breaking a commandment, never sinning against God, even teaching properly. Jesus taught His disciples, He taught anyone who would listen around Him, and He has taught you and me. Jesus’ life was a perfect life. And His death was an holy and innocent death. He died the death that is meant for each and every one of us. He died to bear all the punishment that our sins require... He died, so that we could live. And three days later He rose from the dead. He rose to proclaim that His life and death were sufficient for all people of all time.

And it is through faith in all that Jesus Christ has done that we know our sins are forgiven. Through faith we know that though we have done wrong and sinned, Jesus died for all of those sins. Through faith we know that Jesus has redeemed me... for all those times I have

not been the perfect parent... nor the perfect child.

And thanks be to God that He has now given us the opportunity to be better than we have been. Now that we have forgiveness of all of our sins, we can take that knowledge and share it with those around us... starting with our children and our families. We can call out to those erring children who have left the faith... we can rebuke and correct those children who are living in gross and public sin... we can help those children who need that extra "oomph" and motivation to come back to church. Yes, because of Jesus, we can be about our Father's business... sharing His word and His love to all of those around us.

Dear friends in Christ, being perfect is not easy. However, Jesus Christ was perfect for each and every one of us. He lived that perfect life in perfect obedience not only to His heavenly Father but also to His earthly father and mother... and also as our story shows us, to those who were in authority in God's church. Jesus Christ was the perfect child that we are

not... but thanks be to Him that He was perfect for us so that through faith in Him we too can be perfect and we too can spend our remaining days going about our Father's business... learning from Him all that we need for this life, but more importantly, all that we need for the life to come.

Thanks be to God that He has given me my faith. Thanks be to God that He has given me people to educate me in the proper Christian way. And thanks be to God that though I am not a perfect child, through faith in His Son I now can spend my days going about my Father's business.

Thanks be to God. Amen.