

“Jesus Has Authority”

Luke 2:40-52

This is the last year until 2025 that we get a Second Sunday in the Christmas Season. Most years we only get one. So we don't get to hear these readings too often. We heard them last year, as we are in this mini-cycle with the calendar where this second Sunday falls before Epiphany.

Last year, I talked about Jesus' authority to speak to the rabbi's and teachers of the Law and how He amazed them. Yet, even though He has such authority, Jesus is submissive to Joseph and Mary and yields His authority as He endures His humiliation during His days on this earth.

Today, I want to speak of a different aspect of Jesus' authority that is alluded to here in Luke's Gospel. Even though the hearers at the time did not understand what He was talking about, Jesus makes a direct assertion of who He is in relation to His Father when He says, “Did you not know that I must be in My Father's House?”

If Joseph and Mary had understood this statement, and if they would have understood this reality before they went searching for Him, they would not have

taken three days to find Him. But, of course, after three days after Passover, three days after the lambs have been slain and the people rejoice that God had saved them through the blood of the lamb, Jesus is found alive and well.

Jesus asks Joseph and Mary, “Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s House?” “Why were you looking for Me?” When the women go to the tomb after three days, the angel of the Lord asks them, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?”

We are told that after searching for Jesus for three days and finding Him safe in “His Father’s House” that Mary “treasured up all these things in her heart.” The angel speaks to the women at the tomb and says, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” And Luke records, “And they remembered His words.”

Those words were treasured in their hearts, even though they obviously did not fully grasp what Jesus had meant when He spoke to them. At least three times He has specifically mentioned what would happen when He went to Jerusalem for Passover that final time. He would be “lost” for three days in a much more profound way.

When He was “lost” as a 12 year old, as I mentioned before, He was in the Temple of the Lord, the place where God dwells on earth. And He was there exercising some of His authority as He spoke to the teachers of the Law, asked them questions, and gave them answers which caused them to be amazed at His understanding.

The final time when He will come to Jerusalem for the Passover, He will be questioned by the teachers of the Law, He will ask them some questions (after they unjustly beat Him), and He will give answers to their questions about who He is. Caiaphas asks Him directly, “Are you the Son of God?” to which Jesus simply says, “You say that I am” [Lk. 22:70]. And Caiaphas calls it “blasphemy.” He knows exactly what Jesus is claiming.

Just as He spoke to the guards in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus asks, “Whom do you seek?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus says, “I am.” [Jn. 18:4-5]. The English says “I am He” but the original is the formal name of God – I AM. And the soldiers drew back and fell to the ground. They knew exactly what Jesus was claiming.

When Jesus is 12 years old and is speaking with authority to the teachers of the Law in the Temple of the Lord, in His Father’s House, in the place where God most tangibly dwells on earth, this is just a foreshadowing for when He will

exercise His authority more fully and proclaim His authority to fulfill His Father's will.

He is the Son of the Most High God. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in a much more profound way than any lamb which was offered at the Temple. He is a Lamb with authority.

In John 10, we hear Jesus tell His disciples and all the crowd who was listening (including some teachers of the Law), He says, "So there will be one flock, One Shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" [Jn. 10:16c-18].

The authority of the Son of God incarnate, in the flesh, is what we celebrate during the Christmas Season. He has authority – real authority. In the weeks ahead, in the season of Epiphany, we will see His authority revealed to the world to a greater and greater degree, until ultimately, in His suffering and death as the Lamb of God, we see what real authority looks like.

Until then, that which was hidden is revealed in small glimpses. The glory of God and the announcement of angels at His birth and the eternal wisdom of a 12 year old boy instructing the "teachers" is just the beginning. Amen.