

Mary's Treasure
By Rev. Todd Farnsworth
Luke 2: 41-52



*Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. **42** When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. **43** After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. **44** Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. **46** After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. **48** When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." **49** "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"^[a] **50** But they did not understand what he was saying to them. **51** Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*

Michael spotlight's todd like at telethon so that two spotlights can be up at once.

T: The week after Christmas offers a little break from the rush up to the holiday, and Martha and I have used it to catch up on some movies. We watched the Christmas Chronicles 2, 3 versions of A Christmas Carol. Our

kids usually watch *Die Hard* and *Home Alone*. Do you remember *Home Alone*? About the harried parents who leave their child behind as they fly away to a lovely vacation? It seems like a nice tie into today's lesson. I mean, what kind of parents would overlook their child and leave without him? It's amazing that God didn't revoke Mary and Joseph's parenting privileges right then and there! And what was up with that kid that he didn't notice his family leaving without him???

Michael spotlight's Robyn

M: Excuse me, Pastor, but our Jesus was a good boy!

T: Hello? Who is that? Michael, are we being zoom bombed?

Michael: I don't think so, Todd

T: But how did she get in? She lived 2000 years ago!

M: Don't start with me about time hopping, Mister! You're the one who had my baby in a manger last week and have him on the edge of manhood today!

T: Well, that's more of a construct of the lectionary...

M: Lectionary shmlectionary! I don't care if it's Jeremy Beremy or eternal yaya! I'm Mary, Mother of God, and I don't appreciate you besmirching my son!

T: Well, welcome, Mary. Um, you have to admit, he does come off as pretty insolent with his, " *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"*

M: Do you think it was easy raising Jesus?

T: Excuse me?

M: Do you think it was easy raising the son of God?

T: Well, I never thought about it like that. I've read the stories about his early years...

M: From Thomas??? It's no wonder he didn't make it into the canon of the Bible! All those rumors about Jesus hurting his classmates and making clay pigeons fly!

T: Ah yes, the clay pigeons...

M: And those stories about striking our neighbors blind for complaining about him? Have you been struck blind???

T: Well, no, but...

M: Exactly. You're just like Thomas! Focusing on the negative instead of seeing the gift of who I got to raise.

T: With all due respect ma'am, there's really not a lot for us to go on about Jesus' early years. Most of the gospel writers just skip ahead to his adult life. We kind of have to make do with the scraps we get.

M: Are you calling my son's childhood a "scrap?"

T: Nooo, I...

M: Let me tell you a little about him. Jesus grew up in a loving home. His father, as you know, was a carpenter. I worked from home organizing daily

life, getting Jesus to his lessons, preparing food for our family. We were poor, (somewhere between the rich who owned land and were entrepreneurs, and the destitute who begged for a living) but Joseph's trade kept us fed. We ate mostly bread and olives. We drank pressed grapes.

T: Ah, the bread and wine of Communion!

M: Call it what you will. Bread and wine were the most common elements at a meal. We often shared our meals with neighbors who lived close by.

T: How close by?

M: Like, we were *roof to roof* close by! There was no lawn between us. In fact, in Nazareth, there was very little lawn at all. Mostly dust...or mud, depending on if it rained.

T: It sounds terrible.

M: There you go, focusing on the negative! It was our home and we loved it!

T: Sorry. Go on.

M: Anyway, we taught Jesus the stories of our faith. He learned about Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. We sang him the psalms and shared with him the wisdom of Proverbs. He was an eager learner and he asked a lot of questions. It was as if he was learning about himself!

T: I guess I've had some rough children's messages through the years. I imagined Jesus peppering the rabbi's with questions that they were ill-equipped to answer.

M (laughing): Oh, we were ill-prepared, too! But we still tried! Oftentimes, Jesus would end up getting us to think differently about the stories we told him, just by the questions he asked or the comments he made. He understood our faith as a living thing, not something that was set in stone.

T: What do you mean?

M: I mean he was always recognizing God's mercy, God's justice, God's care in the stories...and not just for our family, but for everyone! It made us look in that direction, too!

T: You know, I've noticed that about Jesus, too. He did try to point out the blessing in the midst of difficult texts. Like when he described "neighbor" as someone who we would have otherwise thought of as our enemy!

So what was he doing in the Temple? In the story we read today?

M: About the same. He was listening to the rabbis (as was appropriate for a boy his age) and asking questions. I guess he got so absorbed in the conversation that he didn't notice us leaving. He was fine. We were scared.

T: Scared?

M: Haven't you ever lost track of one of your children in a supermarket or a mall?

T: Well...

M: We were so relieved to discover that he was safe in the presence of God's house...with God's people! That kind of community is pretty priceless.

T: Priceless? Aren't those the same guys who attacked him in his later years?

M: There you go only seeing the negative. Did you notice what Luke said about the whole affair?

T: He said you were worried...

M: And?

T: And that you didn't understand Jesus' answers.

M: And?

T: And that you treasured all these things in your heart. I didn't understand that part.

M: I'm not surprised, you old Pessimistic Pete! Luke knew me pretty well. *He* understood that even though parts of Jesus' life were a mystery to me: the angel's visit, giving birth in a stable, having a bunch of shepherds show up and celebrate our child, figuring out what to do with the gifts the Magi left for Jesus, *this* story...all of these were moments to treasure with my son.

T: Treasure?

M: The word means to hold onto for a later time, to protect, to safeguard.

Given all that our family has gone through, don't you think we might have needed a bit of stored up *treasure* in order to survive?

T: Oh, you have been through a lot. Watching your son get attacked by his teachers, threatened by the government, put to death...

M: Everyone goes through a lot, and if you don't have any treasure stored up from better days, days when God was with you in ways that you might not have understood, then you will feel pretty empty when the really bad times start to unfold. Having these treasures reminds me that God has not given up on us, even if people around us are thoughtless or cruel.

T: So are you saying I should try to find some good in everything?

M: I'm saying that there is God in every moment, and God is pretty mysterious. Hold on to those God moments, when the sun hits the water just right, or a friend calls you out of the blue to check up on you, or you discover someone you lost exactly where they ought to be.

T: I'm sorry I said you were a lousy parent, Mary.

M: I know. Fortunately, I had some treasure stored up to give me the courage to let you know of your mistake. Now if you don't mind I have to get back to watching *The Crown*. You're not the only one who has post-holiday catching up to do and I love the mother figures in the story!

T: Thank you, Mary. I'll treasure this time of chatting with you. Amen.