



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 1317

Luke 2:46 *“Then, after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.”*

Our passage today is the only glimpse into the life of Jesus between His birth and when His ministry started at the age of thirty. Thirty years without anything, except this reference. We'd like more, but more isn't given. Jesus as a teenager. Jesus as a twenty-something. What did He do all those early years? Who were His friends? How did people view Him? Lots and lots of questions, curiosity and thoughts. The Gospels are not the biography of Jesus. They are not intended to show us every detail of His life. The intention is to show us that He is the Son of God who gave His life so that we might be forgiven of our sins. In doing that, many, many things are left out. John tells us that the world could not hold all the books detailing all that Jesus did. There were more miracles than what we find in the Gospels. There were more lessons. There were more people He met and encountered. What is recorded is enough. It's enough to convince us and convert us to our Lord and Savior.

In our passage, Joseph, Mary and Jesus had been to Jerusalem to worship for the Passover. They were returning home with many other people. Jesus wasn't with them but they assumed He was somewhere in the group heading home. They began looking for Him after the first day, but couldn't find Him. They returned to the city, and now, three days later they found Him. He was in the Temple, with teachers, listening and asking questions.

Today, an Amber Alert would have been sounded. Jesus was missing and they didn't know where He was. That thought could be said of many homes and sadly, many churches today. Jesus is missing, and they don't even realize it. Jesus has been replaced with other things and worse of all, many do not even realize that He is missing.

It is interesting what the text tells us about Jesus.

First, He was back in the Temple. He wasn't on the ball field with other kids His age. He was in the temple, the place of worship. Now that the Passover was over and it was time to return home, Jesus had not turned off His interest in things spiritual. What an amazing twelve year old. Of all places, He is in the temple. But knowing Jesus, where else would we expect to find Him?

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Second, He was sitting among the teachers. He recognized the scholars and that is where He wanted to be. He was learning. He was hearing what they had to say. He was interested in depth, content and things spiritual. He wasn't in a children's wing, singing songs, drinking Kool-Aid, and playing games. That's where many today put 12 year olds. Too young to be in worship. They'd be bored. They need to play. Not Jesus. Maybe we don't give kids a chance to be spiritual. Maybe they would want to sit among the adult teachers.

Third, He was listening. There was much discussion about Scriptures and things spiritual. That is what Jesus wanted to be a part of. He wanted to hear what they were saying. You wonder if the teachers were talking about the Messiah. They were always looking for the Chosen One to appear. Jesus was him. It wasn't time to reveal that yet. Makes you wonder what the discussion was about.

Fourth, He was asking questions. Most twelve year olds that I know do not ask very deep questions. Jesus must have. He was engaged in spiritual dialogue. I wonder what the teachers thought about Jesus' questions. I wonder if He made them really think.

We also wonder what these Jewish teachers thought of Jesus. They might have been bothered by "the kid" hanging around, but then to hear His interests and His questions must have turned heads. Who is this kid? How does He know so much?

Now after this brief scene, the next time we read about Jesus, He is thirty, and beginning His ministry. John, His cousin, commonly known as "the Baptist" baptizes Jesus. The Holy Spirit descends upon the Lord. A voice from Heaven declares that Jesus is the only begotten one. He is the chosen one. He is the Messiah. Then it all begins. The miracles. The sermons. The journeys. The encounters. The accusations. The Cross. The tomb. The resurrection. The church.

It would be in this same Temple, that a few years later, a woman caught in adultery would be brought to Him with the question of whether or not to stone her. It would be in this same Temple that Jesus would teach. It would be in this same Temple that Jesus, not once, but twice, would drive out the money changers. Jesus, referring to His coming death, would say, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The disciples and others thought He meant the actual temple. He was referring to His life.

Joseph and Mary couldn't find Jesus. Many today are having a hard time finding Him. They are looking in the wrong places. They are trying to find Jesus in pleasure and happiness. Others are trying to find Jesus in their own agendas and plans. Some are trying to find Jesus to justify whatever they want in life. They are looking but they can't find Him. They won't find Him. Joseph and Mary looked and looked among all the people for Jesus. They had to turn back and return to the city. I don't know where they went first, but one of the last places they saw Jesus was in the Temple. They returned there, and they found Him.

Jesus can be found. Seek, He said, and you shall find. A person has to know where to look. Jesus is found in the Bible. That's where you learn about Him. That's where you see Him. That's where faith is born, in the word of God.

Jesus responds to Mary and Joseph, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" The text tells us that they did not understand. Jesus was no ordinary person. He was God clothed in flesh. He was here for a reason and a mission. Mary would later get it. She would be at the Cross, witnessing Jesus die. He died for her sins. He died for your sins.

It's the Father's business that put Jesus back in the temple in Jerusalem when His family left to return home. It's the Father's business that put Jesus on the Cross. It's the Father's business that puts Jesus in your life.

Jesus was right where He was supposed to be. He always is.

Roger Shouse

