

Title: Christ in our Company

Text: Luke 2: 41-52

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Luke 2: 41: Now 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 after the custom of the feast. 43: And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. 44: But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45: And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 46: And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47: And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. 48: And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49: And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50: And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51: And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

FAITHFULNESS TO GOD

First, we see an example of a believer's faithfulness toward God, "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast." (Lu 2: 41-42)

By God's grace, Joseph and Mary were devoted to God, serving God, according to the covenant they were under. Joseph and Mary were very poor. The trip to Jerusalem from Nazareth was very long and very dangerous.

Yet, together, as husband and wife, with their child, according to the word of God, they left everything every year and came to worship God, in God's way, at God's time. Every husband and wife ought to come to the Lord's house bringing their children. It is husband's responsibility to bring his wife and children to the Lord's house where Christ is preached in truth. Every child ought to come with their parents to the Lord's house.

DRAWING NEAR WITH CHRIST IN OUR COMPANY

Notice, they came to the house of the Lord with the Lord Jesus. This must have been an extra special time for them to observe the Passover feast. They knew something of the truth that their child is the Messiah. By now, Mary had heard the gospel of Christ declared to her several times. They were observing the passover with Christ who is our true Passover Lamb; who would soon put an end to that law forever. The picture this sets before us is a time of worship, like we are doing here, when we come together to worship God in Christ Jesus the Son of God.

When we come to the Lord's feast, the preaching of the gospel, we must come in Christ, through Christ, because there is no other way to approach God for sinners like us. We are unrighteous and God is righteous. But Christ is the righteousness God provides for his people. We are unholy and God is holy. But Christ is the sanctification God provides in his people. Christ is the only way of approach unto God and acceptance with God. By his own blood he obtained eternal redemption for everyone for whom he died. We draw near to

God—in his feast—by the Holly Spirit washing our hearts in his blood, with true hearts, in true faith, resting in Christ our Passover Lamb.

OBEDIENCE OR PRESUMPTION?

Since they were poor, were they presuming upon God's grace to make such a long trip? Could they just as easily have worshipped God from home? Folks will say, "Funds are short. I can't make the trip to worship." Were they presuming upon God's protecting grace to leave all for this long trip? Folks say, "I can't leave my job, my land, my stuff!"

No, they were doing just the opposite. They were obeying God, not presuming upon God. If they stayed home, forsaking the assembly, then they would have disobeyed God's command, distrusting God to provide, and presuming upon God's grace to keep them though they were walking contrary to God's will. What they did was faith and obedience to God, from a heart of love, trusting God to do as he promised. God said,

Exodus 34: 23: Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24: For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.

They showed that nothing else is as important as the public worship of God in God's ordained way. They let no excuse turn them from worshipping God.

We are not under the old covenant but believers now are under the everlasting covenant of grace. But we learn from the Hebrew writer what happened to those who refused to meet God in his ordained place and what shall become of us if we forsake Christ's assembly and his people. This is God's word to you and me who profess faith in Christ:

Hebrews 2: 1: Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. 2: For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; 4: God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Hebrews 10: 21: And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23: Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) 24: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

If we love and are considerate of our brethren, then the way we do so, the way we provoke each other to love and good works is by not forsaking Christ's assembly. He says that next.

Hebrews 10: 25: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The Lord's people shall assemble together more often the closer we get to Christ's return; soon we will only have each other in this sinful world.

Hebrews 10: 26: For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, [if we willfully forsake assembling ourselves together to Christ, with God's saints, we are rejecting Christ

and]there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27: But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

We have the live broadcast. I am thankful. We have it for three reasons. First, for those who live too far to attend on mid-week service; two, for those in parts of the world who are without a pastor; three, in hopes some who do not know the truth will hear and be called by God's grace. But we do not provide the live web stream for those who could come on Sunday to instead stay home to watch. To do so is to disobey God. It is to willingly presume upon God's grace, supposing God will be in our mist on our terms. He will not!

So let us follow the example before us of making no excuses but coming to the Lord house as God commanded and coming in the Lord Jesus.

A WORD ON PRESUMPTION

Next, we have a word on presumption and supposing that Christ is in our company, "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey." (Lu 2: 43-44)

Understand, for God's chosen child, those Christ redeemed, those in whom the Spirit dwells, we shall never be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit says through the apostle Paul, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8: 38-39) God the Father chose and blessed us in Christ, God the Son purchased us with his blood and the Holy Spirit has sealed us unto the day of redemption. We shall never be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

But Christ can make us feel as those we have been separated from Christ. He can make it so that we think we have lost his presence in our hearts. We feel utterly lost. Christ sees us but we cease seeing him by faith. We read in our text, "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it." (Lu 2: 43)

WHY CHRIST DEALS THUSLY?

What are some reasons Christ will deal thus with his Father's house? If we come to the house of God simply to fulfill our duty—"to fulfill the days"—then turn toward home with our minds set on self and other things. Then we will not notice that Christ is not with us.

Some who were not seeking Christ searched the scriptures for life. But when they fulfilled their day's duty then they turned to something else, never knowing they did not have Christ. The Master said to them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (Jn 5: 39) Seek Christ alone in the scriptures. He is in every word of this book. Christ said, "In the volume of the book it is written of me!" Seek Christ alone for life. He is eternal Life, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 Jn 5: 11)

Many fulfill their day's duty of keeping the law of Moses then turn away and never know they do not have Christ with them. Christ said, I came to fulfill the law, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5: 20) Christ is the Righteousness of God. God will not accept us except we have Christ—not by your law-keeping or mine!

We make a certain mistake if we suppose Christ is with us, presuming he is, when he is not, “But they, supposing him to have been in the company...” (Lu 2: 43) In those days, the men travelled in a company and the women travelled in a company. So Mary thought he was with Joseph and Joseph thought he was with Mary. My wife and I lost our son at a parade, once. We were frantic. First thing each said to the other, “I thought you had him.”

Brethren, it is not someone else’s responsibility that I know Christ and have Christ in my heart; it is my responsibility. I am not to suppose Christ is in me but to give diligence to make sure I am resting in Christ alone. We can exhort one another but we are not to be careless ourselves.

When we come to house of the Lord, do not suppose Christ is with you but be diligent to approach God in Christ and with Christ. We cannot worship God if Christ does not give us the Spirit in our hearts and make us behold him in faith. Many think going through the motions is to have Christ and to worship Christ. But a form of religion is not having Christ in the heart. Many know doctrine who do not know the Christ of the doctrine.

Likewise, when we go home from the service we should not suppose Christ goes with us but be diligent to see that we have Christ in our heart. It is alright to talk after the service, to visit with brethren. But do not forget Christ whom we heard. They were probably talking about the temple—but forgot him who is the Temple; talking about the high priest—forgot him who is the High Priest; talking about the Passover—but forgot him who is the Passover Lamb; talking about the food at the feast—but forgot Christ who is the Wine on the lees, the Feast of fat things; they had their minds on the way as they journeyed—but forgot him who is THE WAY.

Let us leave here thinking on one person, Christ Jesus; thinking on how God chose us in Christ, adopted us by Christ, preserves us by Christ, shall raise us by Christ and how we shall spend eternity with Christ our Inheritance and our Heaven. Let us do so all the while asking and depending upon Christ himself to keep us thinking on Christ. But let us never suppose Christ is leaving with us. Let us be sure.

How does it happen that we lose Christ? We wait too long to seek his face. Notice, “But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him.” (Lu 2: 44) They went a whole day’s journey before Christ came to their mind. Then when they sought him, they found him not. Does that sound strange to go that long without thinking on your child or checking to see if your child is with you? It is worse to go all day without seeking Christ!

Seek Christ and his righteousness first: first before coming to the Lord’s house, first when at the Lord’s house, first as you leave the Lord’s house, first before the days’ journey, first in the day’s journey, first at the end of the days’ journey. Christ said,

Matthew 6: 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

CHRIST DEALINGS WITH US

Thirdly, we have a word on seeking and finding Christ once we realize that he is not with us. Or better yet, this is a word on how Christ deals with us so that he keeps us seeking him rather than turning away without him.

Now, try to imagine how their hearts are breaking. This one they love with all their hearts is missing, their only son. It is worse when God’s only begotten Son removes his presence from you. Moses said, “If thy

presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.” (Ex 33:15) So they began looking for Christ. Where do you find Christ? Where do we not find Christ?

NOT AMONG OUR KINSFOLK

First, they sought him in their company, “they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.” But they found him not. (Lu 2: 44) Simply, they were looking among their relatives and the other companies to see if their son was there. But get this spiritually. Most of our kinsfolk and acquaintances have no idea who Christ is. Yet, we foolishly spend so much time among those where our Lord’s presence is not to be found. Or when we fall under conviction we go to the preacher or to our brethren. If they are faithful to the Lord they will tell you where to look.

IN HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

Then they turned back, “And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.” (Lu 2: 45) This “turning back” is a good example of repentance. Christ brings his child to forsake the path we are on. It leads away from Christ. Christ brings us to turn back from “our kinsfolk and acquaintances.” He makes us turn back to run to Christ. That is what repentance is.

But Christ will not be found in earthly Jerusalem—in earthly, legal, works religion. The Holy Spirit said through the apostle Paul, “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” (Gal 4: 25) But Christ will be found in heavenly Jerusalem. He said, “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” (Gal 4: 26) Heavenly Jerusalem is God the Father’s house over which Christ is the Head.

Hebrews 12: 22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

Notice, it may be more difficult to find Christ than it was to lose sight of him, “And it came to pass, that after three days.” (Lu 2:46) It only took a day’s journey to lose Christ; but it took three day’s to find him. But when Christ makes our heart new, he makes it so that we do not give up seeking him. He withholds his presence long enough to bring us to the end of ourselves so that we seek him with our whole heart. Then Christ brings us to himself. He said, “And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” (Jer 29: 13)

So where will Christ be found? Christ will be found in his true temple, teaching those who he brings to truly seek him—“And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.” (Lu 2: 46) This is an example of Christ being found in his Father’s house in the church. The “doctors” represent those Christ makes true students, true disciples of the gospel. As the gospel goes forth Christ hears the questions of our hearts and asks us questions, answering us in Spirit and in Truth. There was one place God promised to meet with the children of Israel—it was from heaven, in the temple, over the mercy seat. Drop down to verse and that is exactly where Christ says he will be found, “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Lu 2: 49) The same word is translated in another place “house.” So Christ is saying, “Do ye not know I must be in my Father’s house?”

We find Christ, where he is about his Father's business in his Father's house. He finished the Father's business of redemption, of magnifying God's justice, of fulfilling the law. Christ justified his people from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Now, Christ is our risen Head, calling out his lost sheep through the preaching of his word in the Lord's house. This is his Father's business which he accomplishes through the gospel in his Father's house.

Has Christ made you realize you are without Christ's presence? Wist ye not that Christ is in his Father's house about his Father's business? Come to the house of the Lord. Come not to hear a man below but to be taught of Christ from above; not to seek things below, to seek Christ above. If Christ is drawing you to seek him it is there you will find Christ.

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ makes his redeemed hear him, Christ will astonish and amaze you, "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed." (Lu 2: 47)

THE PURPOSE FOR CHRIST DEALING WITH US IN THIS WAY

Why does Christ sometimes draw back from a believer like he did in our text? The answer is in Mary's statement, "and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (Lu 2: 48) Christ thus deals with us that he might make us willing to seek only him with a broken and contrite heart.

We can get caught up in so many things which steal our affection from Christ: our kinsfolk and acquaintances, our husband and wives, our service, our journey, even in the means itself. Remember what Christ did to Jacob? He drew back. Jacob was helpless to do anything except cling to Christ sorrowing. That is how Christ made Jacob prevail with God. That is how he makes us prevail. We are made to see how greatly we need Christ when Christ makes us think we have lost him. Then we seek him. Then we seek only him. But all along it is truly Christ seeking us.

THE EFFECTUAL END

We do not understand till Christ makes us understand, teaching us in our hearts, "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." (Lu 2: 50) But Christ promised that if we abide in him then he will abide in us. (Jn 15: 1-11) So when Christ has brought us to his feet to truly seek him alone, then he comes down into our hearts, dwells with us where we live, all the while ministering unto us and making us to keep all his teaching in our hearts, "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." (Lu 2: 50-51)

As Christ teaches us in our hearts this is what happens in our hearts, "And Jesus increased in wisdom." Christ is made unto you Wisdom. "And Jesus increased in stature." Christ becomes exalted above all in our heart. And Jesus increased "in favour with God." Christ teaches us in the heart that Christ is the only one who satisfied God for his people. And Jesus increased in favor "with man." Christ grows us to be satisfied with Christ even as the Father is satisfied in him so that we rest complete in Christ! (Lu 2: 52)

We truly have Christ when we have him in truth, when Christ is our All, when we have the Spirit of Christ within making us willing to follow him in his Father's house with the mind of Christ, when only Christ will do! If we can go "on supposing he is in our company" when he is not then we do not have him. But if we are

brought to the end of ourselves so that we have to turn back to him then we have him. The reason is because Christ has us!

Amen!