

Congregational Study: Luke's Epiphany

Luke 2:41-52

Sunday Class (1/12/24)

Read 2:41-52

If you were one of the teachers in the temple, how might you have told the story? If you were Joseph, how might you have told the story? If you were Mary, how might you have told the story?

Remember (from 1:1-4), Luke gathered eyewitness accounts as he put together his gospel. From whom do you suppose he heard first-hand info about this story?

If you were Luke, interviewing Mary, what questions might you have asked her about this story?

Luke 2:41-52 details

“went to Jerusalem” (41) – Greek: “went up to Jerusalem” – not only because of height, but because this is Zion, the holy mountain where God dwells and visits his people (cf. 18:10, 31).

Luke doesn't tell us how it came to be that Jesus was not noticed as missing. What's your best theory?

“all who heard him were amazed” (47)

- “amazed” -- Luke uses same word repeatedly (cf. 8:56, 24:52; eight times in Acts)

“his parents ... were astonished” (48)

- Luke uses an even stronger word to describe his parents' reaction

“Son, why have you treated us so?” (48)

- *What do Mary's words reveal about how she was feeling? Do you think she was hurt/wounded?*
- *Did she feel that Jesus was at fault? That he had wronged them?*

“your father and I ...” (48)

- Her phrase stands in sharp contrast to Jesus' reply about his need to be focused on his *Father*
- *Where's Mary coming from with this? She and Joseph have been full-time parents for 12 years. Had they forgotten about his divine origins and divine mission?*

Jesus words in v. 49 are his first recorded words in the gospel. When he asks, “Why were you looking for me,” what do you think he's implying with this question?

“I must be” (49)

- Literally, “it is necessary”
- Theologically significant word – we’ll see it again and again in gospel
- Emphasizing necessity of God’s plan of salvation to be accomplished (in Jerusalem)
- part of Luke’s passion vocabulary
- cf. 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26, 44
- *What does this one word reveal to us about the attitude of Jesus toward his mission?*

“I must be in my Father’s house” (49)

- Very significant that Jesus claims God as his Father, in his very first words recorded in this gospel
- From the beginning of this gospel, through the end, this is one of the key points of contention – is Jesus really the Son of God? He says he is, over and over.
- This is one of the basic issues that Luke returns to over and over again in his gospel.
- Basic question: What do you think of Jesus’ authority? Will you respond with faith, or reject his claims?
- Is he the Son or not?

“they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them: (50)

- In this gospel, his first words are misunderstood, and this becomes a theme for his entire life
- Think about the pattern of misunderstanding that we see, particularly, when Jesus predicts his own suffering and death
- Jesus’ earthly parents stumble over his words, in this story; and so many others, later, did, as well

“was submissive to them” (51)

- *Why is this phrase significant?*
- *What does this reveal to us about Jesus?*
- *Is Jesus itching to get started with his ministry? Do you sense that he’s impatient?*

“his mother treasured up all these things in her heart” (51)

- *Do you remember the first time Luke notes this action on Mary’s part? Cf. 2:19.*
- *Do these words suggest that Mary was a source for the historical info in the early chapters of Luke’s gospel?*

“increased in wisdom and in stature” (52)

- *What do you think these words mean?*

“favor with God and man” (52)

- *What do these words tell us about the boyhood of Jesus?*