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**About God**  
(Luke 2:41-52)

Kids grow up so fast, don't they? I mean, didn't it seem like just two weeks ago we were peering over the edge of a manger looking at an infant swaddled in bands of cloth and now here he is by all accounts having a pretty advanced theological conversation. It's hard to let go of the little fellow that drew shepherds and wise men and angels.

But the fact that the lectionary asks us to consider today's reading on this Sunday I think is very important. It is too easy to retreat from the holiday season and back into whatever lives await us without asking what it is we have just done by celebrating the birth of Jesus. Who is it we celebrate being born?

Well, we say: Jesus. Jesus Christ. Messiah, Only Son of the Father, Counselor, Prince of Peace... names like these roll off our tongues from familiarity and maybe even the figure of Jesus has become too familiar to us for him to have a real impact on our lives. But, dispensing of titles for a moment, I think this episode in Jesus' life gives us an idea of who and what he is in a manner that can speak to us about the nature of ourselves.

What is happening? People are hustling back from the Passover festival, presumably to be about their lives after a time away from their homes and their businesses. It was evidently a long journey for Jesus and his family because they have already travelled a day before Mary and Joseph notice Jesus isn't with them. Not to judge, but really? Let's assume he's with relatives. For entire day without an explicit understanding that aunt so and so is watching after him. Really?

Doesn't it show how perennial the idea of being distracted by the busy-ness of life is? How many of us are rushing back or already have rushed back from the festival in order to find the comfort that distraction provides? And then when Mary finds Jesus she is not just astonished, she's a master of projection: "why have you done this to us? We have been searching for you in great anxiety." How many of us, for good cause or for self-imposed reasons walk through this world identified with a blinding anxiety? But we are more than beings who reactive to the stimuli of the world.

When I was just a boy I was looking through a box I found in the upstairs hall closet. This was pre-technology what I did for fun. In this box was a small, old school picture of a young Jesus with long blond hair (possibly an artist's interpretation)

looking up into light shining down on him. The picture was in a wood frame and the back was covered with thin brown paper and written on the back in pencil was "I must be about my father's business." This is from the King James version of Jesus' response to his mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

This phrase was literally etched upon my mind and in my heart for years, but perhaps with a misunderstanding. I heard it as "I, Jesus, am about God's business." In other words whatever we saw in Jesus' life came from the fundamental truth that his core was nothing other than God's business, or love. He could be or do nothing else. And for him to call us to follow from him, to learn from him, to do what he did and even greater things...well that must mean we are about God's business.

Newer versions of the Bible such as the one we use, have Jesus saying "didn't you know I would be in the temple." While all are rushing and living out of a place of anxiety in order to get somewhere, I am here: in the temple, the external symbol of an interior reality...God is not just with us, God is within us. It is what we are about.

In his poem "A Psalm for Life" Longfellow said the grave is not the goal of the life that flows through us: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." Good news: this body isn't you, but while you have it remarkable thoughts and emotions and beliefs and actions can be your tools for experiencing and bringing love to a world of distraction.

Knowing this we can know longer be satisfied waking up in the morning and putting on the unwieldy armor of beliefs about ourselves and then live in the distraction of the thoughts and emotions that arise from that, and lose ourselves. We can no longer so easily be content with searching daily filled with great anxiety using senses that are outward directed for something that abides within us.

So, the question isn't "what are you about?" It's been answered. The life of Jesus, starting with this moment makes clear a point that will be made over and again throughout the Gospels and the Epistles. We are one, with each other and with God. Whether inside or out of the temple, to live, to truly live we must see that we are about God's business, we are about God.

Amen.