

A place of belonging – Jesus in his parents' care.

Luke 2:41-52

The feeling of something being lost is awful. Frustrating if it's your car keys, terrifying if it's a child. This passage from Luke deals with being lost but discovers unexpected belonging.

Due to the nature of first century Jewish culture, it wasn't such a shock that Jesus was not with Mary and Joseph. Jesus' family group would have contained the whole extended family, and Jesus could have tagged along with any of the aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Nevertheless, when Mary and Joseph realised that he wasn't there, terror struck. They set off back to Jerusalem and found Jesus on the third day.

When they eventually found him, I sense that they hesitated for a moment, there was something holy about the moment. He was not anxiously searching for his mother and Joseph, instead the bible says, **'After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.'** The difference between Jesus and his parents is striking; the Living Bible draws that out.

His parents didn't know what to think when they saw him sitting there so *calmly*. "Son!" his mother said to him. "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been *frantic*, searching for you everywhere." Jesus challenges his mother **'Didn't you know that I had to be in my father's house'** or as its translated in the KJ **'wist ye not that I must be about my father's business'**. We ought to be careful when following of Jesus, we might take advantage of his good nature, thinking he will follow us, as we do our will, our business. He won't, he is about his father's business, and wants us to be too.

Whilst Jesus was perfectly at home with his family, he found his true place of belonging in his father's house, about his father's business. This story is essentially about discipleship. Mary and Joseph thought they knew what Jesus needed but it took the boy to draw his parents back to the purpose of life and faith, which shocked them. Tom Wright reminds those who follow Jesus that, *'discipleship always involves the unexpected'*. We ought not to be complacent as we follow Jesus, please expect the unexpected. That doesn't mean that Jesus can't be trusted; he can, fully.

As we learn to follow Jesus, we become more used to our true home and real purpose, being in our father's house and about our father's business. This is our true place to belong.

Questions

1. Have you ever been lost, or lost something, how did it make you feel?
2. Why do you think Jesus was calm, what might we learn from this?
3. How do you understand Tom Wrights comment, 'discipleship always involves the unexpected'?
4. When and where do you feel you belong?