Great Expectations: Jesus

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Date: 07 January 2018

Preacher: The Venerable Daniel Gifford

[0:00] Father in heaven, we thank you for your word, and we ask that in this time when we're all gathered together, that you will speak to us through your word, and by your Holy Spirit, that you will draw us closer to you and strengthen us to serve you. Amen.

Well, we just heard every parent's nightmare, and it sounds like almost all of you have had that nightmare from all the kids that were up here that were lost. When I was reading this passage, I was reminded that when I was 12 years old, I got lost as well. I was at soccer practice at school.
I was supposed to come home right away afterwards. I walked home with friends, and as we passed my friend's house, he said to me, why don't you stop in? I got a new pellet gun and a target. Well, what 12-year-old boy could resist that? So I went in, and I spent a lovely couple of hours with him. But it was getting dark, and I went home, and my mom wasn't there for some reason.
It was strange. Well, she arrived shortly afterwards very, very distraught. And she gave me a big hug. She was very upset.
[1:16] I was bewildered. And she said, where were you? I was expecting you well over two hours ago. I have been looking everywhere for you. Everybody's looking for you. Even the minister was out looking for me.

And the minister came shortly afterwards, and he was very relieved to see me. And then he proceeded to chew me out, which he was very good at. He was an officer, a paratrooper, who was an officer in the army in his previous life.
So he was very good at this. Put me off being an Anglican minister for years. Now, there is a similarity, and there is a difference in our passage to what I went through.
There's a similarity because Mary and Joseph were, in a similar way, totally distraught. Son, why have you treated us so? If you look at verse 47 there.
We've been searching everywhere in great distress. It's very vivid. It has this eyewitness feel to it, or first-person feel, because Luke interviewed Mary about what she went through.
[2:23] He was two years in Israel when Paul was in jail. Heard this testimony about Jesus. That's the similarity. But the difference is in verse 48.

If you look at chapter 2, verse 48. And this is a key two verses here that I want you to look at. I stayed with my friends way too long because I was clued out.
But Jesus stayed in Jerusalem because of his identity and because of his purpose. Both of which we see in verse 48. You see, Jesus said, That word house referring to the temple is not in the original language.
It's just blank. So it is also translated, I must be in my father's business. In the old King James version. I'm about his purpose. And that's because the father's purposes are centered in the temple, as I told the children.
That's where the sacrifice for sin was made. It's where heaven comes to earth. God is present with his people. It's a sign that God's great purpose is to save sinners by reconciling them to himself so that they might be with him forever.
[3:50] Heaven come to earth. And this was promised in the Bible that this would happen. It was promised in that same scriptures that Jesus was listening to and interacting with so brilliantly with those teachers.

It was, as an adult, Jesus would perfectly fulfill, as one of the children said, he would perfectly fulfill God's purpose and his promise when he died on a cross as a sacrifice for sin of the whole world. And in that way, people are reconciled to God the Father forever and know his love forever. They are with him. In that way, God saves. That's God's great purpose.

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And that is why Jesus came. Now, Jesus is also very, very clear about his identity as well in this little verse. Because he said, if you remember, it is my father's house.
I must be about his purpose. So he's clearly saying that he is God's son. And that takes precedent over every other relationship.
[5:01] So when the agenda of his parents do not line up with the agenda of his heavenly father, Jesus has to be about his heavenly father's will.

That's what he says. I must be about that purpose. And I think we can understand why Mary and Joseph were bewildered, perplexed at the end of verse 49.
How can it be, they must have said, that we are raising a boy with all those things that I talked about with the children, all those similarities of any other 12-year-old boy, how is it that we are raising this boy who is also God himself?
And if we are really thinking about this passage, that has to be the question for us as well. It's the extraordinary truth that is hard for our brains, our minds to wrap around.
This boy who's not yet fully developed is also the almighty God. Jesus relates to us in every way, in every stage of his life, because he went from being a little infant to a small boy to a teenager to an adult.
[6:16] And yet he is God himself who saves us. You see, Jesus didn't give up any of his divinity, his godness. He is God, the beloved son, second person of the Trinity.

But he takes on being a human being. And Mary and Joseph have the awesome task of helping him to develop and to grow.
So as we think about this passage, what does it mean for us today? What did Jesus' words mean for us this morning? Well, it really tells us about our purpose, and it tells us about our identity as well.
You know that we live in a society that is not sure what the purpose of life is. Is it to make money? Is it to be secure?
Is it to have a family? Is our purpose to be respected? Or is it to make a mark, a good mark, on society in some way? Our society is even more confused about identity.
[7:22] So we question, am I defined by my sexual feelings? Am I defined by what I am attracted to? By my gender? Or am I defined by who I'm related to?

Or what I do for a living? Am I identified by what I have accomplished? Well, in Jesus, our purpose and our identity becomes crystal clear.
Because when you come to trust him, he gives you a true identity. He makes you God's own daughter, God's own son. He makes you a sinner who is saved by grace in order to know your heavenly Father.
In order to know his deep love for you. That's the identity that you have that can never be taken away. And it is fundamental to all things in your life.
Yes, you may have many roles and many relationships, but your relationship with the Father takes precedent. It defines everything else in your life and it blesses everything else in your life.
[8:28] That's the constant joy that every Christian knows. That's your identity. But there's also a clear purpose that Jesus gives us. Because it is about being part of God's great purpose to save sinners.

You see, because Jesus perfectly fulfilled that great purpose, our mission in life is to point to him and to reflect him and what he has said about himself to the world around us.
Our first priority is to see people reconciled to God. Healed by him. Growing in him. And this shapes and blesses every task, every endeavor that we take on in life.
And as we go away from this passage, I want you to notice that in verse 51 and 52, after Jesus tells the people, his parents, that the big priority is to be God's son and to take on God's purpose, what does he do?
He goes to Nazareth and he blesses his mom and dad. As a 12-year-old, he was submissive to him. That is a great blessing. He was submissive to them.
[9:49] And not only that, but he grew in his relationship with God and with man, it says. There was grace in that relationship, in all of those relationships. His life was filled with grace.

And it looks like Mary and Joseph deeply supported his identity and purpose. They were not perfect parents, but they helped him to grow in wisdom, it says, and stature, and in favor with God and man.

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They became part of that identity, part of that purpose of Jesus. And you too, and me, if we know our identity is in Jesus and we take on his purposes, God will bless your professional life, your family life, your social life, your student life, for his glory, for his goodness.
And yes, there will be times when God's agenda is at odds with the agenda of the world. It will be at odds maybe with agendas that you have in your own life. And that's difficult.
But as you choose each time for Jesus, you will see grace in your relationships with those around you and with your heavenly Father. This is what happens with Jesus.
[11:07] So may you, with Mary, treasure these things about Jesus in your heart. Treasure those words, I am about my Father's purposes.

And may that be your true identity and your true purpose. Amen.

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