

Epiphany I

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Date: 08 January 2023

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[0 : 00] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Please be seated. On the Feast of Epiphany that we celebrated on Friday, our Gospel text spoke about the wise men coming to the young child Jesus to worship him.

It was the Magi who were the first Gentile witnesses of the incarnate Christ. It was good news for the Jews, and it was also good news for the Gentiles.

And just as the wise men did not go about Herod's business in reporting the location of the Messiah, so we are to ignore the counsel of our world and follow after Christ.

In our Gospel text today, we are presented with another episode of our Lord's Childhood, this time on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with his parents for the Feast of Passover.

[0 : 59] As the Gospel narrative progresses, we come to the part where Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem while his parents head back to Nazareth, not knowing that he is not among them in the company.

After they realize that they have left him, they turn around and they head back to Jerusalem. When they arrive, they find him sitting with the teachers in the temple and asking them questions.

The teachers are amazed at his understanding. We can imagine that it is partly because he is only 12 years old and that he is zealous for knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures.

His parents are glad that they found him, but they are also startled that they had lost him. Mary says to him, Son, why have you done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought you anxiously.

Jesus responds to them and says the only words that he says that are recorded at this age. Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?

[2 : 03] They didn't understand the statement that he made back in that time. He returned with them to Nazareth and the text says that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.

One of the things that should have made our ears perk up when we heard the gospel text was the sentence about Mary. Verse 51 says that Mary kept all of these things that had happened in her heart.

What things were those? It would have been the going down to Jerusalem, the momentary panic of not realizing that her son is not with them anymore on their journey home, and then finding him in the temple with the teachers.

But most assuredly, this phrase would have been in her mind most of all. Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?

Jesus, even as a young boy, was a righteous person. He was obedient to his parents, but that only came after his obedience to God. I imagine that Mary would have thought about this for a while after the event happened.

[3 : 14] Mary's consideration of what happened during their journey home is something that she thought personally, but it also serves as an example for what we should do in our own lives.

We should also keep these things in our heart. What we are to keep in our hearts is not just this event that we read about in the gospel, but how it influences us to live.

Now, we may ask why it is that the story of the child Jesus has relevance in our lives. Most of us here are not children. In fact, we've left that life long ago.

Even if the child was Jesus, how do we understand this and keep these things in our hearts? To aid us in our understanding, we should remember the time when Jesus rebuked the disciples for not allowing the children to come to him.

Jesus tells them that the children should not be forbidden to come to him. Children are very near and dear to the heart of our Lord because it is a child who is able to grasp the kind of faith that is godly, a simple faith that is unwavering towards God and his business.

[4 : 25] The gospel narrative describes the simplicity of faith that Jesus exhibits toward his father. And this simplicity was not something that ended after he grew up.

His simplicity of faith in God was maintained throughout his life. Friends, we have the same calling. We are to be like the child Jesus, the one who knew that he was supposed to be about his father's business.

The revealing of our Lord, the epiphany season, also urges us to model our lives after his example. Let us then, like Mary, keep these things in our hearts.

And let us, like Jesus, always be about our father's business. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.