

Second Sunday in Christmas  
Sermon text: Luke 2:40-52  
Related text: 1 Kings 3:4-15  
Date preached: January 3, 2016

It was a joyful reunion. Worried beyond description, Mary and Joseph go searching for their first born son. Unbeknown to them, Jesus remained in Jerusalem as his parents were making their journey home following the feast of Passover.

In this broken world we yearn for and pray for joyful reunions. Moms and Dads yearn for the return of a missing child long after searchers have back to their daily routines. The feelings in many ways are indescribable, feelings that no person should ever have to endure.

How many times do we walk past the signs in a store that have pictures of missing children without even realizing that the sign is there?

In this broken world, parents and children have become estranged hoping that one day there can be reconciliation.

Do we have that same passion for Children today who are lost from faith? Put it differently, do we care when people are not attentive to the Word of God? Do we care that we know the exact physical location

of an individual, but that such an individual is lost from faith?

Some people may accuse me of comparing apples to oranges. That may be the case. On the one hand there are people who are lost in the temporal, earthly sense. On the other hand, there are those who are in danger of being eternally lost.

Let me be absolutely clear, I am NOT in anyway trying to minimize the heartache of those whose children are missing, those whose memory lost loved ones have wandered away from home not to be seen, or children who cannot return home because their parents disagree with choices their children have made.

What I am saying is that when people are lost from the body of Christ, there is that same yearning, the same passion for seeking the lost from faith. That yearning comes from God.

The passion for saving those who have strayed, wandered away from God and the enormous, infinite love He has for you and I led him to send his Son into the wilderness of sin, death, and the earthly domain where evil seems to spread as easy as poison ivy.

Emmanuel, the name which means “God with us” has come to be present in our lives. He has come to lead us back to the way of the Father. He has come to lead us back to the family of whom you have been made a part in Holy Baptism.

This is the one who as we heard in Ephesians 1:4 “chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...”

You are part of the body of Christ. Count yourself among the listeners of God’s Word. The most important thing we can do is be about our Father’s work, starting in His Father’s house.

When the body of Christ comes together in worship, we are participating in a family reunion. In this family reunion we catch up with the good news that we have been reconciled to God. Romans 5:10 it is written, “For if while we were enemies (lost, estranged, etc.) we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved through his life.” It is of reconciliation filled with the blessing of being forgiven people of God who forgive people.

That is the reconciliation we are called to live out with family members, friends who have wounded us, or those we have wounded by our sins.

In this family reunion of worship God feeds you with the spiritual food that is just as important as the meal you grab via the drive through or the family dinners you sat down to over the past several days. The spiritual food is the gift of Jesus.

Recorded in John 6, starting at verse 35 and throughout that chapter we hear Jesus' words, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Jesus says again, "I am the bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Eucharist (a word that means "Thanksgiving") is indeed a meal of celebration. To eat at this family reunion is to feed off of the one who gives us life freely, Jesus. To eat at this family reunion is to celebrate the work of Christ in our lives.

From this weekly reunion that takes place here and in sanctuaries across the world, we go out into the places we live as witnesses to who we are and what

we believe by what we say and do. We don't have to have an "in-your-face" style of witnessing. In fact, that often becomes counter productive.

Yet, opportunities exist on a daily basis to share how much God loves us. As but one example, when someone is sharing with you a struggle or a joy, ask if they would like to be prayed for. And be willing to do it, on the spot. Trust in God to give you the words you need for that prayer. God will.

You are a part of the family of God. You have been found by Jesus, who came to seek and to save. You have been equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit who is daily, and ever-present with you. For those who have been away from the family for some time, Jesus welcomes them back with open arms. Through Baptism, there is always room in this ever growing family for one more. AMEN.