

Text: Luke 2:41-52

Date: 12/27/09

Theme: The boy Jesus in the temple as told by a family friend.

Title: "Holy Land News"

Anchorman/woman:

Good evening.

There is news from Jerusalem tonight, a city in an uproar over recent events involving a young rabbi known as Jesus of Nazareth.

We go now to Simon Bar-Jonas, who is reporting from the Temple's Court of the Gentiles, where today's disturbance is said to have occurred.

Simon, what can you tell us about what happened today at the Temple?

Reporter 1 (Simon Bar-Jonas):

(Pause) "Yes, Joseph, hello.

Eyewitnesses are reporting a fracas that occurred after Jesus – a former Galilean carpenter widely regarded as a prophet, teacher, and miracle worker – entered the court of the Gentiles and began shouting at the moneychangers and vendors who sell sacrificial animals.

There are conflicting accounts of exactly what happened next, but some say the shouting escalated into a heated exchange where various vendors' tables were turned over and some were, in fact, chased out of the temple area."

Anchor:

Simon, let me interrupt you there: Where were the temple police during the incident?

Reporter 1:

Spokesmen for the high priest's office say the police did respond but were unable to apprehend any suspects.

At this time, the only thing they will say is that Jesus and his followers are wanted for questioning in connection with the incident.”

Anchor:

Simon, we're going to have to leave it there. Thank you for your report.

Reporter 1:

“Thank you, Joseph.”

Anchor:

In the last several weeks, the controversy surrounding Jesus has grown into a furor.

What began as a trickle of reports about healings and exorcisms has become a flood of stories about astounding teachings and what some say are out-and-out miracles.

The population in many quarters has hailed him as the Messiah, while religious authorities remain skeptical.

Tonight, we ask the question: Who is this man Jesus?

We begin with our own Hannah Bat-Reuben, who went to Jesus' hometown of Nazareth to find out what people there had to say about this mystery man of Galilee.

She filed this report. (Pause)

Reporter 2 (Hannah Bat-Reuben):

“If you talk about humble beginnings, Nazareth, a tiny farming village in the hills of Galilee, is about as humble as they come.

No one here ever would have guessed that this place would produce a figure as famous
– and controversial – as Jesus son of Joseph.

No one, that is, except this woman, who says she has known the family since Jesus
was a baby.

She agreed to speak for our cameras only if we promised to conceal her identity.

Here's what she has to say."

Family Friend:

You know, there always was something not quite right about that boy.

I never could put my finger on exactly what it was, but he was always, you know,
different. My boys said the same thing.

I remember this one time, we went down to Jerusalem with them – a whole bunch of us
from Nazareth.

I forget now what festival it was.

I think it was in spring, I guess it must have been Passover.

Anyway, I guess my Benjamin was about fourteen so that must have made Jesus
maybe twelve? Something like that.

So we were down there, we stayed in town a few days, shared the Seder with our
friends, offered our sacrifices, and then we all met to head home.

And I remember I ran into Mary, you know, his mother, and she was looking everywhere
for Jesus.

I told her, "Listen, he's probably with Joseph.

You know how boys that age are. I'm sure they'll catch up. Don't worry about it."

I still feel awful about having said that, because it turns out I was completely wrong.

The whole day Mary tried to get some news about her son.

She was asking everyone she saw if they'd seen him.

At sunset we made camp, but we still hadn't heard anything.

I don't know if Mary got any sleep that night at all.

She waited and waited until Joseph got in and when she heard the men outside, she

ran out and started shouting,

"Where's the boy?" "Where's the boy?" "He was supposed to be with you!"

Woke everyone in the whole camp up. She was furious with her husband.

He just kept standing there saying, "I thought he was with you."

It made you feel really bad, you know?

Kind of sick inside, to see parents separated from their son like that.

As soon as it got light the next morning, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

They searched everywhere for that boy – with all their relatives, friends, anyone they

knew – this went on for hours.

You know where they finally found him? In the Temple.

They had about given up when they walked up those steps to the Temple Mount.

I mean, they had had it – absolutely at their wit's end – and dead tired.

The only thing they could think to do was to pray to the Lord that the kid might

somehow show up – so they went to the Temple.

And no sooner did they get there than they look up and there he is, smiling at them, "Hi

Mama! Hi Abba!" Like nothing had happened.

Now if that was my kid, you can bet there would have been hell to pay.

My kids weren't brought up like that – to go wandering off and giving their Mama a heart attack.

But you know, Mary and Joseph, they were always so patient with that boy.

Patient to the point of being indulgent, really – you know what I mean?

Even when the stuff he did was totally outrageous – like this.

I guess you just have to be more understanding with a kid who's different like that.

I don't know.

Anyway, he was just sitting there, talking with the teachers, asking them questions.

And the teachers, when they found out Mary was the boy's mother, made a big fuss over her, saying how amazing her son was and how blessed she was to have a boy with such a heart for the scriptures.

They'd never heard such wisdom, let alone from a child his age, they said.

Meanwhile, Mary's thinking, "You've been sitting with him here for three days and you never once asked where his parents were? What's wrong with you people?"

But here's the thing that gets me.

No matter how many times Mary told me the story I couldn't get over it, what the kid said.

It just stuck with me.

Mary pulls Jesus aside and says to him, "Son, you've nearly driven us out of our minds.

We were looking for you everywhere. What were you thinking, leaving us like this?"

(Pause) And Mary said she just fell apart when she looked into the boy's eyes. They were just so full of sorrow, and disappointment, and well, she said, almost pity. He looks at her for a minute and he says, "Mama, I don't understand. Didn't you know I'd be in my Father's house?"

To the boy, it was just the most natural thing in the world that he should be sitting in the Temple discussing Torah with men forty, fifty years older than him.

And he was always like that.

Constantly going off by himself to pray.

My one neighbor was a widow and she loved him because he'd come and help her with little things around her house.

You'd hear him telling the little kids in the neighborhood stories from the Bible.

He never needed to study it, you know, somehow he just knew.

It was like he'd lived lifetimes by the time he was five.

But I'll never forget that, "Didn't you know I'd be in my Father's house?"

Now a lot of people talk about God as our father, but this boy took it literally.

Like he really believed he was God's son.

Reporter 2:

Ma'am, I'm sure you've heard what many people are saying, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Savior promised by God. What do you believe about him?

(Pause)

Family Friend:

Listen, I'm not saying whether he is or he isn't.

Every person has to make up their own mind about that.

But I will tell you this: the world has never seen anyone like him before.

And so when he speaks, people ought to pay attention.

By Rev. Joe Monahan (pastorjoe@sumcnj.org), 2009, all rights reserved.

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