

Seeking for Jesus (Luke 2:25-52)

Last week we studied "Walking with Jesus" as the first message of this year 2013. This year, waking with Jesus I'd like to study the Gospel of Luke together.

Today, we will be studying about "Seeking for Jesus" from the latter half of Luke cp 2.

You may think, "Oh, I have already met Jesus. I already have very good relationship with Him." That's wonderful. I believe you really do have a wonderful relationship with him.

But I want you to think about this. If we think we have already known enough about Jesus, and stop seeking to know him more, what will we seek then? If we really know Jesus as wonderful God, I think we will naturally want to know him more. If we love Jesus, naturally we will want to know him more. Actually, Jesus is much more wonderful than what we have known about him. Today, let's study about "Seeking for Jesus".

1. Joseph and Mary lost sight of Jesus

2:42-44

⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

Joseph and Mary had been with Jesus just a little while before. And they were thinking Jesus was still with them. But actually he was not. We might think, "How irresponsible! How could they not notice that their child was not with them for a day!?" Were Joseph and Mary really irresponsible, unreliable parents?

Before we look at about Joseph and Mary, we'll look at Luke 1:80 first.

Luke 1:80

⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

The child here is John the Baptist. John didn't just "grow and become strong in the spirit" by himself. There were people who brought him up. They were Zechariah and Elizabeth. They brought him up so that he would be in good health, and spiritually strong. Their teaching helped him to understand what his mission was and how to fulfill it. And this verse is the result of their parenting.

2:40

⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

It is almost the same as 1:80. The child here is Jesus. We've just seen that John didn't just "grow and become strong in the spirit" by himself. There were people who brought him up, so he "grew and became strong in the spirit." In the same way, Jesus as a baby didn't just "grow and become strong, filled with wisdom" by himself. There were people who brought him up. They were Joseph and Mary. Of course, without any doubt, God's special blessing was upon Jesus. But Joseph and Mary had to take their responsibility as parents, and brought Jesus up, following the Word of God.

2:27

²⁷ ... the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,

2:39

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

2:41

⁴¹ Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

Jesus' parents practiced the Word of God. The parents brought their child to God. Children will not naturally start seeking God by themselves. Someone has to show and teach them how to worship God through action. At

that time Jesus was a baby. It is never too early to let your child take part of worshiping God.

In v.40, it says, Jesus was “filled with wisdom” and in v.52, “Jesus grew in wisdom.” What is the word “wisdom” mentioned here?

2:47

⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

“Wisdom” here is the understanding of the Bible. No doubt there was special blessing on Jesus as the Son of God. And there was no question that, though they were not perfect parents, Joseph and Mary fulfilled their responsibility as parents, and brought Jesus up, following the Word of God. As a result, Jesus got the understanding of the Bible. Probably Jesus listened more earnestly than other children. He probably understood faster and deeper, and had better memory than others. But his parents had to teach him.

2:52

⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Jesus grew in body, spirit, wisdom and character. Joseph and Mary were people who live the Word of God. They fulfilled their responsibility as parents, and brought Jesus up, following the Word of God. They did pretty good job. Joseph and Mary were not irresponsible, unreliable parents.

However, something happened.

2:43

⁴³ After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

I feel here is a pitfall for our faith.

Even if we practice the Word of God, but if we do it like religious routine and we focus on observing the custom duty, or think we are okay because we are doing it, then we will not notice when we have left Jesus.

Let’s apply this to us. We attend Sunday Worship Service, join Bible

study and prayer meetings. We offer tithe. We do this ministry and that ministry. We read the whole Bible once a year. We do devotional time, using this book or that book. These are all wonderful things! But, are we all right because we are doing these things? Not necessarily. If we focus on doing those things, or if we think we are all right because we are doing those things, we may not notice when we have left Jesus. Surely Jesus was with us just a little while ago, but we will not notice when we have left him.

2:44-46 and 48

⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

Seeking for Jesus. It is like the heart of parents who are searching for their child in the great crowd for many days.

We don't just look around once or twice and say, "He is not here. Never mind. Forget about him." We don't do that! After asking this person and that person, we still don't know where he is. Then, do we give up? No, we don't! If we continue to search for him, what we have been doing till now will be wasted, and we have to sacrifice this and that. So, do we give up him? No, we don't. No matter how much time it may take, we will search for him at all costs until we find him. This person or that person may say, "Don't go too far. You can stop here. God will take care of him." But we will never give up. Surely we will look for him until we find him. That is the heart of parents who search for their child. And this is the heart to seek for Jesus. We will seek him whatever the cost. It should be nothing less than that.

2:49

⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

Jesus is always with his father. Joseph was a carpenter. But, Joseph was not building a temple at that time. So, what Jesus calls "my Father" here is God, heavenly Father. We can see that at this point Jesus was already aware that he was a Son of God.

No matter how hard we search for him, we can't find him if we search in the wrong places. We can't know Jesus, just by being eager. But, if we search for him properly, we will certainly meet him. If we seek for him correctly, we will surely find him.

2. Simeon and Anna waiting for God's salvation

In Luke cp. 2, Luke writes about two people who had been waiting for God's salvation and met Jesus. One is Simeon, and the other is Anna.

First, Simeon. We can learn about him from v.25 to v.35.

v.25

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

From here, we can learn several things about Simeon.

First of all, he was "righteous". He was not double-minded. His attitude was consistent, whether he was in the temple or outside.

He was "devout". In other words, he was a man who practices the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:5

⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

There are some people who look pious, and talk about God and the Bible, but their real life is far from what they talk. Simeon was not a person like

that. He is a man who lives the Word of God.

He had received the Holy Spirit, "the Holy Spirit was upon him." In v.27, it says "Moved by the Spirit." He was a man who was led by the Holy Spirit and acted by the Spirit.

2:25

²⁵ ... He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, ...

2:26

²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

2:29

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

He took the Word of God at face value. He trusted that God would do what He had promised and he was waiting for it. He was not influenced by sentiment, circumstances or feelings because he had faith in the Word of God. He lived by faith.

Now, Anna. We can learn about her from v.36 to v.38.

2:36-37

³⁶ There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

From here, we can learn several things about Anna.

In short, she was a woman with holiness. Her attitude was consistent before God. Let's look at one verse about widows.

1 Timothy 5:13

¹³ Besides, they (widows) get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

Anna was not a widow like that.

Now, let's go back to Luke 2:37. Here it says, "night and day". It doesn't mean she didn't sleep at all. But it shows her yearning for God was continuous. She had unchanging love for God. And it made her seek God even more.

In the same verse, it says, "served God with fastings and prayers". She devoted herself to serve God. Her concern was not "how God will bless me." But she served God, offering herself to God. We are not sure for how many years she had been praying, and for how long she had been waiting for God. But it is sure that she was a woman who devoted herself for the sake of God's kingdom under any circumstances.

2:38

³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

She "spoke about the child to the people." She was a bold witness for Christ. She had passion and joy in sharing the good news. And she never loses the passion and joy even when she was 84 years old.

We've been looking at the character and faith of two people, Simeon and Anna.

They had been waiting for God's consolation, restoration and redemption, then when they saw Jesus they knew "This is the one." Like Simeon and Anna, I hope we will also wait for the Lord faithfully, full of praise, thanks-giving and joy as we grow older until we see him face to face.

3. Jesus, God's salvation

Then, who is Jesus? Why do we keep seeking for him? Simeon's word tells us something about it.

2:30

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

What Simeon saw was Jesus. That is, Jesus is salvation itself. There is no salvation other than Jesus. So, we keep seeking for Him and want to know Him more.

2:31

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people,

God's salvation is given to all people. All people. So there is no one who is not given God's salvation. Nevertheless, it is a pity if you don't receive it. It is foolish not to receive the salvation as it is given to us. We don't receive just a little bit of salvation. God's salvation is not that small! So, we will keep seeking him and, want to receive more of Him.

2:32

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Here it says, "revelation". Revelation is what God reveals to men. Men cannot think up revelation, or judge the revelation of God. All we can do is to wait for God.

2:34-35

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

By Jesus, some people will fall and some people will rise up. Then I hope we will be the people who rise up. So, we will keep seeking for Him, and want to come closer to Him.

2:35

³⁵ ... And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

This is the word spoken to Mary, Jesus' mother. Here, Simeon spoke about the actual sacrifice Jesus would make, which Mary, his mother would see in the future. Jesus is the Lamb of God, who redeems us. Jesus is the only one who can set us free from bondage of sin and rule of Satan. So, we will keep seeking for Him, and we want to remain in His power.

There are some wonderful experiences of Jesus, which we can only experience on the earth. It will be too late when we go to heaven. How well do we know Jesus? How much have we experienced Jesus? And how is our knowledge about Him influencing our real life?

Let me share one story in HCMC.

I went to a Japanese restaurant with a man who just moved to HCMC. The lunch box there has great value for money, so we both ordered it. The lunch boxes came with miso soup. As we were eating, a waitress also brought sashimi, vegetable dish and steamed egg. But the friend said to the waitress, "I don't want them" and made her take them away. "Oh, are you not feeling well?" I asked him. He said he was fine. When we finished eating, the waitress came and asked, "Would you like hot coffee or iced coffee?" I asked hot coffee. But the friend said, "No thank." With coffee, some fruit and wet towels also came. Then the friend said, "I don't want fruit or a wet towel either" and asked her to take them away. I was a little worried and asked, "Was the food not good?"

Then he started to talk. The day before, he had a local noodle at a local restaurant. At the next table people were having iced tea, so he also asked for it. With iced tea, the waitress also brought a kind of fried bread. She said he could dip the bread in the soup, so he ate the bread. When he finished eating, the waitress brought some fruits. So he ate it also. He felt his fingers were sticky with food. Then the waitress brought a wet towel. So he used it. Then, when he saw the bill, he was so surprised. Tea, fried bread, fruits and even a wet towel were all charged. He exclaimed, "It was a terrible experience!"

While he was talking, a waitress came with a bill. Looking at a bill, again he exclaimed, "What?!" "Anything wrong?" I asked him and looked at the bill. It says, "Two lunch boxes ...this much." "That's right...." I said.

He pouted, "You ate sashimi, vegetable dish, steamed egg, fruit and coffee other than lunch box! Why are you not charged?" I answered, "Because they are all included in the lunch." But it was too late.

There are some wonderful experiences of Jesus, which we can only experience on the earth. It will be too late when we go to heaven. How well do we know Jesus actually? How much have we experienced Jesus? And how is our knowledge about Him influencing our real life?

Simeon and Anna were earnestly waiting for God's consolation, restoration and redemption, that is Jesus. So when they saw Jesus, they knew, "this is the one." There were also so many other people in the temple. They also saw Jesus, but they couldn't know it.

Some people hold on to the Word of God, live their daily life, filled with joy, praising Jesus like Simeon. Some people continuously give thanks to Jesus and witness for His greatness like Anna. Some people just complain and grumble at Jesus, or just ask Jesus to grant their wish.

Does Jesus change depending on whom he is seeing? No, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He remains the same. What makes a difference is how we seek for and wait for Jesus, how we spend our time before God. Simeon and Anna were earnestly waiting for God's consolation, restoration and redemption, that is Jesus.

I hope we will be the people who earnestly wait for the Lord, praise the Lord, rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks to the Lord like Simeon and Anna. Let's keep seeking for Jesus until we see him face to face.