

And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Luke 2:49=8-49 Seeking Jesus

Dear friends in Christ, Epiphany is Wednesday, so this is the last Sunday we meet before our Christmas celebration ends. We have seen the Christ Child proclaimed by angels, lying in a manger, and being presented in the temple. Shepherds saw him, Simeon sang of Him as he held Him, and Mary treasured these things in her heart. Yet even as Christmas comes to a close, we still see people seeking Jesus. The wise men the king of the Jews, and Mary and Joseph seek Jesus when they leave Jerusalem.

All these people, shepherds, wise men, Mary and Joseph, are seeking Jesus. What are we to make of this?

First, that it is important to seek Jesus. There is no other name by which we are saved. He is the one who forgives our sins, the one who gives us life as he gives his life for us, who shares our sorrows and gives us joy. He is our king, and our priest and our savior. Our whole life is with him.

So often we fail to seek Jesus. We look for other salvation . Some we know are wrong, like drugs or alcohol, pornography or other sexual immorality . But others seem OK. in food that makes us feel better, in new years football victories, in getting good at video games, in accomplishment at work, in grades, in affirmation by friends and peers, in being a good gardener or farmer or mother. Yet even with these Jesus tells us to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. And the kingdom and God's righteousness are found only in Jesus.

So often Satan the father of lies tells us that we can seek Jesus, we just need a little more time or enjoyment, then seek Jesus. Just one more drink, one more game, one more hour at work. He tells us there is time to seek Jesus later. After this project is done, after the kid's game, after the meal is cooked, after COVID is beat. One would guess the priests and scribes thought they could seek Jesus later, when Herod wasn't looking and it was safer. Mary and Joseph thought it was time to seek work and home. But Jesus was there to be found at that time. Satan also tells us to make other things our God, and says it is just for a moment. But the moments can last for eternity. Do not listen to His lies. Seek the Lord now.

Second, seek the Lord where he says He will be found. Listen to God's word. The shepherds went to the manger because the word of God from the Angel told them to. The wise men saw a star in the east, but were sent to Bethlehem by the word of God given to Micah. Mary received God's word through the angel that Jesus was the son of God.

We want to wait to seek God elsewhere. We say we haven't had an angel, we haven't seen a star,. We wait for a clear revelation. We say if only God told us what to do with our lives, we would do it. Until then, we keep ourselves busy with work, or school, or family or friends. Just wait for a revelation -a star or an angel. Or some sign from heaven. WE look to nature. We say we feel closer to God with nature. But we make our feeling our God if we do - it becomes an idol. Nature does not of itself proclaim Christ the son of God given for us. We might say we feel

the true meaning of Christmas with family. But as much as the Grinch might proclaim Christmas is togetherness, unless family shares the word of God that Jesus the savior, the son of God, has come to the world, it is in competition with God - it becomes an idol. Herod even said he sought the Christ, but he just sought to remain king. So often our choices show we just want to remain king too. But Christ's kingdom has only one king.

You won't get a star or an angel. God's word spoken to the rich man when he wanted him to send Lazarus to warn his brothers was that if they didn't listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not listen even if someone rose from the dead. God does proclaim himself in other ways, but we won't see them if we ignore His clear word.

Third, Jesus can be found. The wise men saw the child and rejoiced with great joy. Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple. God is present where we gather around word and sacrament. Christ is in his father's house. Christ comes to us in His word. Christ gives us his very name in baptism. Christ gives us his very body and blood in His supper. Where we gather even 2 or 3 in his name, Christ is there.

So continue to seek Christ. Read his word and come to his house. Do not be distracted by other salvations, other Christs, the world and the devil and the flesh want you to seek. They cannot satisfy because they cannot save. Let nothing separate you from Christ, for he even took on flesh that nothing could separate him from you. He defeated death that nothing could separate Him from you. Seek Him and you will find. Amen.