

In Jesus' name. Amen.

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

... And when His parents saw Him, they were astonished. 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?" And they did not understand the saying that He spoke to them.

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. (ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The season of Epiphany that we will enter this Thursday is all about revelations.

Most pointedly, we look for Jesus to be revealed as our Savior-God in the flesh.

If you regularly attend a Christian church, this should not be new.

Each gathering around God's Word and Sacraments offers another opportunity for God to reveal more of His grace to you.

And it is this grace that is much needed.

In the Lord's Prayer we pray, **Thy will be done**, and we ask that it would be done through us.

In Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers, we pray,

into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things.

In both prayers, we would confess our desire to be **about** our heavenly **Father's business**, as the King James Version translates this phrase.

But how often have we found ourselves not even considering these words as they cross our lips in these prayers.

Do you find your mind wandering as soon as you begin praying them?

How empty and meaningless, then, are our prayers?

And how vain our attempt to be **about** our **Father's business**?

If we fail at prayer, in which our mind and mouth are both active,

What about our Father's business of hearing His Word?

Do we fair any better when we are actively receiving from Him?

In the course of this service so far have you been able to keep your mind attentive?

Has your mind been intent on the words of each hymn and the Psalm?

Did you reflect on the sins of this past week in your confession,

or did you mindlessly read the words because you're supposed to?

Did you rejoice in the words of forgiveness announced by the Vicar in the stead of Christ?

Did you ponder Scripture readings, or were you daydreaming about something else?

How often have we broken the 3rd Com. during the Divine Service?

We are not always glad to hear and study God's Word; in fact, isn't it often a chore?
How pitiful of us, even when we try to please God, we fail.
Even when God would give you His forgiveness in Jesus, we ignore it.

If this is you at your best, going **about** your **Father's business...** in His house,
then what about when you are not in His house?
Are you still **about** your **Father's business** when you leave those doors?
Are you then only concerned about your business, regardless of the Lord's will and Word?

In today's Gospel lesson, we see the Boy Jesus at 12 years old.
He is about [His] Father's business.
We find Him among the teachers at the Temple in Jerusalem,
listening and analyzing, asking and answering questions.
He is intent on learning the Scriptures and understanding them.

But wait, isn't He the Son of God, the Word-made-flesh? Why does He have to study the Scripture?
It is true, as we emphasize in the Epiphany season that Jesus is the Son of God, but He is also true man.
He started life as all other humans, except He was without sin.
He had to learn how to talk and read, how to work at memorizing God's Word.

As a human child, He was born under God.
As a Jewish child, He was brought under the Law at circumcision, and obliged to obey God's Law,
including the Third Commandment.
But being perfect, He always found great **delight in the Law of the Lord.**
and on His Law He meditated day and night. (Psalm 1:2)

As a young Jewish Boy in a pious Jewish home, Jesus would have had continual religious instruction.
From infancy, He was under Mary's tutelage in devotion and life.
Joseph would make sure of His regular attendance at Synagogue,
taking in the Scripture readings and the Jewish liturgy, learning prayers and key Bible passages.
Even before He realized it, He was **about [His] Father's business.**

At 5 years, He would have started His formal instruction on the Law, followed by the rest of the OT.
By age 12, after so many years of formal study in God's Word,
we find no hint of disinterest/boredom, like many other 12 y-old, instead we find quite the opposite.

His questions and answers among the Temple teachers showed that He understood the Scripture.
For Jesus, theology was not just some favorite pastime, it was His work. It was His life.
His answer to His mother's admonition reveals His understanding.
He was **about [His] Father's business.**
That business was the salvation of the world.... your salvation.

Everything that He was learning in Scripture applied to Him.
Our OT lesson from Isaiah 61, was about Him.

He was to preach good news, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty, to comfort and console.
In order for Him to preach and to comfort, He had to study.
He had to know God's Word so that He could tell it to others.
But more than just preaching and teaching, He had to be that good news.

Think about the bloody Passover sacrifice that He had just seen in the temple only days prior...
that would be Him later on in life.
Now, we all know that we are going to die someday, but we will die as a result of our own sin.
He would die because of the sin of His mother and Joseph, of His ancestors,
His friends and His enemies alike, past, present, and future.

And yet, see how diligently Jesus applied Himself to the study of God's Word, even at this early age.
In spite of the fact that He realized that He would suffer and die,
He gladly heard and learned God's Word which prophesied it.

If this were the message that God told you in His Word,
that He would punish & forsake you for someone else's sins, would you continue to enjoy reading it?
Would you continue even to read it?
(Don't we often find it a chore reading it, even though He tells us that Jesus suffered/ died for your sins.)

But this makes Jesus' obedience all the more amazing.
He not only continued to read and study it, but He happily continued to do so for you,
in spite of the great personal injury & death it would cause Him.
He was **about** His **Father's business**, not His own.

Every time you read and study God's Word it is an opportunity to receive God's grace and forgiveness.
Listen to and learn Holy Scriptures well.
Know and understand its message to you:
God will not forsake you...Not for your sins nor anyone else's.
He has already forsaken Jesus in your place.
This is the message He reveals to you throughout His Word.

When your heart condemns your prayers and your meditation,
repent of your failures and receive God's forgiveness.
And as you struggle against your sinful nature to concentrate on the message of God's forgiveness
given to you through Jesus,
know that Jesus has done it perfectly for you already
so that you may study without fear of punishment.
And as God's grace is revealed to you,
it will renew your desire to learn and study His Word, and give you joy as you take Holy Scriptures
to "hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them," ... or "take them to heart."
so that being **about** your **Father's business** is not a chore but the greatest blessing. Amen.

Glory be to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Amen
Soli Deo Gloria