

They look around in the streets... He is not there, playing with friends.
They look in the marketplaces... He is not there, enchanted by all the wares to be sold.
Finally they look in the temple, one of the last places one might expect to find a 12-year old boy.
But He is there. Right where He **MUST** be: in His Father's house.

Why **MUST** He be there?

According to the Majority Text, He must be there, being about His Father's business.
Not Joseph's business, as in carpentry work around Temple, which was still under construction.
Joseph is His adoptive father.
But Jesus **MUST** be about His natural, heavenly Father's business.
He **MUST** learn about His work as the Messiah.
He **MUST** grow in wisdom and knowledge and in favor with God and man.
He **MUST** keep the day of rest holy,
not despising the preaching of His word,
but holding it sacred and gladly hearing and learning it.

Why **MUST** He do this?

Psalms 119 gives us a whole host of reasons. Let us consider just a few.
Verse 24: **Your testimonies are My delight; they are My counselors.**
Because He delights to be there, hearing God's testimonies to Him, receiving His Father's counsel.
Verse 25: **My soul clings to the dust; give Me life according to Your word!**
Because He is 100% man, eternal soul and frail dust and He knows it is God's Word that gives life.
Verse 9: **How can a young man keep His way pure? By guarding it according to Your word.**
Because He, too, is a young man, tempted in every way as you and I are,
yet He **MUST** remain without sin so that He may redeem you and me.

Why must He do this? Because He is the Lord's Messiah, the world's Redeemer in a 12 year old body.

He has come to fulfill God's law perfectly because we do not... because we cannot.

Jesus **MUST** be in His Father's house to be about His Father's business,
because we struggle to not despise preaching and His Word... even we who are here in His house.
How often do you find you have other things on our mind, than what is happening here and now?
How often do you find yourself easily distracted from Jesus by what is happening around you?
Jesus **MUST** be in His Father's house about His Father's business,
because we easily grow weary of gladly hearing and learning His Father's word.
Even reading a Psalm like 119 through all 176 verses (the Psalm completely devoted to the blessings
of hearing, reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting God's Word)
begins to be a labor for us sinners, rather than a love... or a joy and delight.

And yet, Psalm 119 points us right to Jesus, doesn't it?

He is the only One who could completely and perfectly pray every Word and verse of that Psalm.

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As I said at the beginning, dear Fellow Redeemed, even Christians struggle sometimes to find Jesus.
It isn't that Jesus isn't in other places, as if the only place Jesus could ever be is in His Father's house.
... as if you can't hear Jesus, or read Him at home in your private and family devotions (invaluable),
... or as if you can't pray to Him while driving in your car or at your school or at the work place.
But sometimes we look for Jesus, we look for the source of God's comfort and joy and certainty,

apart from where He says He is.

When your conscience is burdened, rather than seeking Jesus in His Father's house for forgiveness, do you ever find yourself looking among your family or your friends or social media contacts to justify or vindicate your actions or thoughts?

... or do you sometimes try to ignore the feeling of guilt by wandering the endless digital streets, streaming mindless and mind-numbing entertainment to amuse your conscience to silence?

... or do you possibly try to purchase your joy and delight in the marketplace, trying to find peace of mind in the acquisition of stuff, things that promise to make you happy.

Yet, where is Jesus to be found?

Jesus is here. It is not only His costume to be here. It is where He **MUST** be.

He is not here to play around in His Father's house, He is here to do His Father's business.

As the 12-year old boy saw the Passover lambs slaughtered, He knew this was His fate.

Each one of them, a picture of His sacrifice for each of those families there... and the world over.

Yet He did not shrink back in horror or fear, but He leaned into it.

He desired to learn more, to know more about His work of redemption for you.

He asked questions of the teachers of God's law

and displayed His comprehension in His answers to their questions. And they gathered around Him.

...

As Jesus returned to Jerusalem approximately 21 years later,

He had the same resolve to be about His Father's business.

There He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as the appointed and anointed **Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.**

There He taught God's people in the Temple during His final week of earthly life,

calling them to repentance and to Himself... and preparing them for His final coming in glory.

There He gave Himself up, allowed Himself to be found and captured, tried, beaten, and crucified.

There His blood was poured out, shed for you for the remission of your sins,

for despising His word, for listening to it halfheartedly, for not seeking Him where He is to be found.

It was all a **MUST**. Jesus had to do it, not just because it was commanded of Him by His Father,

but because your redemption was His will also and this was the only way.

It was for the joy set before Him.

And having accomplished your salvation in all of its entirety, He now makes Himself available to you.

Not merely once a year, as the Passover was, but weekly, and even more often in His Word.

If you seek Him, do not look to your worldly friends on social media, not to the TV/computer screen, not to the marketplace, but look for Him in His Father's house.

Find Him teaching in His local temple, where His ministers preach Jesus as the Lamb of God, that Lamb once slain for your justification, causing God's judgment to pass over you...

that Lamb who is now risen to eternal life, inviting you to His feast,

to eat of His body and drink of His blood for the forgiveness you so desire and need...

that Lamb who terrifies the roaring lion, the devil, who seeks to devour you...

that Lamb who has washed away your sin and guilt in His own blood through holy Baptism.

Find Him where it is His custom to be... where He must be. In His Father's house.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria