

Sermon Title: "Turning Point"

Biblical Passage: Luke 2:41-52

### **Passage Background and Summary**

The passage begins, "Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover" (v. 41). Thus, like previous years, a 12-year-old Jesus and his parents go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Yet, this year, when they went to return, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem without them realizing. They went a day's journey, assuming he was in the crowd, before they began to look for him among their family and friends. They returned to Jerusalem and found him in the Temple after three days listening to the teachers and asking questions. His parents were shocked, and his mother said, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety" (v. 48). He responded, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (v. 49).

They didn't understand what was going on at that time, but it would later be revealed, and the passage ends with: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years,<sup>[c]</sup> and in divine and human favor" (v. 52).

### **Sermon Points**

It was another New Year and Mary and Joseph were doing what they did every year at that time, going to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. In their minds, this was another year like any other year, but Mary and Joseph didn't know that this year would be a turning point. Could it be that this year for you is not just another year? Could it be that God is up to something that we can't see or understand right now? Pastor Warnock prays that this year for us and God's children all over the world will be a turning point. We pray that for all of God's children all over the world that this year can be a turning point. Pastor Warnock is encouraged because there is baked into the story of the Passover the idea and the possibility of God showing up in the worst of times. Passover is a story about liberation during a plague, about liberation in the midst of a pandemic. Still in the Bible, the pandemic is just a footnote to what God was up to. God was doing a new thing. In Jesus also, God was doing a new thing.

This year was to be a turning point for 12-year-old Jesus, and it would set him on a path to push him toward his future. His parents would go a day's journey before they realized he was no longer with them. There had been a radical shift in the normal order of things. He was not where he was supposed to be, and his parents were astonished. Some people may be surprised this year when they look up and discover you are not where they left you, and that upsets some people because purpose is offensive. Mary and Joseph are understandably upset because Jesus is just a child. They left him, and then it took them three days to find him. They were surprised to find him in the Temple. This is the only story we have about the childhood of Jesus. Jesus is

at a turning point that is the beginning of a process that will put him on the road to pursue his mission.

For us to soar, there are some things we have to do to get ready for what God has in store:

1. Right place - We have to be in the right place: May 2022 find us in our Father's house like Jesus was.
2. Right people - We have to surround ourselves with the right people: They found him in the Temple listening to the teachers and asking questions. If you're in a place that feels stagnant, surround yourself with quality people; we have to hang out with people who will ask us the right questions.
3. Right purpose - We must pursue the right purpose: There's another translation that says, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus knew the purpose for which he was sent. Don't let anybody get in the way of your purpose.

Decide that this year will be a turning point. Pursue your purpose and embrace your life's mission. Find yourself in the right place and surround yourself with the right people.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What are some of the customs and rituals that your family does every year?
2. Share any moment(s) in your life in which a ritual or custom became a turning point?
3. How do you understand this moment in Jesus's childhood? What is the significance of Jesus being in the Temple?
4. How has the pandemic shaped and/or reshaped your understanding of what it means to be "in our Father's house"?
5. What are qualities and characteristics of the right people to have in our lives?
6. Do you have a mission for your life? What are you doing to pursue it?
7. Have you ever reached a turning point in your life? If so, what happened?
8. How will 2022 be a turning point for you?