



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“Primary Allegiances”	Rev. Brent Baker	December 26, 2021
<p>1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26</p> <p>Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. 19 And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord.” So then they would return to their home... 26 Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.</p> <p>Colossians 3:12-17</p> <p>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word</p>	<p>Sermon notes:</p> <p>We love stories of lost things that are found: the woman who searched everywhere for a lost coin, the shepherd who brought a lost sheep back on his shoulders, the father who refused to give up on his profligate younger son or his prideful older son. But at the start of this story, Jesus is not lost; he is right where he should be—at home with his Father. From Mary and Joseph’s perspective, Jesus is utterly lost, but not because they are bad parents. Consider their acts of piety for their son—presenting him at eight days for circumcision, traveling to Jerusalem to offer the appropriate sacrifice in the Temple. So how do you lose Jesus? Their son, not yet bar-mitzvahed, is found seated in the Temple with the scholars, answering questions, astonishing the teachers of the law. Yet when Mary questions him, he answers with assurance that he is in his Father’s house, delineating his primary identity, which informs his primary allegiance.</p> <p>His Father’s House</p> <p>With this answer, Luke introduces the first recorded words of Jesus, and Jesus introduces a shift in his primary allegiance. Up to this point, Luke refers to the couple from Galilee as “his parents.” Later they are referred to as “Joseph and his mother,” signaling a change in the identity of Jesus’s father. From this point, Joseph retires to the background, and Jesus publicly reorients his allegiance by referring to his “Father’s” house. Joseph is still there, but God moves to the foreground. Jesus has many titles and offices in the Scriptures, but they are all contingent on his primary role as the Son of God. Jesus reminds Mary here of what she already has heard from the angel, that he is God’s Son, born to redeem God’s people. Jesus’s claim is reaffirmed at his baptism almost 20 years later. God is his Father, so only Jesus can (1) rule over all the kingdoms of heaven and earth, (2) redeem, cleanse, and reconcile human kind to God by atoning for the sins of the world, (3) judge the quick and the dead, and (4) plead our case before the throne of God. By doing all this, he brings us into adoption as his sisters and brothers.</p> <p>We each have many roles and titles, but all of them depend on being sons and daughters of God. When our offices take</p>	

or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 2:41-52

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 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." 49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 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. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man

precedence over our primary identities as children of God, we turn our worlds upside-down. No role, title, or honor in this world should come before our identity as adopted children of God.

His Father's House

Different Bible versions translate Jesus as saying that he is either in his "Father's house" or about his "Father's business." Though the terms differ, there is no need to choose between them. The business of God was done in God's House, the Temple, and flowed from there out into the world. It is where men encountered the Word, the Sacraments, and the presence of God.

Eternal things take on flesh and bone as we gather together. We become the living stones laid on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is vitally important that we meet to worship together (Hebrews 10:24-25) where the church gathered is equipped to be the church scattered, fit to go out into the world as the body of Jesus (Col. 3:16,17).

Our primary identity as sons and daughters of God reminds us not to neglect either the Father's house or the Father's business, "whatever we do in word or deed."

Three questions the world asks:

1. If God is good, why do bad things happen to good people and why do good, unbelieving people go to hell?
2. If God is real, how can He be the only true God and Jesus the only way to God?
3. If God is with me wherever I go, why do I have to go to church?

In fellowship with other believers, we can grapple with these doubts and questions. It's not just a precious place, it's full of precious people. Come to your Father's house to be equipped to go to your Father's world.

Discussion:

1. When have you lost something precious and looked for it diligently? How did you feel? Did you find it? How did the experience change you?
2. What particular values are you tempted to place over your primary allegiance to God? How can you manage those temptations?
3. Consider the specific benefits you receive from fellowship with other believers. Share with someone else your "war stories" that involve the beauty of being connected to other children of God.