

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, January 25, 2022
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“The Rest of the Story”

READING: Luke 2:41ff; Matthew 3:13-15 – Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parent were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their family and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions...Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus said, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

When my siblings and I cleaned out the attic in our parents’ house last fall, we found some odd and interesting things for which we had no knowledge or information. One of those items now hangs on the wall in my garage. It’s a road sign. It reads “M-24”. M-24 is a two-lane highway that runs from Unionville, on the north flank of “The Thumb” of Michigan directly south all the way to Detroit. We’ve all driven on that highway at some point, as it cuts through Caro, the county seat of our home county of Tuscola. What we don’t know is how and why our father had come into possession of that sign? The sign is in “like new” condition so it doesn’t appear to have been an old cast off. Did he steal it in some teenage prank? Did he buy it in an auction as part of a larger consignment of items? We don’t know, and we probably never will. We’d all like to know “the rest of the story!”

Don’t you wish you knew more about Jesus’ childhood, his teenage years, and his early life as a carpenter in Nazareth? We have information given us by the Scriptures regarding his birth, his circumcision and presentation at the temple, the Magi’s visit and the flight to Egypt. Then one story at age 12...and then nothing until he comes to be baptized by John at the Jordan. That’s it! Christians through the ages have wondered and wished for more. Some took to writing fiction about him, imagining what he might have been like and what he might have done, but most of those veered into flights of fancy so strange as to be comical. We wish we had more, but the Holy Spirit chose not to unveil more of that early life and with good reason.

The story of Jesus focuses on his ministry, his teachings, and his actions on our behalf. All of those began with his baptism and the temptations in the wilderness. His childhood, outside his birth and the drama surrounding it, was ordinary in many ways. He was obedient to his parents, went to Hebrew School, did chores, had his Bar Mitzvah, apprenticed with his father and other carpenters, and went to Synagogue faithfully. He did what most of the other Jewish boys of his day did. Those things were important to his formation as a Jew and as a man, but none of those things were particularly important to OUR salvation. Once he comes to the Jordan to be baptized and receives the Holy Spirit’s power and the Father’s commission, the real work of salvation begins. Then things get REALLY interesting and important for our sakes.

Maybe someday we’ll get “the rest of the story”. Our curiosity may be satisfied. We may also discover that those years were very much like ours: highs and lows, lessons learned, doing chores, living with family, grieving our losses, growing in our knowledge and trust of the Lord, and wondering what our future might hold. Whatever Jesus did, he did well and without sin. But, as a boy and as a young man, these were years

of growth and preparation for the task ahead. The things God most wanted us to know, we have in four Gospels that together give us an amazing picture of his Son's acts of redemption and sacrifice for our sakes. That's the best of it!

Some of you may recall a story I told about a picture taken in the early 1940's that showed my Grandfather Kischnick, his brother, Clarence, my dad and my Uncle Earl, and some neighbors posing on and around an old Model A Ford car with a steer inside the car looking at the camera through a window. The granddaughter of one of the neighbors had discovered the picture and wondered what the circumstances had been. She realized that they only one in the picture who was still living was my father. She sent the picture to my sister who showed it to Dad. He laughed as he told her the story. That steer kept eluding the neighbors when they tried to round him up with the others to take them to winter quarters. They finally used Grandpa's old beater to chase down the steer, rope him, and bring him to the farmstead. After several glasses of celebratory home-made wine, they wondered if they could get the steer into the car. The photograph was proof-positive they succeeded. That was one time we got "the rest of the story."

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

1) TBA