

Sermon 2008 Christmas 2

Text: Luke 2: 40-52

Theme: "Got Jesus?"

You have seen the ad for milk that says "Got Milk?" What an incredible idea those two simple words were. I would love to be the Madison Avenue guy who thought that one up. How do you go about bringing recognition and awareness to something as common and ordinary as milk? Well he did it.

The concept is this. As human beings we are drawn to the new and different and exciting. Like moths to a flame we fly toward anything that looks bright and shiny. We do that in the marketplace and we do that religiously sometimes too. Yet, people in a relationship with Jesus are still always seeking him, even in the new and different. We are constantly asking the question of every situation, "Got Jesus?"

There was a congregation in Seattle which was old and tired and decided that she needed to do something different to attract a new and younger group of worshippers so they began a contemporary service on Sunday nights. The band wore flannel

shirts and ripped jeans and played in a grunge style that was reminiscent of Nirvana and Pearl Jam. The first week they had about 50 worshippers. By the time they stopped it, they had about 10 worshippers. At the same time, in the same neighborhood, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral was chanting Compline, one of the most ancient liturgies of the church. If you want to see how contemporary Compline is, take a look at it – it is page 253 in our hymnal. There was line on Sunday nights to get into the Cathedral that easily sat 1,000 people in order to chant this ancient service.

What was the difference? One showcased modern lyrics, a good beat and cool musicians. The other showcased Jesus. People went seeking Jesus and they found him in the words and music of Compline not grunge contemporary. People today are still seeking Jesus just like Mary and Joseph were seeking Jesus, but where to find him? That's the question.

Mary and Joseph were frantically searching for Jesus when they noticed that he had gone missing. When they found him

they were just like all human parents reacting to human children. Half of them wanted to hug him and the other half wanted to strangle him.

“Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.”

“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” These by the way are the very first recorded words from Jesus.

“And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.” There you have it. The pattern is established. People will forever be seeking Jesus in places other than his Word and his House and then when they stumble across him, they won’t want to understand what he said anyway.

It’s not really that we cannot find Jesus. It’s not really that what he teaches is all that complicated. It’s that we have to change our position in order to make room for his position. We have to move stuff around in our hearts. Right now our game room is a jumble of things moved out of the living room for

Christmas and new stuff that Santa brought. Every year after Christmas, we have to rearrange everything and throw out some old stuff to make room for new stuff. Christmas sort of marks the time we do that in our hearts as well.

The birth of Christ brings amazing things to us, but they are new and different things that might conflict and compete with some of the other stuff in our hearts. I love the way Luke puts it,

“And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.” She moved all this new Jesus stuff into her heart and just let it sit there while she made room for it all. It is easy to ask, “Got Jesus?” It is quite another thing when Jesus moves in.

So, like Mary and Joseph, we find ourselves constantly torn between trying to keep a rein on Jesus and just letting him take over our lives and rule there. Our faith hungers for Jesus to rule our lives but our human nature is unwilling to move aside for him. So perhaps the best advice comes from his mom.

Don't worry too much about whether or not you understand it. From day one, Jesus has been saying things that don't seem

to make sense in this world. Rather, just treasure it all up in your heart and let it take root there and grow. "Got Jesus?" Oh yeah...we got Jesus and everything that comes with him. We got Jesus and forgiveness and salvation and strength and comfort and responsibility, and concern for one another and care for the poor and patience with the weak and... well you get the point right? The process is simple but the ramifications are deep and complicated.

We are God's temple and Jesus is here, in his Father's house. There is no need to look elsewhere for him and having heard from Mary and Joseph we are prepared for some frustration and irritation as Jesus grows and overflows and slowly changes us as he becomes manifest in us. AMEN.