

First Baptist Church of Augusta
December 27, 2009
Psalm: Psalm 148
Old Testament: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Gospel: Luke 2:41-52
Epistle: Colossians 3:12-17
What Do You Expect?

Luke 2:41-52

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 43 When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search 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 When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." 49 He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Here it is; a few weary days after Christmas. Is your house like mine; a bit disheveled – our Advent candles are askew, wrapping paper wadded and discarded in all corners, and our tree and live greenery is anything but live? Was this Christmas what you expected? How about you young people; did you get presents this year that you expected? I believe the older we get, the less we know what to expect from one Christmas to the next.

All during Advent we have heard about expectations – surprising, discouraging, joyful, fearful, hopeful, and so on. We know that not all expectations are welcome, but some cannot come soon enough – like when you are expecting a birth, or a bonus, or a very important phone call. And then, there are those moments in life when we just do not know what to expect.

I cannot help but believe Mary and Joseph had no idea what to expect regarding their boy, Jesus. This is true for all parents, but surely you can agree, that there is no comparison with raising a child that the prophets are calling the Messiah, the Anointed One.

In all of the Gospels, this is the only story of Jesus as a child. Who among us is not curious as to what Jesus was like as a child? Early Christians were just as curious about the details of Jesus' life as a youth. One can imagine that there were many stories circulating around concerning Jesus as a child, growing up in Nazareth.

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas was allegedly written by Thomas the Israelite. It is not in our Bible for a number of valid reasons, but it does make for interesting reading because it is full of stories of Jesus growing up in Nazareth. There is the story of Jesus, when he was five years old and out of clay he molded twelve sparrows. It was the Sabbath day, and so he was criticized for profaning the Sabbath, to which Jesus clapped his hands and the clay figures came to life and flew away. There is another story of Jesus being assigned a tutor, and this tutor sought to teach him Greek and Hebrew. As the teacher was instructing Jesus on the alphabet, Jesus at first seemed unresponsive and finally said, "If you tell me the meaning of alpha I will tell you the meaning of beta." Considering this a smart-aleck remark, the tutor hit Jesus on the head. The story goes, that the little boy Jesus