

## Living Lent | Day 16

# *Serving our Neighbor, Together*

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*Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 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. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 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." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*

*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*

**Luke 2:41–52 RSV**

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### **Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:**

This passage is about the Feast of the Passover and Jesus being 12 years old and traveling there with his family. When they were returning home, Mary realized Jesus was not with them. Mary, of course, was frantic at the thought of where he may be. They traveled back to Jerusalem and found him sitting in the temple courts among the teachers and asking them questions.

Mary said, son where have you been? He, not understanding at all why they were looking for him, says, "mom, why were you searching for me, I was in my Father's house"!

One of my worst weaknesses of being a mother of four is worrying about them in an effort to keep them safe. I want to protect them in everything they do. For years and years, I let “my control” parent them. After many experiences and years of them growing up, I found out “my control” did not work. Letting go and letting God is definitely the answer.

Mary had to let go of her child and let him become Jesus, the Messiah. Letting go of anything in our lives can always be scary. A long time ago, I had a Sunday School teacher tell me, “Letting go of your children and giving them to God will be one of the hardest tasks you will ever have to do.” He added, “they are God’s from day one, we are being selfish by thinking they can stay with us forever.” It is hard to let go of people and things that we care about. But, there comes a time to step back and let go. When we do this, they can soar to the heights God intended for them.

He says, trust me with every fiber of your being.

What are you holding onto today that’s keeping you from being all that God has for you? Maybe it’s control over your child, maybe it’s something at work that you need to let go of, or maybe it’s just anything that is taking hold over you. The point is for you to give it all to God, He has it anyway. Let go and let God. See the difference it makes in your life by trusting in Him with all your heart. Let’s challenge ourselves daily to let go of things that are holding us back from being the best we can be. Get out today and every day and serve your neighbor by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

Jodie Deal Hendrix is the Director of Children’s Ministries at Statesboro First, expanding her family from four of her own to many of the Children of the family of God in Statesboro. Dating to December of 1886 under O.R. Lassiter, Pastor of the Statesboro Mission, eight persons chartered the Statesboro First United Methodist Church, which held its worship services in the Court House until the first Church building was erected. The Sanctuary that stands today was completed in 1959 and represents a form of Gothic architecture and was designed by Walter Aldred, Jr., an architect and a member of the Church. Jodie was instrumental in leading a group of volunteers (both adults and children) from SFUMC to the Day of Service on the Campus of Morningstar during Living Lent 2021.

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