Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Second Sunday after Christmas – January 4, 2026

"[49]And {Jesus} said to {Mary and Joseph}, '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 {Jesus} 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."

- Luke 2:49 – 52

I am the oldest of three kids in my family, and I have vivid memories of going to JC Penney with my mom and younger sister. I was about 7 or 8; my sister was 3 or 4. My sister *loved* to quietly disappear in the middle of a clothes rack. Mom would frantically look for her throughout the clothing section we were in, and eventually, Mom would let a sales associate know that my sister was missing. The entire department store would go on lock-down until my sister was found. Every time this happened, she was safely tucked away in the middle of a rack. For her, it was a game. For my mom, it was her worst nightmare.

About eight months after my husband and I, along with our three kids, moved from South Dakota to Ohio, I had a similar experience with my youngest daughter. My older daughter was involved in the Biddy Cheer. We were at a home Biddy Football game on a Sunday afternoon. I got distracted talking to another parent. When I turned around, my daughter Antonia was gone. Suddenly, a hundred people felt like a sea of millions. I felt disoriented and thrown into an ocean of chaos. I tried not to panic, and I asked my other children to help me. Just when I was about to tell another mom that I couldn't find her, Antonia came running up. I let out the biggest exhale and hugged her tightly, asking where she had gone. She told me she was exactly where she said she would be: just a few feet away in the grass playing with her doll. She had told me, but I was distracted and didn't hear her. She had no idea why I would be so worried. She had done everything I taught her to do, so in her eyes, it seemed rather unnecessary that I would be so worried.

"Why were you looking for me?" the twelve-year-old Jesus asks his mother and father. I can only imagine how Mary must have felt. Why *wouldn't* she be looking for him? She was terrified that something had happened. Maybe she wondered how they could forget their son in Jerusalem. Jesus was never really lost because he was doing exactly what God intended for him. He was growing in wisdom and understanding the ways of God. Jesus didn't come to get lost; he came to seek the lost.

Mary knew that her son was special. She knew that he came from God, but it still surprised her to see how wise he was when it came to his understanding of God. Oh the things that he would teach her in the years to come, but for now, he must follow the commandments and obey his parents.