I know what you are thinking – what? Wasn’t Jesus just a baby two days ago. And we haven’t even encountered the Magi yet. What?

You are in good company, however, every year the first Sunday of Christmas takes a moment to focus on the early life of Jesus – fleeing to Egypt, encountering Simeon and Anna at the temple and then our text today. Perhaps the other two are a bit easier to wrap your head around because Jesus is still relatively young and in today’s text he is on the edge of adolescence in Ancient times.

And some of you are thinking – Mary was just pondering things in her heart and now just left her son and didn’t even notice he was gone for three days?!

And yet it seems fitting that we haven’t been left to linger at a sentimental manger thinking that the silent night was ushering in some kind of serene and easy existence. Because you and I both know, the night was not silent – not as Mary screamed in birth pangs to deliver the Messiah. And you know that the serene easy life is nothing of what Jesus promise. That noisy night with a baby meant revolution.

And today at 12 year’s old, in Jesus first “public appearance” we learn two essential things about that revolution.

So beloved, take a breathe because that baby we have waited for is on a mission – and we invited into God’s creative and redeeming work in the world.

*Prayer*

So let’s set the scene for a moment. Jesus’ family (a whole carvan of them) have traveled to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover. Jesus would do this again and again. I wonder if when he entered into Jerusalem as he would be come the Passover if it was simply muscle memory at that point. His legs that had made the journey every year giving him courage even if a piece of his heart was hesitant to journey to the cross.

His family had celebrated the Passover feast and began to head home. Soon into the journey Mary & Joseph realize that Jesus is not with them. Their anxiety takes over and they head back to search.

And there was twelve year old Jesus in the temple.

Because we know the end of the story, you half expect Jesus to be captivating audiences with his words and performing miracles. But no.

He was there listening.

God’s revolution – God’s redeeming work in this world through Jesus starts with a posture of listening.

Honestly, beloved, I teared up a bit when I noticed it.

To start a revolution seems so much easier with weapons and words. So much easier with agendas and best laid plans.

And here in the first public act of Jesus, we find the revolution of love beginning with listening.

And I simply found myself praying, “God, could a posture of listening heal our world?”

Beloved, I don’t know what else can. I think the way of God is the way of love. And love is given space when we listen. I learned a saying when I moved to the south, “God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason.”

Diverse fields are coming to the realization through data and learning that listening is a core component of individual and community healing. In South Africa, after Apartheid, they refused to bury their brutal history of racism and instead told the truth. They made space for every story.

Many of those who testified to the atrocities they had endured under apartheid would speak of being healed by their own testimony. One young man who had been blinded when a policeman shot him in the face at close range said: "I feel what has brought my eyesight back is to come here and tell the story. I feel what has been making me sick all the time is the fact that I couldn't tell my story. But now it feels like I've got my sight back by coming here and telling you the story."

Hospice volunteers are often trained in this healing listening like those as Wings of Hope in Michigan. They are trained to know: “Healing listening supports those **who choose to express their pain by talking about** it. It is a way to help another carry the burden of their grief for a short time so they can rest. Healing listening validates the other person and acknowledges their pain.”

And I just cant shake the imagine of the young man in a South African Courtroom being heard o the image of one of our elders being listened to as death draws near. Those feel like the kind of moments that God came to birth in this world. Moments of healing, restoration, of a love revolution all begun and sustained by listening.

I was reminded this week that at 12 Jesus would be on the verge of adolescence. And when he says, “You had to know I would be in my father’s house” follows a pattern of proclamations to come. A proclamation in this text serves to tell all of us that Jesus is committed to the mission of God, following the way of his father – a mission that begins in deep and healing listening.

When I was in CPE – story of the man at the bedside story.