

## Drawn to God's Presence

Many of us are familiar with the idiom "home is where the heart is," yet most of us are less acquainted with its origin. The idiom communicates the sentiment that **home is the place you are drawn to because it is where you find the people you love and who love you**. It further carries with it a sense of wellbeing, comfort, and safety. Whether the idiom's origins go all the way back to the first century and the Roman statesman Gaius Plinius Secundus - also known as Pliny the Elder - or not, its appearance in English literature can be traced back to an unsigned poem published in 1828 named *'Tis Home Where'er the Heart Is*. The poem beautifully develops the heart's powerful longing for home.

Jesus, as a good Jewish boy, grew up with parents that impressed upon Him the significance of the temple. As the sinless Son of God, He also had an innate understanding of its importance in relating to His Father. Similar to the Garden of Eden and the Israelite tabernacle, the temple served as the place where heaven and earth met or, better yet, where the presence of God met humanity. So in Luke 2, the author connects Jesus to the very presence of God by placing Him in the temple. It is here that He is presented and joyfully recognized by Simeon and Anna, and it is here that, at age twelve, the Son of Man is found among the theological elite confounding and mystifying the great minds of His day with His understanding and answers. The sinless God-Man is entirely unencumbered by sin's effects on His mind. Without a sin nature, Jesus' mind was never clouded or fatigued, never inconsistent or distracted, and never misinformed or forgetful.

So like the learned rabbis, we too are amazed, because we find the young man sitting in the temple completely at home. As a matter of fact, upon finding their son after frantically scouring the city for three days, Jesus informs His parents that He "must be about [His] Father's business" (v. 49, KJV). Jesus came for a distinct and life-altering purpose. The Apostle John hints at this when he says that Jesus "made his dwelling [*tabernacled*] among us" (Jn 1:14). Did you notice what John is implying? Jesus came to us to be the Temple (Jn 2:18-22; Col 1:19)! He came to us so that by His death and resurrection He might usher in the New Covenant through which the dividing curtain between God and man might be torn in two (Matt 27:51) and the temple expanded beyond a single building. Now God, the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26) not only makes His home **with** us, but **in** us (1 Cor 3:16-17). The people of God, the Church, now become a temple able to experience the presence of God at all times and in all places (Eph 2:19-22).

As mentioned at the outset, the poem *'Tis Home Where'er the Heart Is* describes the heart's overwhelming desire to be where it is loved. But the poem goes further by shedding light on the heart's yearning to be renewed, and to be free. Jesus, the perfectly sinless Son of God has come to mingle among those made of mud and blood - you and me. The glory of God Himself has been revealed in the flesh, visible for all to see (Jn 1:14; Lk 1:1-2; 2:30). Both Simeon and Anna recognized infant Jesus during His presentation at the temple. In Jesus, they and millions have found where their heart has found a home, their life has been made new, and the shackles of their sinful past have fallen off.

Come home! Run to Jesus! He is your comfort and salvation. And, be like Simeon and Anna who embraced Jesus and gratefully spoke of Him to all who would listen.

***Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV) - "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. **And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**"***