

Chosen Home
Christmas 1C, 2021
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I

'Twas the morn after Christmas
and all through the church
no, that's not right
'cause what rhymes with church, cousin Lurch, buying merch?

No that's not why we are here
We are here for worship, yes
But to gather together
with our family of faith
those aunties, uncles, nephews and nieces, siblings
in God's family
drawn together to sing the old story

That story of wonder
That story of love
That story of miracles
of heavenly host
of star-filled nights
of radiant beams
and God's holy face

That's why we are here
Look around, look around (is that Hamilton?) ...
oh song snippets fill our minds this time of year
Those songs of old
They take us back
back to days gathered around the piano
back to days singing in the choir
back to days dancing and singing with brothers and sisters
Long since scattered
back to days when the chairs were not empty

Those songs are precious
 They tell the story of old
 They tell the story of love
 Those stories remind us why we are here
 Gathered in God's house

II

God's good news for us from Luke is our story too
 Mary and Joseph brought their son home too
 to that Holy place to remember

Remembering God's holy deeds
 God's redemptive work through Moses
 Through Miriam and Aaron
 And even through Pharoah
 Yes, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to remember the Passover

And after that celebration was done
 when all the matzo and roasted lamb was consumed
 they started their journey home
 Home, back to their ordinary lives
 of carpentry
 and home-making
 of raising their dear child to be a faithful Son

And yet, where was he, they fretted, that first night after leaving?
 Have you seen Jesus, they cried?
 No, came the answer....
 Haven't seen him all day
 Oh my God in highest heaven!
 My Lord, where is he?
 This precious child!
 How could we have lost him?
 Is the world lost because we were horrible parents?
 We couldn't keep track of this miracle?
 Oh God, this doesn't feel much like a miracle now.

Running and fretting Mary and Joseph
Left the safety of numbers,
of traveling home
and returned with great haste to Jerusalem
Searching where they stayed
Searching the neighborhoods
Wishing they could describe him better

Three sleepless nights they searched
3 days he was lost to them
3 days..... hmm.....
Sounds kind of familiar

Three days later, they found him.
Relief flooded them.
There he was, sitting among the teachers
Listening, asking questions.
Where all who heard were amazed at his understanding.

Mary and Joseph were beside themselves
“How could you do this to us!!”
Why have you treated us like this?
We have been searching high and low for you, young man!
Why, when we get you home...

With a glance, that young man stopped them in their tracks.
“Why did you search for me?
Didn’t you know I would be here?
Didn’t you know I would be here
In my father’s house
At home
I had to be here at home, in my father’s house.”

What in the world are you talking about, son?
Let’s get you home.

III

Where is home?
Where was home for Jesus?
 In his Father's house, of course

For each of us, though,
We answer that question too...

Where is home?
Is it the childhood home of yours?
Does that place feel like home?
 For many of us, other people live in that house now...
Is it the home you raised children?
 Perhaps that was several houses ago
Is it the apartment now in the retirement center?
Is it that place on the lake?

Where is home?

Could it be that park bench out there in the cold?
Could it be the car that works for a bed too?
Is it the hotel room for the night?

Where is home?
If you could choose your home, where would you choose?

Is it the place with all your stuff?
Is home the place with all your memories?
Is home the place with all your dreams?
Is home the place from long ago?
Is home the place with the people you love?

Brene Brown says,
 “Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.”¹

and

“True belonging is not something you negotiate externally,
 it’s what you carry in your heart.
 It’s finding the sacredness in being a part of something.”²

So maybe,
 Home is where you **belong**.

IV

Scripture tells us a little about home and houses

Matthew 7:25

Jesus said:

²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.

Matthew 12:25 (CEB)

“Every kingdom involved in civil war becomes a wasteland. Every city or house torn apart by divisions will collapse.

The psalms tell us:

Psalms 91:1-2

¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

¹ <https://ideas.ted.com/finding-our-way-to-true-belonging/> found 12/23/21

² IBID

Proverbs 24:3-4

³ By wisdom a house is built,
 and by understanding it is established;
⁴ by knowledge the rooms are filled
 with all precious and pleasant riches.

Hebrews 3:4

⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

Joshua 24:15

¹⁵ Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

What kind of home do we choose?

Where do we choose to dwell?

In the shelter of the most high?

On solid rock?

On the foundation of our faith?

Where do you choose to dwell?

Will you answer, as for me and my house?

Will you answer like Joshua?

Will you answer like Jesus?

V

Friends,
My brother and sisters
My aunts and uncles
My nieces and nephews
My siblings
You belong here.
We all belong here together ...

On this journey of choosing our home
Let's walk together
Towards home
We can get there,
If we walk together.

Take my hand, let's head home.