

The First Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord
St. Luke 2:41-52
January 13th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

They Found Him in the Temple

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today our Lord + Jesus shows both His obedience to His heavenly Father and to His earthly parents who raise Him in His earthly life. The Lord God, through the voice of Moses, had commanded that the men of Israel were to appear where the Tent of Meeting was stationed three times a year: During the Passover festival, during the Pentecost festival, and during the Harvest festival. It is important to point out that only the men were required to go—those twenty years old and up. The women and children were not required to go.

When the temple was built in Jerusalem, and replaced the Tent of Meeting, the rule was confirmed that the men of Israel and Judah would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year. Even when Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, made two golden bulls in the Northern Kingdom for them to go to and worship in Bethel and Dan, the requirement to go to Jerusalem and worship the Lord God three times a year was not replaced. The false religion of Jeroboam did not change the Lord God's command for those in the Northern Kingdom.

St. Joseph, who with his wife St. Mary and his Son + Jesus, lived in the Northern Kingdom continued to go to Jerusalem three times a year as was required by the Law of Moses. We are told by the Evangelist St. Luke that every year the Lord + Jesus' parents went to the Feast of the Passover. Both parents went even though only Joseph was required to go. St. Mary and the young Man + Jesus were not required to go to Jerusalem. However, we are told that both St. Joseph and St. Mary went yearly to the feast. Although not specifically mentioned, we can assume that St. Joseph and St. Mary did not leave their young son home alone like some young boy in a Christmas movie; they brought Him with them yearly to the feast.

This teaches us several things: First, His parents were devout Israelites, subjecting themselves willing to the Lord God's commands. Second, that this devout worship of the One, True God was a family affair. Everyone in the family went yearly to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast with the rest of the devout worshipers of Israel. Third, that the Lord + Jesus is respectful of the teachers in the temple, for He is learning from them, and not, at the age of twelve, presuming to have authority over them in regards the Word of God. Even though He is the Word incarnate, and is God Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, He only listens to the teachers, and asks them questions regarding the Word of God. Fourth, that the Lord + Jesus was obedient to His parents, for He willingly went to Jerusalem with

them and willingly worshiped the way that His parents worshiped even though He was not required at His age to go to Jerusalem.

This is further established later in the Evangelist St. Luke's Gospel reading for today, when after searching diligently for the Boy—sorrowing, the Greek text says—they find Him in the temple in the midst of the elders listening and asking questions. A boy who does not want to be someplace would only remain as long as he was required. If the Lord + Jesus did not want to be in the temple—in His Father's house—He would have left as soon as He possibly could. But, the Lord + Jesus shows His love for His heavenly Father in that He remains in the temple. He shows His love and obedience to the heavenly Father by not only being in the temple but engaging the teachers of the Word of God in asking questions and listening to answers about the Word of God.

One could make the claim that the Lord + Jesus developed this love for the temple simply because His parents instilled in Him a love for the Word of God by being devout worshipers of the Lord God themselves. This is a fine example for us. Our children learn to be obedient to the Word of God through our obedience to the Word of God. They learn to be devout through our devotion. I have seen too many parents who on account of modern philosophies do not believe they should steer the beliefs of their children; that the children need to “find their own way.” What a load of nonsense! Holy Scripture in many places—the Book of Proverbs, the Psalms, and other places—teaches that training a child in the way he should go, will produce the desired fruit of that child maintaining the desire to remain in the Church when he is no longer living under our direct authority.

Our children learn from mimicking us. This point cannot be argued. We have examples all the time when we see our children use the same bad language that we use on a regular basis. I always think of the time when I was giving a ride to my nephew who was about three or four years old, and I called another driver a bad name, and out of the backseat of the vehicle the word is echoed by my nephew. The call to repentance from a three-year-old.

This is why we as parents have the obligation to train our children in God's Word. And not just on Sundays, or special occasions, but on every day of the week. St. Joseph trained his family in how to worship by bringing them with him to the feast every year. They learned the importance of it, and developed a love for doing it. And this is done through more than just carrying out the actions. Many parents bring their children to the Church with them and they do not continue in the Church when older. Why are they different? It is centered in how the Church is treated at home when it is not Sunday. Does the Word of God envelop every aspect of your home life? If not then repentance and change needs to take place. Even if they hate you for it at first. When they develop a love for it themselves, they will thank you for it later, even if they never say the words. They will learn to be obedient to the Lord God through their obedience to you.

We are told by the Evangelist St. Luke at the end of the Gospel reading that the Lord + Jesus was subject to His parents. Even though He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and Ruler of all things, He is subject to His parents. And in being subject to His parents, He is subject to His heavenly Father, Whose command it was to honor our parents.

Our Lord + Jesus exemplifies His obedience to the Father by being in the place where His Father's Word is spoken, and where the sacrifices that atone for the sins of the penitent—the same sins that He would one day atone for with His very own life on the tree of the holy cross—are carried out.

This leads us to another aspect of this text. Our Lord + Jesus on the eighth day of His life was circumcised. This is not something that an eight-day-old person could request. His parents had to do this on His behalf. In this the Lord + Jesus is obedient to the Father, because His parents were obedient

to the Father. The same is true when our Lord + Jesus was forty days old. He was brought to the temple to fulfill the Law that all male children that open the womb must be redeemed with a burnt sacrifice and a sin offering. Again, a forty-day-old child does not have the ability to be demand of his parents to obey the Law of God. The Lord + Jesus is obedient to His Father's commands to be presented at the temple, because His parents were obedient to the heavenly Father. It is through the devotion of His parents that the Lord + Jesus is able to fulfill the Law for us.

Our devotion to the Word of God should be the same. Especially if we are parents. And since the command to honor our parents does not stop when we "reach a certain age" our task as parents to train our children in the Word of God does not stop when they "reach a certain age." It certainly becomes more difficult because of worldly and societal pressures, but it never stops until we are in the grave.

The Lord + Jesus was unable to fulfill the Law for us when He was a Baby, but now we meet Him as a twelve-year-old Boy and we see that He is obedient to His parents in that He worships as they do, and He is subject to them as His earthly parents. More importantly, the Lord + Jesus is obedient to His heavenly Father, in that He engages in the Word of God, even as a twelve-year-old Boy. He must be about His Father's business. He must be in the temple.

The temple is the embodiment of the presence of the Lord God among His people. Here we find the Lord + Jesus in the temple, among His people. This is the second time that St. Luke shows us the Lord + Jesus in the temple. The first was when He was forty days old. Now, as a twelve-year-old He is shown to us again.

The Lord + Jesus abides in the Lord's house. He abides in His Father's house. He abides in the place where the sins of the people of Israel are atoned for. In the Temple of His Body the sins of the whole world are atoned for, and through faith in Him we are justified before our Father in Heaven. This is what gives us true joy, for our sins have been atoned for by the Lord + Jesus in the Temple of His Body. And He has opened our graves through His resurrection, so that we may live with Him and the rest of our heavenly family for all eternity.

This is the message of joy that we need to pass onto our children. They must come to see their own sinfulness, and their own need for a Savior. Through the Word of God, the Holy Ghost convicts their hard hearts to see that salvation is found only in the Lord + Jesus Christ. May the Lord Almighty grant this to us all. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!