

The First Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord
St. Luke 2:41-52
January 10th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Jesus Increased in Wisdom and Stature

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who in mercy hast established the Christian home among us: We beseech Thee so to rule and direct our hearts, that we may be good examples to children and servants, and not offend them by word or deed, but faithfully teach them to love Thy Church and hear Thy blessed Word. Give them Thy Spirit and grace, that this seed may bring forth good fruit, so that our homelife may conduce to Thy glory, honor and praise, to our own improvement and welfare, and give offense to no one; through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

The Apostle and Evangelist St. John in his Gospel that was appointed for the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, which seems like a month ago, but has only been a little over two weeks, establishes for us that the Baby born in Bethlehem, Who was wrapped up in swaddling cloths and was laid in a manger; of Whom angels preached and sang and to Whom shepherds attended and spread the report of Him to all the surrounding areas; to Whom wise men from the East came and bowed down and worshiped Him and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and Whom the devil, through King Herod, tried to kill was in fact the Word Who was made flesh and dwelt among us. This Baby born in Bethlehem Who was circumcised on the eighth day and was presented at the temple on the fortieth day was from the beginning the Lord God. In Him dwelt bodily the full glory of the Divine majesty. In Him—this Baby—the Lord God had humbled Himself to dwell among us as One of us.

The Apostle and Evangelist St. John establishes this fact for us on Christmas morning. Now, a little over two weeks later on this First Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord, the Evangelist St. Luke establishes for us that the Lord God is fully and truly man. Just as He is fully and truly the Lord God Almighty, this Boy in the temple both listening to and asking the teachers questions, is fully and truly Man. This Boy + Jesus is both fully and truly God and man. We see the perfection of the Godhead in Him in that He astonishes the teachers with His understanding and answers, and that He amazes His parents, St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary, that He would be found in the temple, doing the business of His Father in Heaven, in the midst of the teachers; fulfilling all righteousness for us poor, miserable sinners. We also see that He is truly Man, born of His mother Mary, because this Baby has not only grown into a Boy of twelve years old, but the Evangelist St. Luke also tells us that this Boy + Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and grew in favor with both the Lord God and with mankind.

This is one of those truly amazing things! How does the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; Who was from the beginning; Who was with the Lord God from the beginning; Who was the Lord God from

the beginning of the foundations of the world grow in wisdom and stature? How does He Who is the Lord God—the Second Person of the Holy Trinity—grow in favor with the Lord God? He is the Lord God; how does He grow in favor with the Lord God? The Evangelist St. Luke is clearly talking about His human nature. Our flesh which He has taken into the Godhead after He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary grows in wisdom and stature. He, Who after only a few days after His conception, was greeted by the Virgin Mary's cousin Elizabeth, and the baby in her womb—St. John the Baptist—who was only six months old, with joy and leaping in the womb; grew in the Virgin's womb and was born for us on Christmas Day in the city of King David—in Bethlehem. He grew into a Child, and then a Boy of twelve years old, just like every boy does; just like every human does; just as all of mankind does; He grew in stature.

St. Luke the Evangelist also tells us that He also grew in wisdom. This wisdom refers to His knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; His faith in the Lord God. How is this possible? How does He Who is the Lord God; Who is perfect in every way grow in wisdom? This again is according to His human flesh which He has taken into the Godhead, as we confessed on Christmas Day in the words of the Athanasian Creed. "Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God." According to His human nature He grew in knowledge of the Lord God. According to His human nature He grew in wisdom and faith in the Lord God. According to His human nature He grew in stature and grew in favor of both the Lord God and of mankind.

All this was planned from before the foundations of the world. Just as the Apostle and Evangelist St. John pointed out in the beginning of His Gospel. He was the Lord God from the beginning, and He was with the Lord God from the beginning. From the beginning the Lord God had planned to bring light into this dark world. The Light of the world is this Boy + Jesus, who is in the temple both listening to and asking questions of the teachers. The Light that shines in the darkness of this dark world filled with sin is the Boy + Jesus Who is in the temple being about His Father in Heaven's business. He is in the temple fulfilling all righteousness. He is in the temple, and He dwells in Nazareth, and is born in Bethlehem, and fled to Egypt and was called out of Egypt, all so that He might fulfill all righteousness for us poor, miserable sinners.

We who are unable to save ourselves by our works and merits; who are filled with sin and shame; who daily and often break the Ten Commandments, and we have been doing so since we were conceived, born of our parents, and have grow up in this world; need Someone Who is righteous in every way to be our Savior. The Lord + Jesus, this Boy in the temple who is only twelve years old, grows in wisdom and stature and in favor with the Lord God and men, for us. He lives and grows in this world just as we do. According to His human nature, He grows in wisdom and knowledge of the things of the Lord God—in His Holy Scriptures—just as we who are brought up and live in the Church do. The Holy Ghost creates and sustains faith in us. The Holy Ghost Who overshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary and conceived in her womb our Lord + Jesus Christ, also fills this Boy + Jesus.

He is filled with the Holy Ghost perfectly without sin. He does not struggle against the Holy Ghost like we do every day of our lives. Sin infects us so deeply that we struggle and strive against the Holy Ghost whenever we sin, which is daily and often. But the Holy Ghost also uses the hammer of the Law to turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. He leads us out of sin, by leading us into daily contrition and faith. He leads us to the waters of our Holy Baptism, wherein we have been washed clean and free from sin, and in which we have put on the righteousness of the Lord + Jesus. This same Lord + Jesus Who is a Boy of twelve years old in the temple for us today.

This Boy + Jesus being perfect and without sin does not struggle against the Holy Ghost, but grows in wisdom and stature and in favor with the Lord God and men for us. He has taken upon Himself our flesh; He has humbled Himself to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary for us. He grows in wisdom

and stature and in favor with the Lord God and men for us. We are unable to do what He does, since we are filled with sin and shame. But, our Lord + Jesus—this Boy of twelve years old—is without sin. He fulfills the requirements of the Law of God. He does this throughout His whole life, not just during His ministry as He preaches and heals the sick and lame for three years. He is perfect and sinless and fulfilling the Law of God His whole life, not just during Holy Week after He triumphantly enters Jerusalem and carries His cross to Golgotha. He is perfect and sinless for us throughout His whole life so that He can offer up for us on the tree of the holy cross the perfect once and for all time sacrifice that atones for the sins of the whole world.

He is about His Father in Heaven's business from the time He is conceived in the womb, through the time of His birth, His circumcision, His presentation in the temple, and even today as He sits in the temple before the teachers both listening to them and asking them questions. The business of His Father, and which He makes His own business, is the business that has been planned since before the foundations of the world—our atonement. As the Apostle and Evangelist wrote in His Gospel which we heard sung for us on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, our Lord + Jesus was from the beginning; He was with the Lord God; and He was the Lord God. This One came down from Heaven to fulfill all righteousness of the Law for us poor sinners, since we are unable. This Boy + Jesus is perfect in every way for us. He is about His Father's business of fulfilling the requirements of the Law for us. All so that He can offer up on the tree of the holy cross the perfect sacrifice that atones for the sins of the whole world, so that we who cling to Him in faith may be justified by His shed Blood.

We who are now filled with the Holy Ghost through the means of grace; through the preaching of the Gospel and through Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper; are filled with faith by the working of the Holy Ghost to cling to the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus. The works of righteousness that He performs throughout His whole life as He grows in wisdom and stature and in favor with both the Lord God and men.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us partake of the rewards of this perfect once and for all time sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross as we gather around this altar and receive on our lips His Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine for the remission of all our sins. For His Body and Blood cleanse us from all sins and transgressions even as the waters of Holy Baptism cleansed us from sin. We are surrounded by sin and sinful mankind all our lives, just as our Lord + Jesus was in His earthly life. We fail daily and often to live up to the tenets of the Law of God, and so we need to take the medicine of life often—our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine—so that we may be free from the bonds of sin and death.

This Body and Blood is from our Lord + Jesus Who although He was surrounded daily by sin and sinful mankind did not fall into sin but remained perfect and righteous and holy. He did this all for us, so that He might offer up the perfect sacrifice for our sins on the tree of the holy cross. Therefore, let us give Him thanks and praise by receiving from Him this gift of forgiveness, life and salvation that He desires to give to us from this altar. And may this gift aid us to everlasting life as we are strengthened and renewed through it by the working of the Holy Ghost, Who creates and sustains faith and life in us by this precious gift of our Lord God. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, when a Child, wast seated in the Temple in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, so rule us, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit that, following Thy example, we may love the habitation of Thy House and the place where Thine honor dwelleth, diligently seek the same, hearing Thy Word with gladness, and faithfully keeping it to the saving of our souls; O Thou, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!