

The First Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord
St. Luke 2:41-52
January 11th, 2026
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Fort Myers, FL
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

He Was Subject unto Them

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said unto Him, ‘Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing.’ And He said unto them, ‘How is it that ye sought Me? Knew ye not that I must be in My Father’s house?’ And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He was subject unto them: and His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And + Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Prayer in Pulpit before 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.

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

My dear friends, the Son of God comes to His temple. The season of Epiphany is a season of revelation. It reveals the Lord + Jesus to be the Son of God. The Evangelist St. Luke tells us that His parents went every year for the Passover. This reveals and makes manifest that the Lord’s parents, Sts. Mary and Joseph, were devout parents. They taught the Word of God made flesh the Word of the Lord God. They took Him to the synagogue, brought Him along when they went to the three high festivals—the Passover, Pentecost, and the Harvest Festival. They brought Him to the temple and showed Him and taught Him the Jewish sacrificial system. And He was subject to them in all things. He humbled Himself to be taught these things by His earthly parents.

He was the One Who created the heavens and the earth. He made all things visible and invisible. He controlled the winds and waves, the sun and moon, made rain to water the earth, and stopped the rain from coming as a punishment for man’s disobedience to His holy Law. He did not have to be subject to His earthly parents. He was the Lord of all things! Heaven and earth, and sky and sea! But He humbles Himself to be subject to His earthly parents, because His fourth Commandment demanded honor of parents. He obeyed the Law that He gave to Moses. He obeyed the Law that He had written on man’s hearts for them to know good and evil. He did it to fulfill that which mankind had left unfulfilled. He did it to fix that which mankind had broken.

Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden by the devil in the guise of a serpent with the knowledge of good and evil. He had told them that if they ate from the tree which they were told not

to eat from they would know good and evil. However, they already had this knowledge written on their hearts. Because the Lord God had created them in His image, they were perfect, with perfect knowledge, they already knew good and evil. It was just that in the Garden they only knew and experienced good, because they subjected themselves to the will and Law of the Lord God. It was only when they turned away from being subject to the Lord God, when they craved to be separate from Him and do their own thing, that they began to know evil.

The serpent was right that day, they would know good and evil. Before they only knew good, but no longer desiring to be subject to the Lord God and His Law and will, they began to know evil. They were given the knowledge that they were evil. Our Lord + Jesus only knows the good. This Boy + Jesus who is twelve years old, only knows the good in Himself. But He bears witness to the evil in every person that He comes into contact with on this planet which He created. Regardless of that He still subjects Himself to His earthly parents—parents who were full of the sin inherited from Adam—because this is what His heavenly Father demanded. This is what He demanded of Himself, and His creation.

Even though His parents were sinners, they still were devout. They were just like we are every day of our lives. We struggle daily with sin; we do things we wish we had not done. We think things we wish we had not thought. We say things we wish we had not said. The earthly parents of our Lord + Jesus were no different. But even though they struggled daily with sin like we do, just like us they sought the Lord God out for forgiveness. They knew that their salvation was found in the Lord God. He was the One Who could save them from their sinfulness. Therefore, as the Evangelist St. Luke writes in the Gospel pericope for today, they went yearly to the temple at the feast of the Passover. They obeyed the Jewish sacrificial system. They had faith that in doing so they would be forgiven of their sinfulness.

They did the same thing for their Boy + Jesus. Even though He was without sin, and had no need for forgiveness, because He was perfect and sinless, they taught Him the place to find forgiveness. It was found in the Lord God, in the sacrificial system that He had given to the Israelites just for this purpose. And our Lord + Jesus subjected Himself to His parents in this regard, even though He needed sacrifice on His behalf. He obeyed the Law that He gave to mankind in their hearts, and the Law which He wrote on tablets of stone and gave to Moses. In this we have perfect examples of how Christian parents, and Christian children, should observe the fourth Commandment.

Parents should bring their children to the Church devoutly, like Sts. Mary and Joseph. Children should be subject to their parents in all things, just like the Lord + Jesus did, even though He was the One Who created His parents, He was still subject to them. Even though He was perfect and they were sinners, He was still subject to them. This is what Luther teaches in the Small Catechism, that even if our parents are not the best parents in our eyes, we should still give them honor, because this is what the Law demands. And when we dishonor our parents, and other authorities, we should humble ourselves and ask forgiveness of both the authorities and the Lord God.

We also learn in the Large Catechism of Doctor Luther that to “honor” is a greater devotion than love. All the Commandments require from us love. We are to love the Lord God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. The fourth Commandment requires above this “honor” for our parents. To give honor to someone is to “esteem them sincerely and worthily, as the highest treasure on earth: [that we] should demean ourselves towards them submissively in our expressions; and not treat them maliciously, or look upon them with contempt of disdain, but yield to them in their claims, and keep silence even if they act imprudently.” This is how we honor our parents, and other authorities, we serve them, assist them, and maintain them by our labor and possessions when they are old, sick, feeble, or in need, and we do this willingly with humility and reverence, as if it was done in the presence of the Lord God, for the parents, and other authorities, that our Lord God has given us. This what our Lord + Jesus did for His earthly parents, even though they were like us and did not do things perfectly all the time. Unlike Him Who knew no sin, but became sin for us.

And so, our Lord + Jesus honors His parents by being subject to them in all things that were according to the Lord God's will. And if they were to demand something of Him contrary to the Law of the Lord God, then He would obey the Lord God and not His parents, for the Lord God is a greater authority than any earthly parent. If our earthly parents refuse to teach us the Word of the Lord God, or take us to Church, or bring us to the means of grace, then we must obey the Lord God rather than men.

This is why the Lord + Jesus is not out of bounds, or in disobedience to His parents when He is found in the temple after three days of His parents seeking Him sorrowing. He must be in His Father's house. He must be where the sacrifices were offered for the remission of sins. His earthly parents had brought Him there on a regular basis. Now that He is twelve years old, now that He was considered a man in the Jewish religion, He chose to be where the Lord God was to be found. Oh, that our earthly children would follow in His footsteps; that those who have been raised to be in this place where our Lord God is to be found by their earthly parents, without cajoling or coercion, would come of their own accord to this place to receive the gifts of the Lord God! Then Christian children would become Christian parents leading more Christian children, and the Name of the Lord God would be praised.

Therefore, my dear friends, today we find the Son of the Lord God in the temple, in His Father's house. He Who would become the One, True sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is in the place where the sacrifices are offered for the remission of sins. He has grown in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men, throughout His twelve years, because of His devout parents. And now, He shows that instruction and teaching instilled in Him by His parents by both asking questions and giving answers to the doctors of the Law of the Lord God. He instructed the doctors of the Law, so that even they marveled at His understanding and knowledge. For He is the fulfillment of that Law. In Him the whole world trapped in sin and death, would find life and light. In Him we find our life and light. In Him we find the remission of all our sins, when we trust in His sacrificial death on our behalf.

Let us then subject ourselves to His works and merits, for His are perfect, and our works and merits are insufficient to warrant righteousness. But in Him we have life and salvation. For He subjected Himself to His parents, and moreover, subjected Himself to the whole will and Law of the Lord God, so that we who have been born in sin and death, might be given through Him life and forgiveness. May our eternal Lord God grant this unto us all! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, 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!