

January 2, 2022
Second Sunday after Christmas
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH
Pastor Joel Sutton

Luke 2:40-52

JESUS IS THE ONE WITH TRUE WISDOM AND OBEDIENCE.

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

Our text for meditation today comes from the Gospel according to St Luke, the 2nd chapter which you heard read earlier.

In our Old Testament lesson this morning we hear of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, who succeeded his father on the throne. Solomon truly loved the Lord, walked before Him in faithfulness, righteousness, being upright in heart. (cf: 1 Kings 3:3-6) The Lord was well pleased with Solomon and appeared to him in a dream by night, and said:

“Ask what I shall give you.” (1 Kings 3:5)

What should a new king ask for? A long reign. A long life? A strong military or riches? These things were not the desires of Solomon. No. He recognized his lack of experience as a leader and his inability to manage the day-to-day problems of such a multitude of people. Of all the things he *could* have ask for, Solomon *sought wisdom*. (cf:1 Kings 3:9) He desired an understanding mind to discern between right and wrong, that he might rule his people fairly, in a way that would benefit his people and please the Lord God.

In return for Solomon’s selfless request, God blesses him, not only with *wisdom*, but also with riches and honor, all for which he is still famous, even to this day. (cf: 1 Kings 3:12-14)
Scripture records that:

“... Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.” (1 Kings 10:23)

But if you know the story of Solomon, you know that his reign of fame and fortune did not end as gloriously as it began. It would not be long before the king of *wisdom* would become the king of fools.

As he gathered wealth and enlarged his own kingdom, Solomon turned away from trusting in His God given *wisdom*, and put his confidence in human *wisdom*. He no longer treasured and kept the Lord’s statutes and commandments but turned away from walking in the ways of the Lord. He took many wives and concubines who worshipped many false gods. And they turned his heart toward the false gods and away from the God of his father David, the one and only true God. (cf: 1 Kings 11:3-4) The very same Solomon whose *wisdom* saved a child from death and put that child with its rightful mother (cf: 1 Kings 3:16-27) was now building temples where children would be sacrificed to the pagan gods. (cf: 1 Kings 11:7-8) Because Solomon turned his back on

the Lord and chased after false gods, the Lord allowed Solomon's kingdom to be taken away. (1 Kings 11:14-40)

Solomon's fall from grace should not surprise us. He, along with you, me, and all mankind are descendants of Adam, and share in Adam's disobedience. We share in his sin. God gave Adam and Eve every tree in the garden from which to eat – except for one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God warned them:

“... in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16–17)

Instead of listening to the *wisdom* of their Creator, they disobeyed. They listened to the lies of the deceiver, believing that eating of the forbidden fruit would make them *wise* like God. (cf: Genesis 3:4-6) The same scene is repeated over and over in the lives of all Adam's descendants as you and I trust in our own sinful human *wisdom* and disregard the commandments that God has given us. Instead of using God's name to pray, praise, and give thanks, many prefer to use His name to curse and lie. Instead of gladly hearing and learning the Word of God, we grumble and complain if the sermon is too long, or if the preacher tells us something we do not want to hear. Instead of honoring our parents and other authorities, we try to overrule authority and go our own way just like Adam and Eve, and even Solomon. You and I share in Adam's sin, so we also share in his condemnation and judgment. St Paul writes:

“... just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

Adam and Eve were created in the image of God and He gave them everything they could have wanted in paradise. Yet they desired *more* and trusted in themselves rather than in God's promises. Solomon was given *wisdom*, riches, and honor beyond compare. Yet he, too, desired more and fell victim to the devil's temptations. You and I are capable of no better. We are in need of a Savior.

It has been a little over a week since we celebrated the birth of the true Son of David, born in Bethlehem, the city of David. In last week's Gospel the forty-day old Jesus was presented at the temple. (cf: Luke 2:22-40) The last verse of last week's text is repeated in the first verse of this week's as St Luke summarizes Jesus' life from day forty to age twelve with the simple words:

“... the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.” (Luke 2:40)

St Luke describes Mary and Joseph as very devout and religious. Every year they went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Only the men were required to appear in Jerusalem for Passover, but being pious and very Godly, Mary also attended. And now that Jesus was twelve years old, they took Him along. Twelve is the age when a Jewish boy is obliged to learn and to observe the statues and commands of the Law.

When the feast was over, Mary and Joseph began the trip back home to Nazareth. After a day's journey they discover that Jesus was not with them. Naturally, they were worried and hurried back to the city and searched high and low for the Boy. St Luke records:

“⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.” (Luke 2:46-47)

Mary believed that Jesus had treated His parents badly, but His actions were no disobedience. Jesus is at the same time, fully God and fully man. Scripture teaches that the God/man Jesus has no sin of His own. So, in this instance He could not have violated the Fourth Commandment by dishonoring His earthly father and mother. As fully God, He had a choice to make. He had to choose between His earthly parents and His heavenly Father. So, He first chose to submit to the divine will of His heavenly Father. It was a divine necessity, something He had to do. He told His earthly parents:

“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49)

Some translations say “...*about my Father’s business*” (KJV).

Jesus was filled with *wisdom* and the favor of God was upon Him. Even at the young age of twelve, Jesus knew that He was not just the son of Mary. He is the Son of God. Early on, He knew that He was on this earth for a greater purpose. He had a divine mission to fulfill – to be about His Father’s business of saving all mankind. The future Savior of the world sat in the temple among the teachers doing the business of the Father. He was paying heed to the Law of God and the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. These things were not only the business of the Father, but they were His business as well. And after attending to the will of the Father in the temple, He next submitted to the authority of His earthly parents.

“⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:51–52)

Christ Jesus was born of the virgin Mary in the flesh of man to be about the Father’s business of saving mankind from their sins. He came to live a life of perfect submission, doing the will of the Father: keeping the moral, ceremonial, and civil Law perfectly, because you cannot. As we will hear in next Sunday’s Gospel, the obedient Son of God would submit to a Baptism of repentance, fully identifying with sinners such as you and me. (cf: Luke 3:3, 15-22) In obedience to the Father, He would submit Himself to an agonizing death, (cf: Luke 24:7) drinking the cup of His Father’s wrath for all mankind – while the Father turned His back on Him. (cf: Luke 22:42; Mark 15:34) Yet, approving of His Son’s handling of His business, His work of salvation, the Father raised Him from the grave, indicating the promise of your resurrection from the grave.

Through the active obedience of Christ Jesus, your disobedience is forgiven. St Paul writes:

“⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.” (Ephesians 1:7)

Through Baptism you are adopted as sons of God in Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will. (cf: Ephesians 1:5) In Christ, you stand before God as righteous and obedient sons, covered by the robe of Christ’s perfect righteousness and obedience. He has rescued you from your stubborn sinfulness and disobedience toward God. To all who are repentant, He forgives your sins of disregarding His commandments while trusting in your own sinful human *wisdom*.

As reborn sons of God, adopted through Christ in Holy Baptism, you have *put off* the old Adam, the old sinful self, human *wisdom*, and disobedience – and have *put on* Christ. With God’s help, you now follow Christ’s example of humility before God and men, beginning to keep His Word and obey His commands. Instead of fearing, loving, and trusting in other things, you begin in faith to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. You also learn to trust in His *wisdom* and Him as your only hope and salvation. You resist the temptation to use God’s holy name to curse, swear, lie, and deceive, and instead use it to call upon Him in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. As you fight and struggle against your natural inclination to despise preaching and God’s Word – with the help of the Holy Spirit, you begin to hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. You resist the sinful urge to argue with parents and other authorities and instead strive to listen to them, honoring them, serving and obeying them. You do all this, not out of fear of punishment or condemnation, but out of love for God, joyfully and gladly because Christ’s perfect obedience has been credited to you.

Because of your disobedience which you inherited from Adam, you *were* under God’s condemnation and judgment. But through Christ’s active obedience for you and His obedience to the will of His Father on your behalf, you *are counted* as righteous and obedient before God through faith in Him. We give thanks to God for sending His beloved Son to fulfill the Law for us, and, as reborn sons of God, and out of love for Him, we strive to follow His example of humble obedience before God and men.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,
Amen.