

Second Sunday After Christmas

Text: Luke 2:41-52(NIV)

⁴¹Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” ⁴⁹“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Theme: What an Obedient Child!

They seem to grow up so fast. It was just a couple of weeks ago when we celebrated Jesus’ birth. Today He is 12 years old. Our children do grow fast. As they grow, one of the first things that they recognize is their will. They want to eat and sleep when they want to. When they are able to walk, they want to go where they want to go.

What is one of the first things that we teach them? – obedience. It begins, “Don’t touch that!” As they get older, we say things like, “Leave your sister alone!” It eventually evolves to “Don’t stay out too late.” Part of being a good parent is making our children obedient. How good are your children at obeying? How obedient were you as a child? Today we look at Jesus at the perfect obedient child.

I. He was perfectly obedient to His heavenly Father.

He gladly heard His heavenly Father’s word. Jewish boys were educated in the Jewish synagogues at that time. They learned reading and writing in Hebrew and Aramaic, but the most important part of their education was learning the Old Testament. (That is a big contrast to our priorities in education today) Their childhood was spent learning the laws of the Old Testament. When a Jewish boy was 12, he went through a special ceremony, called a “Bar Mitzvah” which means “Son of the Commandment.” By that time he should have learned the law. Until now his parents carried out the requirements of the law for him as when Jesus parents presented him at the temple 40 days after his birth. In verse 37 it says that Mary and Joseph did everything required by the Law of the Lord. But after his “bar Mitzvah” the Jewish boy was required to carry out the requirements of the Law himself. This especially meant that from now on he would be expected to attend the festivals in Jerusalem, which the Law prescribed. These were, Passover, Booths, and Pentecost.

When Jesus came to the temple for the first time as a “son of the law” he began to speak with the teachers. He listened to them and asked them questions. It says, “*Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers.*” It was not an act of His divinity that Jesus knew

the Scriptures so well. He paid attention in school. He digested the Scriptures. He took them to heart. When He came to Jerusalem for the first time, it was evident that God's Word was a lamp for His feet and the light for His path (Ps 119:105) He had a love for God's house. (Ps 26:8) He felt so at home in His Father's house, that when the group began to travel home to Nazareth, He didn't even notice. There was no place that Jesus would rather be than in the house of His Father and nothing that He would rather do than listen to His Father's Word and speak to Him in prayer. He was a perfectly obedient child to His heavenly Father.

How does that compare with you? When you were in Sunday School, what was the best part? Was it God's Word or the treats that you got sometimes? How many of you looked forward to confirmation class? How well do you still remember Luther's Small Catechism? Could you still say what the 6 chief parts of the *Small Catechism* are? How many of the meanings to the commandments or the creed could you recite? Did you really mean it when you said that you would suffer all, even death, rather than to fall away from this faith and our Lord's church? How many of us looked forward to receiving the Lord's Supper once we were confirmed? Were we eager to come to our Lord's Supper or did we find ourselves coming to worship less often? When the Lord gave us children, did we have them baptized as soon as we could? Were we eager to bring them to worship, even if it meant that we got little out of the service because they were so busy. Did we bring them faithfully to Sunday School? As our families get busier, are there times when we are happy to have an excuse to skip worship because of a conflict that weekend or do we do everything in our power to find a way to worship our Lord that week?

Jesus was perfectly obedient to His Heavenly Father in everything, including knowing God's Word and worshipping Him. When we think of His eagerness and obedience, our apathy for God's Word and the worship of Him is very apparent.

II. He was also perfectly obedient to Mary and Joseph.

He submitted Himself under the authority of many people, even though He was greater than them. It is clear in our text that Jesus knows who He is. His is the Son of God. Yet, He was obedient to Mary and Joseph. He respected them. He obeyed them. He did all that He was supposed to do. I have often commented that it must have been difficult for His brothers and sisters. Mary might have told them, "Jesus never talks back. He always does what I ask Him to do."

Jesus was also obedient to the government, even though He is the King of kings. It was because Caesar August ordered a census that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger. He would also pay the taxes that were required. (Mt 17:24ff) When the time came for His trial, the Sanhedrin had to find false witnesses. Even Pilate said, "*I find no basis for a charge against Him.*" Our Lord submitted Himself to every authority that was placed over Him.

Again how would we compare? How obedient of a child were/are you? Did you ever do anything to add some grey hairs to your parent's heads? What about your teachers? Did you ever try to get away with as much as you could or did you try to make their lives miserable. Was every day a joy to be your teacher? What about the government? Do you pay every single penny of tax that is required? Have you ever exceeded the speed limit? Is there a law that you thought didn't apply to you? What about your boss at work? In his first letter, Peter tells Christian slaves to submit to their

masters, not only those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. (1 Pet 2:18) Are we model employees or do we find ourselves complaining a lot and even trying to do as little work as possible. Hardest of all is when Paul writes that wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Eph 5:24) How respectful are you toward your parents, teachers, government officials, boss, and even your husband? Just as Jesus was much wiser and more perfect than His parents, we might be smarter and better than those who are given authority over us, but we are still called to respect them.

III. This obedience of Jesus was really the first part of our salvation.

We all have to confess that we have failed to give respect to those in authority. We have been disobedient both to God and man. We have wanted the glory and honor. But Christ was perfectly obedient, and He gave up all of His glory and honor to save us.

His obedience went even a step further than what God requires of any of us. His Father willed that He would offer His innocent life in our place. His Father wanted Him to go to the cross to suffer our condemnation. He should become sin for us. As Jesus studied the Old Testament as a child, He realized that this was God's plan for His life, but He never complained. He never turned back. He willingly went to the cross. He suffered there without complaint in order to save us from all of our sins of disobedience. He obeyed His Heavenly Father right down to the last words on the cross, "It is finished." It is through His obedience to His Father in Heaven that we are saved. The obedient one gave His life to save the disobedient, and He took His life back again that we could live with Him forever.

Even when we are obedient, there is a smugness to it at times. We want to show how much better we are than the others. But Jesus was never like that either. All of His obedience was to serve the disobedient. He obeyed His Father's will to save sinners like us. So today, we praise and thank Him that by His obedience, we the disobedient, have been saved.

Amen

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