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Christ is Always Eager to do the Father's Will

Luke 2:41-52 ⁴¹ His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; ⁴⁴ but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶ Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

We like Jesus and like Solomon have come this morning into the house. We stand or sit in His presence. Now that He is before us what are we going to ask of Him?

At some point in your life someone has probably asked you what three wishes would you ask if you found a genie. What did you say?

Our reading from Ephesians reminds us that we are here in order to receive His gifts and His blessings. So what gift or blessing are we going to ask from Him today?

Gold and silver, fame and fortune, world peace? Solomon asked for wisdom, and the Lord was very pleased with this request. But notice that it wasn't just wisdom in general. Solomon didn't ask that he might be the smartest man alive and know how to split the atom or shoot a rocket to the moon. What he asked was for the wisdom to lead the people of God. He asked for the wisdom to fulfill the task that God had given to him. The wisdom to do the Father's will.

In our text Jesus also came into God's temple for the same reason. He came looking for the wisdom to fulfill the Lord's plan for his life. He was eager to do the Father's will. He desired to do the Father's will. But first he must be prepared.

Psalm 40:7-8 "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart."

That would be nice if our children were always this eager to do what they are supposed to do. Unfortunately we don't have children that are this eager, nor do our parents have children that are this eager. But God's son delighted to do his will.

It is necessary Jesus tells Mary. It is necessary that I be among the things of my Father.

In the Greek it's the *things* of my Father. NKJ says business, ESV says my Father's house but really it would have been best if they left as "among my Father's things." Jesus is referring to all of it; the temple, the sacrifices, the word, etc. This is why they came to Jerusalem: to be a part of the sacrifices, to hear the word, to come into the house of God, to be surrounded by all the things of God. Yet Mary and Joseph are surprised when that is exactly what Jesus is doing sitting and learning and soaking in all the things of His Father.

This is necessary Jesus says. I must be here. I must be here preparing for the work My Father has given me.

Luke repeats this same phrase over and over again in scripture

It was necessary for Jesus to be baptized

It is necessary for Him to descend from the mountain and teach the people

It is necessary for Him to accept the cup

It is necessary for him to die

It is necessary for Him to rise again

All these things were necessary and all these things Jesus did for us but first:

It was necessary for him to be the perfect man

This text is kind of the odd man out when it comes to Epiphany. Epiphany is the season when we see Jesus proclaimed to be the Son of God with power. And that is here in the text, He claims God as his father, so it is there. But it is not the driving force of the text. The real heart of this text is not Jesus as the Son of God, but Jesus as the perfect human.

We see Jesus not only obedient to His parents and to God but eager to be so obedient.

One of the questions people sometimes have about this text is, why didn't Jesus leave with his parents. Sometimes it may even seem like Jesus was disobedient staying in Jerusalem. But notice that Luke emphasizes "the boy." "the boy Jesus." When you leave a child at the gas station it is not the child's fault. For that matter if you leave your wife at the gas station it is not your wife's fault. Try leaving your wife behind and then claiming its her fault for not knowing that you were leaving. It is not Jesus' fault. This is even part of His response to Mary. "You should have

known I would be here, why did you not tell me you were leaving." It was not Jesus fault. Jesus was perfectly obedient to His parents and to God.

And in his perfection, in His eagerness to do God's will, in his delight to study and learn God's word. We see what we should be. We see what God made us to be. But we aren't. We look at Jesus at the age of 12 learning and asking questions that astound the teachers and this is what we should be. Jesus isn't doing this by virtue of his divine power. He is doing this because He dedicated his life to God's word from the earliest age.

And that's ok that we are not this. I mean it's not good, but it's ok. Because here is Jesus doing what we could not, fulfilling for us the law and the will of the Father. He was what we should be, but he did that in our place.

So even though we can't ever measure up, His righteousness is accepted as ours by the Father.

It was necessary for Jesus to be the perfect man for us.

It was also necessary that he grow in wisdom

Notice there are two keys to his pursuit of wisdom

1. He digs into God's word
2. He asks questions and studies to learn all he can about these teachers of the law

In this second point in particular we are failures. We all are too quick to speak because we think we already know the answer. We are too slow to listen to others. This is a recipe that will really stunt our spiritual growth. This is a temptation and a sin of which pastors including myself are particularly drawn to. We think we know it all already and find it easy to jump to conclusions without listening

This is why James tells us: "Be quick to listen and slow to speak" I haven't printed out a take home passage for you guys in a while but I did this morning because this is one worth hanging up on your fridge. There is probably nothing that will help your relationships as much as learning to listen before you talk. And actually listen, not just letting the other person talk while you think about how you are going to prove them wrong.

In this text we find Jesus listening and asking and learning. Jesus is the judge of all the earth. It is necessary that He judges rightly. Later on He is going to pass judgment on the Pharisees and the high priests and others. He is able to do that partly from his years of learning at their feet and asking questions

Not only that but later on when we look at His teaching we find that again and again He attacks and corrects the misunderstanding that so many Jews had about certain things. Again He was able to do that because He knew not only God's word but also God's people. It would be easy to say, "well He knows their hearts" but here we see that He also studied, studied not only God's word but God's people. He is not using His divine powers here. Here He is growing in wisdom as a man.

With Solomon the Lord said "I will make you wiser than all other kings." Did Solomon just sit back and say okay the Lord is going to do all the work I can spend my time playing video games and eating chips?

No he did not but he applied himself and sought out wisdom, **"I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven"**

Ecclesiastes 1:13

I have heard it said of Brett Favre that this was his problem . He was so talented but it was impossible to get him to work hard in practice. He was great but he could have been even better if he had applied himself. I had an athlete like this

when I was coach up at ILC, one who was very talented but because of his talent he thought that he didn't have to try.

This is often our attitude but it was not the attitude of Jesus even at the age of eleven He knew that He did not have time to waste. He knew that the day of his work as a prophet to Israel was coming soon and that he needed to be ready and so He applied himself with great joy and discipline to the work that was set before Him.

This is what makes Him for us such a wonderful and perfect prophet, priest, king, and good shepherd. He is always ready to listen.

I'm sure we all have teachers, parents, judges, police officers, even doctors etc with whom we have grown frustrated. We try to explain to them and they do not listen because they think they know if already. Then they judge, and react wrongly because they do not understand. This can be very frustrating.

But Christ is not such a ruler. Christ does not judge unfairly or quickly. He is one whom we can trust. First because he knows all things even our hearts and second because He is never too busy not to listen.

Each and every one of us has received many blessings from God. The Lord wants us to exercise and use these blessing and grow in them. This is what we hear in our reading from Ephesians. He has blessed us so that we should "walk in His ways."

Are we forgiven? Absolutely we stand in His blood, 100% forgiven of all our sins. Are we saved? Absolutely each and every one of us has the promise of Christ that by His death we have the keys to heaven no one can keep us out. Have we been showered with blessings, each in our own unique way? Absolutely. Now are we

going to take these gifts and grow in them and use them to His glory? There is the questions , and the answer is almost certainly not to the extent that we ought to.

But now we see Christ who enters into the temple at the age of 12 and dedicates Himself to the work of the Father. He was perfect in our place, and He learned wisdom, the wisdom not only to know the word of the Lord but to listen. He listens to us so that he can be the perfect king ruling our hearts, applying to us what we need to hear. Most importantly the wonderful news of our salvation.

Amen