



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

December 26, 2021

Pastor Randy Ott

1st Sunday after Christmas

First Lesson: [1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 111

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 2:10-18](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 2:41-52](#)

Promises Kept: Jesus Does the Father's Will

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, through Jesus: Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Did you ever make a promise to someone and didn't keep it and it really hurt you and cut you to the quick when you realized that you didn't keep that promise you had made to someone? There is one that sticks out in my mind. It was probably about 31 years ago now. It's when I was first in the ministry. I was serving at Lincoln Trinity Lutheran Church in rural Lake City and I was trying to go around and meet with all the members. I had promised one member, he, his wife and his family, that I would be there, I think it was Saturday night or Sunday night. I don't remember. I completely forgot. I just blanked. I didn't show up at all. I felt kind of bad. But I felt terrible when they told me they had coconut cream pie waiting for me and I just blew it by not being there and not keeping that promise. That was just terrible. I did go visit them later but they had eaten the pie and they didn't get another one. You look at me today and you think to yourself, *"You missing out on some pie is not the end of the world Randy."* That's okay. I understand that.

The promises we are looking at this week and next are promises that if they weren't kept, we would be in a whole world of hurt. If God didn't keep all those promises that we heard through Advent, that we heard the kids tell us about in the program the other day, if God hadn't kept all these promises to send a Savior, we would be lost in our sin. We would spend an eternity in hell. So as we gather together and we continue to celebrate Christmas, we do so celebrating that God kept His promise; that Jesus came.

We see about the only account that we have of Jesus from His birth to His baptism, we see even as a 12-year-old kid, His focus was on doing His Father's will. That means His

focus was on you and me and every other sinner that ever has lived or ever will live in this world. Because as we heard in our Second Lesson, He came to destroy the devil's work, which was the devil's power over sin and over us that made us slaves to Satan. It's kind of interesting to think about this a bit.

Growing up I remember hearing a number of sermons on this text. The one thing I always took away from those sermons was when I would go home thinking about how it had to be terrible for Mary and Joseph. Did you think that as you heard me read that today? Three days looking for their 12-year-old kid and they can't find Him. The horror, the emptiness in the pit of their stomachs; I think you and I can relate to all that. That's what always stuck in my head, but I don't think the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write this to teach us about what Mary and Joseph went through. It's here to show us something about Jesus, isn't it? So I think I missed the point often when I listened to sermons on this because I'm sure they told me about what Jesus was doing, but I focused on what I could relate to. The truth of the matter is that I could not, when I was a 12-year-old, relate to a 12-year-old that wanted to be in the temple courtyards talking about God's Word. I teach confirmation class. I see kids about that age. I can see those whose eyes are completely glazed over, staring at the wall, staring at the ceiling, staring blindly at my forehead when I ask them a question because they have no idea what I just said. I can relate to 12-year-olds like that. And you probably can too because you and I were probably one of them at one time in our lives.

But a 12-year-old like Jesus, whose family we are told evidently had this custom that every year they went up there, so every year it sounds like a Nazareth group left at the same time and started going back together. For them it was probably not that unusual that they didn't know exactly where Jesus was when they left because there was this whole group on this 90-mile journey when they went back up to Nazareth. But Jesus stays behind. He is in the temple courts. He is talking with a rabbi. I suppose another rabbi comes by and starts hearing the conversation and gets interested in it. Because here is a 12-year-old kid that is asking questions with non-glazed eyes, who isn't answering every question with "God?" or "Jesus" (because He wouldn't use His own name as the answer). That's the answer I get from everyone about everything. I could ask you what time it is in confirmation class and the kid that hasn't heard will say "Jesus?" But here is Jesus having a discussion that demonstrates a desire to know more and then as more information is given to Him, this ability to have wisdom to apply it to things and take A and B and then come up with talking about C and D and how it will apply and how it relates. We see Jesus, who is certainly true God from all eternity, but when He came to earth in this mystery of the incarnation, God becoming flesh, He set aside the full and constant use of His divine power and glory. So like the boy Samuel, He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with other people as they saw Him growing, learning, discussing, applying and just getting it. According to His human nature, He was growing in His knowledge. According to His divine nature, He knew it all, but He didn't always use that divine nature.

Here we see Him, growing, studying, learning, and amazing people who had spent their life studying God's Word, and how He could handle it.

But three days; three days in the temple courtyards talking about God's Word? Think about that. Compare that to today. *I get confirmed, I know it all. I don't need to keep going to a Bible study or learning anymore because I know everything already. Why do I have to keep growing?* But three straight days growing in wisdom and understanding, applying it, discussing it and reveling in it? I suppose in a very real sense, Jesus was doing that because you and I don't always want to do that even though our God has looked us in the eyes and said, "Grow and keep on growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And we've said "Yeah, but I had a white gown on and a carnation pinned on me. I don't have to keep doing that." So Jesus is perfect in our place because you and I, no matter how much we love Jesus and want to serve Him, no matter how much we want to do our heavenly Father's will and what He has told us to and wants us to do, you and I don't do it perfectly. Jesus already here at 12-years-old is being perfect in our place and providing that obedience that God demands of us.

Mary and Joseph find Him. I know if it was me and I found one of my kids I'd be deeply relieved and then I'd want to chew them out, wouldn't you? Deep relief and then "What in the world were you thinking?! How come you...?" and on and on and on and on. Mary says, "What have you done? Don't you know that we were anxiously searching for you?" Jesus' answer is kind of amazing. Jesus wasn't staying there in the temple as an act of rebellion against His parents. He was doing the will of His Father. He says, "Didn't you know I had to be doing..." The NIV translates it "I had to be in my Father's house." The word "house" really isn't in there. It's "the things that are to my Father." "Doing my Father's will; my Father's business," I suppose. This is what Jesus had to be doing. He is saying this is why He came to earth. We are told Mary kept this tucked away.

We've said how Luke is the historian that researches all of this. He says Mary pondered all these things in her heart earlier in the chapter. He says it again. You get the feeling that he was sitting down talking to Mary and as Mary was recalling this, she said "You know, I noticed that and kept thinking about it and thinking about it, and later on it all clicked on how it all fit together." But at this point in time, she knew this child was something different. The angel had said "This is God's Son." This is her Savior as she sang in her song that we looked at a week or so ago.

It's just fascinating to see Jesus, true God from all eternity, then submit Himself to His parents, go home and obey them. I've often thought about how weird that would be to have a kid that obeyed everything. Just think how spoiled they were when their first child was perfect. Don't you feel sorry for the other kids who came after Jesus? It had to be almost eerie to have a child that humbly submitted to the earthly father and mother just like He humbly submitted to His heavenly Father.

He came. He was perfect in our place. He continued that walk to the cross. We hear about it at age 12. We will hear it again at age 30 when He was baptized by John. But He continued to do all the things the Father and He had set out for Him to do in all of eternity so that you and I would have our sins paid for, so you and I would be considered perfect in God's eyes, so the guilt of our sins would be punished in Him. He does His Father's will and He destroys the devil's work.

That means you and I are now free to do the Father's will that He has set before us, not because we HAVE to, to try to appease an angry God. The wrath of God has already been appeased through the life and death of Christ. We are set free now to serve God in love. Not in fear but in love to live and do the things He has called us to do; to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to gather together and worship Him. We don't do any of these things so that God will love us or so that He will take us to heaven. We do them because He has already opened heaven to us through the life and death of Christ.

I think sometimes as Christians we forget that. I talk to people and they say "Well you know, pastor, you don't have to go to church to go to heaven." Yeah, I've been teaching that for 32 years. I'm kind of familiar with that. And I haven't ever taught you that's why you go to church. You do it because you love a Savior who loved you first. Everything else in our life is out of fear, obligation and all these other things. Our living for God is out of love that He did it perfectly in our place first. He did the Father's will. Now we GET to because He loved us first. Don't mess that up. Don't let people around you mess that up. Remind them we do these things because God loved us first. It's not an obligation. It's a joy. It's a joy to get together with your brothers and sisters in Christ at ANY time of the year or for many days in a row during the year and hear that God loves you and to sing back to God, "We love you too." This isn't a burden. This Father's will for us is a joy that we GET to carry out because Jesus perfectly did the Father's will. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7](#).) Amen.