



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

December 29, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

First Lesson: [Isaiah 50:4-9](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 84a CW

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

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

### THE GIFT OF GOD God Gives Both Substitute and Sacrifice LEARNING IN THE LORD

1. The child Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ all \_\_\_\_\_ is a challenge
3. Jesus perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ stop \_\_\_\_\_ about the Lord

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 and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Over this Christmas holiday, many of you maybe had friends and family together. One of the favorite times, of course, is the opening of presents and just seeing the joy of kids and the presents that they get, or just all that time together with friends and family. There are all these memories that you have of things that they say, your kids, your grandkids, even things that your parents say or your grandparents say. I sometimes find it troubling or hard when you want to capture that moment now. I just saw a video talking about the 90's where we had these huge camcorders for recording memories. But now it's so easy to record. You want to record their smiles, their joy, and the things that they say and how they react to those things because it's so easy to record but also, sometimes you just want to sit there and take it in. Do you ever have that feeling? Instead of recording and thinking of how many times you are going to watch that video but just being there in the moment and remembering it. I think that's sometimes a challenge for today. But you can think about some things that you remember. Maybe you keep a diary; then it's easy to remember. But what are things that you cherish about your kids, your parents, your grandparents?

What is fascinating to think about are the things that Mary treasured in her heart. To think about this situation which if you were a parent, would this be something that you treasured in your heart? Think of the situation where Jesus' family, Mary and Joseph, it says that they would go down to the Festival of the Passover year after year. This is something they typically did. But as they departed, and just to help you understand this, it wasn't like they were travelling by themselves. It's not like they travelled a whole day and then all of a sudden said "Oh, our kid is missing!" They probably had a whole bunch of extended family and the kids were probably hanging out with the kids, so they probably weren't even paying attention to where all the kids were until they got a distance away. Then it says three days later they finally found him probably because they were searching all around in Jerusalem. But notice it says that Mary treasured this in her heart.

We are going to talk about why she would treasure this in her heart, and even though she was astonished, they were frustrated, what joy they had, especially because Jesus was **learning in the Lord** and then what we can learn from this and how we can continue to be **learning in the Lord**.

This section of Scripture is quite fascinating. It's almost like we're in a time machine. What was just a few days ago, was Jesus' birth. Where was Jesus but in a manger and now where are we? People think He was about 12-years-old. So in about four days, we've gone from Jesus in a manger to Jesus as a young child. A lot of people say "We'd love to hear stories of how Jesus was as a child. Imagine raising Jesus, the perfect Lord." We get a little glimpse of it today. But we today see some important things about Jesus, both God and man. Jesus was in the temple and we see what happens. They didn't find Him but in Verse 46: ***After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.*** The other thing you see is in the last verse. ***And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*** So what do we find Jesus doing? Even though He is God, we hear also what we heard in Hebrews—that He is fully man. So even though He was God, Him being man He had to do something as well. He needed to learn. *The child Jesus learned and taught.* That is what is kind of fascinating about this section. We see Him sitting in His Father's house, in the temple, and He is sitting there learning, asking questions, but what is fascinating is it says not only was He listening to them and asking them questions, in Verse 47 it says: ***Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.*** So what was happening there? Not only was He asking questions, it almost sounds like He was being asked questions and was answering and teaching.

Jesus is like us, because He needed to learn and to grow. It says that he grew in wisdom and stature. But He is also different. He had this wisdom. We know as He went out and taught in His ministry, He had authority.

So He was there asking questions, but the teachers noticed there was something different about this child. He asked questions but He taught. He was THE Word of God, so He had this wisdom and understanding, but it seems like He wasn't doing this in a disrespectful way even though He was God. Could you imagine being one of those teachers of the Law, sitting there, having this child ask questions, but then having Him come back with answers that were just filled with wisdom? It's amazing to see how our Savior came to be in our place, to be that child, to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

But we also see that this caused challenges for Jesus and for His family. Of course Mary and Joseph weren't neglecting their job as parents, but you can imagine being in their place going a whole day and then starting to look for Him for a long time. They were surprised. Why would He not go with them? Why was He sitting in the temple courts? They say to Him, ***"Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."*** Jesus responds: ***"Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"*** What does this teach us? Did either of them do anything wrong? Were Mary and Joseph in the wrong for kind of wondering where Jesus was and having some frustration? Was Jesus in the wrong for being in the temple, learning and being in His Father's house? They weren't wrong. So this tells us that *fulfilling all vocations is a challenge.*

Mary and Joseph were parents. Jesus was a child. But Jesus was not just the child to Mary and Joseph. He was a child of His Father in heaven. When you start breaking down the vocations, Jesus even had vocations—things He was to fulfill. He was a student learning about God's Word. He was a child to his parents. He was a child to His heavenly Father. But His parents had a vocation, too—to take care of their child, to take care of the Messiah, but yet to understand that He was different.

Think about all the vocations that you have in your life. Do you ever have times where those vocations are in conflict with each other? Times when you struggle to understand that "God has given me this vocation and this vocation and this vocation and this vocation and this vocation but how can I fulfill them all?" Is one wrong? Is one not a Godly vocation? Can you really rank them? In some ways, we have too. In some ways, we have to prioritize and say "I have to spend time in this vocation" or that vocation. For many of us, it's hard. What vocation comes first? At different times it's different things, but Number One—who is your Father? What is your identity? You are a child of God. So being a Christian, being in God's Word is so important. But then what comes next?—hopefully our loved ones and our family. But the challenge is so often we have to provide for our family, with our work, so by doing work, is that not doing your vocation as a father or a husband or a mother or a wife? You have to provide. You're not neglecting your family sometimes, like when you're working. We struggle to put all these vocations into a place because we don't have all the time in the world and we see that even for Mary and Joseph, for Jesus, the vocations that we have can be challenging.

Even for kids—what is your vocation but to obey your parents, to continue to grow and to learn? Is that an easy thing to do, especially when you know you struggle just like your parents struggle with your sinful nature and wanting to do what you want to do? But to be in God's Word is so important, to grow in His Word and to submit yourself to others, to our heavenly Father and to your parents. These are not easy things to do. The challenges in this section come through in our vocations and how it's not easy to fulfill all those things.

But what is a blessing to all of this, as we say "How can I do it? Which is the right thing? What should I be spending my time on? Should I be doing this or that or that or that?" And if you come and ask me what you should do, am I going to tell you all the time? No. Do I know what the right thing is at the right time? No. I can help you talk through it, but what I'll tell you the most is the awesome thing that we find in our Scriptures here today. Even though Jesus was in the temple, in His Father's house, He says that He needed to do this. **"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"** They didn't really understand it. But notice the next verse, in Verse 51. ***Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.*** Did Jesus just obey His parents when He was in the temple? It doesn't seem like it. But once they came and said "Hey, come home," He was obedient to His parents. The amazing thing is that *Jesus perfectly obeyed His parents.* Which parents? We have Mary and Joseph, but we also have His Father, God the Father.

In our theme for today, we see that Jesus is **our substitute and our sacrifice.** Jesus was perfect in our place. Kids when you struggle and you know that you haven't listened to your parents in the best way, when you have trouble fulfilling all those vocations, studying, doing school work; parents, grandparents, when you struggle being the best parent and wonder "Did I do that right?" Parenting is not easy. It's one of the hardest things you can ever do. Did you do it all right? No. We're sinful. We're not perfect. But who is perfect is Jesus. He perfectly obeyed in our place. So when you come and wonder and say "What should I do, is God going to be happy with what I've done?" God is smiling and saying "If you listen and are in His will and not doing something sinful, then be at peace." You're not going to be perfect, but God was perfect for you, so live in that Gospel truth and understanding that you are forgiven and that you can't earn it. You can't be perfect. We can try to do His will and grow, but know that Jesus is the only one who is perfect and He was perfect in your place. He was perfect as a child and then we saw in Isaiah that He was perfect in our place as He went to suffer and die as He was falsely accused and went to the cross for you and for me. But the beauty of all of this as we see what Christ has done for us, is that we are then free to love and to serve and to know that we live in His grace.

Who in this section of Scripture learned something? Think about all the different people. You have the teachers in the temple. You have Mary and Joseph. You have

Jesus and probably Jesus' family. Who learned something? We see that those that were around Him were astonished at everything. They were amazed at His understanding and His answers. They were learning from Jesus. Mary and Joseph learned. They didn't understand what He was saying to them yet, but Mary then treasured up all these things. So I think later she understood. And Jesus even was learning. So the encouragement for you and for me, also, is to *never stop learning about the Lord*. Never stop growing in His Word. Never stop asking questions. Jesus asked questions. Jesus grew in wisdom.

So are you done learning? You finished catechism. You studied God's Word and now you're done. I know there are many of you here that have been in God's Word for decades and you pick up Scripture and you can say "I learned something new today." Continue to learn. Continue to grow. The encouragement for kids is that you might hear a Bible story and say "I've learned that before." Or you, as an adult, you say "I've studied that. I've heard that before. I don't need to hear that again." What did Jesus do? He learned the Scriptures. He learned the Old Testament. He learned the Psalms. When did that become important for Him? As He was on the cross, what did He speak but Scripture—that Scripture that He had studied and learned as He knew the prophecies, as He knew what God had told Him. Scripture came out as He said "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," [\(Psalm 22:1\)](#) as He spoke the truth of Scripture.

When you are in God's Word, when we let the Scripture dwell in us, when we need it, when we are in our difficult times, in sad times, in hard times, in happy times, what can we do? We can let the Word of God come out. It's just like eating a meal. There are days when you're like, "Ugh, I don't like this food. Do I really need to eat this?" But every day that food nourishes you. There are days when you think "This Scripture, this Word, I'm not going to remember that," but then you read that Devotion or that Scripture and weeks later, months later, years later those Scriptures come to life in a time that you needed. Or that sermon that you heard, that book that you read—keep learning, keep growing in Scripture. But most of all, take hold of Christ. Take hold of Him and learn that your Lord is your substitute—that He learned and grew in your place and encourages us to do the same to know that we are loved and forgiven and you have that perfect sacrifice and substitute. Amen.

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