

“THE MANIFESTATION OF WISDOM”

**January 3, 2021, SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
(abbreviated COVID 19 service/50% seating capacity)
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRELUDE: Ray Holmberg (Fuglebergs)

HYMN #60 “Jesus, Wonderful Lord! 9 AM:

CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy on me. O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

CHILDREN’S SERMON: Little King Solomon asks for Wisdom, *1 Kings 3:7 “I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.”*

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *1 Kings 3:4-15*

The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

6 Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

7 "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9 So give your

servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 11 So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. 13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for-both riches and honor-so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." 15 Then Solomon awoke-and he realized it had been a dream.

EPISTLE LESSON: Ephesians 1:3-14 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the*

forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory.

PASTOR: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: **Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)** *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

HYMN #452 "O Take My Hand, Dear Father"

SERMON TITLE: "THE MANIFESTATION OF WISDOM"

Luke 2:41-52; Pastor Tom Olson; January 3, 2021

EXAMPLE: Every year the Kings College in England has a Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols. It always starts off with a boy soprano singing acapella the first verse of the beloved English Christmas Carol, "Once in Royal David's City." Then the boys choir joins in harmony for the rest of the verses. Verses 3 and 4 are interesting because they emphasize the lesson to today's gospel text. They don't focus on the baby Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. They focus on another often-neglected part of our teaching of Christ in evangelical churches, and that is Christ as an example for living. Here are the words: "And through all His wondrous childhood He would honor and obey, Love and watch the lowly maiden In whose gentle arms He lay; Christian children all must be Mild, obedient, good as He. For He is our childhood's pattern: Day by day like us He grew; He was little, weak and helpless; Tears and smiles like us He knew; And HE feeleth for our sadness, And He shareth in our gladness."

Last time we talked about SUPERNATURAL GUIDANCE as we looked at the sovereign hand of God leading the Wise Men to the Christ child that God sent to earth to save us out of grace and love, with no help from us. Today we look at the flip side of this picture at the responsibility we have to do the things that nurture faith and develop Christian maturity as we see the MANIFESTATION OF WISDOM in the example of Christ for us. This should make for some very good New Year's resolutions!

I. MANIFEST WISDOM: FOSTERED BY HIS PARENTS

Luke 2:4-45 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

FAITHFUL-I think it is very important for us to remember that when Jesus born in Bethlehem that he "laid aside his crown for our souls." He was fully God but he did not "count equality with God a thing to be grasped" according to Philippians 2. So he had to learn the Scriptures the same way we did, from our parents at first and then from the more learned teachers in the church as we grew. I would suspect that if Mary and Joseph had Christian radio they might have had some good Bible teacher on as well. But they faithfully taught Jesus the Word of God and that is demonstrated by the sacrifices they made of taking him to Jerusalem for the Feasts of the Lord where he experienced temple worship services and instruction.

RESOLUTION #1-to keep studying the Word of God.

Supernatural guidance won't come without natural discipline in learning the Holy Scriptures. *Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."* Jesus had FAITHFUL parents.

FORGETFUL-Jesus also had forgetful parents. They looked for him for days and then finally found him in the temple. Even though he was born of a virgin and was announced to each of them by angelic visitation it became apparent that they did not fully comprehend that as the Son of God, he would be in the temple studying the Word of God. And this is a reminder to us all that we must never forget that Jesus is the Son of God...all powerful...King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus had FORGETFUL parents.

RESOLUTION #2-Remember that Jesus is on the throne.

Sometimes we talk as if he isn't. Some people are extremely concerned about the congress meeting on Thursday to ratify or reject the presidential election and electoral college votes. What if clear evidence comes out to prove the election was a fraud? What will happen to our country if congress is not united and the Vice President declares the election null and void? What will happen if mobs start rioting as some fear? There is always something to fear if we want to. When I was young, we had drills in school for fire drill, tornado drill and all sorts of fears of the Communists attacking our nation. In 1917 my grandparents were about 20 years old and they had the flu epidemic and World War 1 to fear and near starvation in the great depression. When my parents were teens, they had Hitler and the Nazis and the Japanese Emperor to fear. I guess one of my greatest fears is PEOPLE WHO ARE AFRAID and might do something crazy out of fear. But we must not forget who Jesus is and that He is Lord. Say it out loud: "Jesus is Lord." You can only do that by the power of the Holy Spirit and it chases away fear. I urge you to say it out loud often and not forget, "JESUS IS LORD."

JESUS MANIFESTED WISDOM WITH A LIFE THAT WAS FOSTERED BY HIS PARENTS.

II. MANIFEST WISDOM: SHARPENED BY HIS TEACHERS

Luke 2:46-50 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When 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?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

I would like you to notice that Jesus was in the temple having deep theological discussions with the learned men of the Word of God. They were amazed at his understanding. I also love to talk about the Word of God with people who have great understanding and love for that Word. I am so thankful to be surrounded by people who love the Word of God. I have truly enjoyed the classes here at our church taught by people who love, honor and respect the Holy Scriptures. It has been especially fun having Bible teaching times with Travis Hensersky. When I met him several months ago, he was a bitter Atheist. But now he has a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and an amazing love for the Word of God. When you combine that with his strong intellect and his experiences in the dark side of the spiritual world, it is amazing the insights he has into the Word of God. He is like a scientist who becomes a believer and science comes alive when you let God enter the equation. Travis stays home because of his mom's vulnerable health and COVID concerns so we don't meet in person anymore, but we talk on the phone, text and email and his enthusiasm and insight is contagious.

RESOLUTION #3-Dig deeper into the Word of God for more enlightenment from God.

JESUS MANIFESTED WISDOM AS HE WAS SHARPENED BY HIS TEACHERS

III. MANIFEST WISDOM: REFINED BY EXPERIENCE

Luke 2:51-52 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Sometimes we feel like we are "on the shelf" or "on the back burner." We feel like God is not using us. Jesus was "on the back burner" for the next 18 years. Not a word is given to us about his life until age 30 except this one here: he went home, he was obedient, he grew up and matured.

I like this old saying. I will say the first part and you fill in the blank. "If a tree is not growing it is dying." One thing that is so important for all of us is to keep growing. Notice how Jesus grew.

- IN WISDOM-Wisdom is applied knowledge. He not only knew the truth, but he learned to apply it to his life.
- IN STATURE-Stature is physical growth. His body grew up and grew strong. This would also imply for us the importance of exercise and nutrition. We can't do what God may have us to do if we are out of shape and worn out ahead of time. None of us can avoid growing older and weaker but we don't have to live in such a way that we are old for our age or weak for our age. If God allows a disability into our lives, we still can be the best we can be for that condition. He will do the rest.
- IN FAVOR WITH GOD-this would speak of the obedience of true faith. When we trust the Lord and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we get God's favor. I am not speaking about salvation. That has nothing to do with our works, it is 100% the work of Christ on the cross. But as saved believers,

there is a favor that comes when God finds us faithful to His Word and his still small voice. Sometimes this is sharpened in the “school of suffering.” **Hebrews 5:8 is an interesting verse on this topic: “Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.”** Suffering for the Lord can make us grow deep with God. Just like going through a war or battle or disaster with someone makes for a deep lifelong bond.

- **IN FAVOR WITH MAN**-let us never forget that spiritual maturity also means growing in our ability to get along with people tactfully, patiently and intelligently. I heard of a boss who was so gracious that when he fired an employee who deserved to be fired that the employee felt bad for the boss. I also heard of a pastor who, perhaps was lacking in some ways, was told to resign his church. He accepted the request with such grace and served them so kindly with no retaliation until a replacement was found that people really started to be sorry that they asked him to leave. This is the kind of favor with man we can learn. We can be people who seek first to understand and then to be understood.

RESOLUTION #4-No matter how old I am I want to keep growing up in all important areas of life. I resolve to be fully alive until the moment God calls me home to heaven.

I am personally trying to become fluent in the Norwegian language, sharpen up Biblical Greek and seeking to become a better musician through analyzing the chordal structure of music...who knows but God may be calling me down the line to compose music or direct choirs again. God puts desires on our hearts sometimes that don't make sense at first.

JESUS MANIFESTED WISDOM...FOSTERED BY HIS PARENTS, SHARPENED BY HIS TEACHERS AND REFINED BY EXPERIENCE.

CONCLUSION Pastor Leonard Masted retired from the ministry and moved to Mound, Minnesota and did the retirement things like gardening and going on walks. But he grew restless and sought the Lord. He felt that God wanted him to go south for the winter but not just to warm up but to preach the gospel in Arizona, Mexico and South America. So in his late 60's he and his wife started learning Spanish and in a few years he was ministering in the Spanish language in several countries, preaching at revivals all over America in English and even traveling to Norway and preaching in the Norwegian language he learned as a child. This went on well into his 80's until he got so weak, he could not travel any more. He and his wife were some of the most fully alive people I have ever met. He even wrote a book in his 80's called “Goals that Grip and Glow.” I have a copy in my library. He kept learning, growing and bearing fruit! He is an inspiring role model for me.

1 Peter 2:21 “*For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*” Amen

HYMN #57 “*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*” 9 AM CD:

HOLY COMMUNION (Dave Fischer prep and help)

BENEDICTION (9 AM): The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY: (10:30 AM-To the tune of Edelweiss) *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever. 9 AM Vagle CD#19*

POSTLUDE: Ray Holmberg