

“THE MANIFESTATION OF WISDOM”

**January 2, 2022, SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal (Fuglebergs)

HYMN #57 *“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*

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.

READER: 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: "SPIRITUAL GROWTH"
Luke 2:40-52; Pastor Tom Olson; January 2, 2022**

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

CEO: I recently heard of a new CEO (Chief Executive Officer) who wanted to be an anonymous employee for a few weeks before being introduced as head of the company. She applied as a secretary. Some of the department heads treated her with respect. Others put her down and treated her very poorly. The owner of the company held a great party to introduce the new CEO. Everyone came dressed in their best formal wear and best public behavior. They were shocked to find out that the lowly secretary that some of them had treated shamefully was now their CEO. And not only that, she was the wife of the owner of the company. She made changes based upon her experience that transformed the unhealthy work environment. It is kind of an incarnation story.

INCARNATION: One of the great mysteries of the incarnation is that Jesus was true God and also true man, He was SECRETARY and CEO at the same time. God had placed himself into a very real human body that would develop in the same manner as any other human being. There is something very powerful about this in regard to his sympathy for us. He understands our weaknesses. **Hebrews 4:15&16 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."**

GLIMPSE: Today we get that a glimpse into the physical and intellectual development of the boy Jesus at age 12. It is the only picture of his growing up that we have in the Bible. Let's look together at Luke 2:40-52 under the theme of "Spiritual Growth."

I. GROWING STRONG: A Healthy Body

Luke 2:40 *And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.*

HEALTH: It is not necessary to be an athlete to serve the Lord, but a healthy body can be very helpful. This verse shows us three key areas of our life that need to be developed:

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: “***the child grew and became strong***” Jesus had a body just like you and I have. Even though He was God in human flesh...that didn’t change the humanness of his flesh. As a baby he nursed, he had to learn to walk and talk. He had the same physical desires we have for food, warmth, affection and every other desire. He had to in order to be our perfect substitute. **HE BECAME STRONG.** That means that Jesus developed the ability to carry out his ministry. He had to walk hundreds of miles to bring the good news of the kingdom of God to Israel in his three-year ministry. Without strength we cannot do what God has called us to do. Many people have neglected and abused their bodies and have been unable to carry out the work God had for them in this life. Care of our bodies is an important part of serving the Lord and a good thing to consider at this New Years’ time of making serious decisions.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT: “***he was filled with wisdom***” We see here that Jesus developed with sound education. Notice that it doesn’t say “he was filled with knowledge.” NO! It says he was filled with WISDOM. And that brings up the question of our own education. Are we getting filled with mere knowledge or wisdom? There is a great difference. WISDOM IS APPLIED KNOWLEDGE. And that would mean knowledge of good things. What are we reading? What are we practicing?. There has never been a time in history when knowledge was more readily available. But I would argue that we are at a time in history when WISDOM is at a low point. I love this verse from **1 Chronicles 12:32** “***from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command***” Can you imagine the impact we could make in America if we could elect 200 people “who understood the times and knew what to do?” I want to be like that. I am not so concerned about knowing a lot in comparison to being wise. When Solomon became King, he asked God for one thing and that was “wisdom.” Jesus was filled with wisdom.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: “***the grace of God was upon him***” Here we see the spiritual development of Jesus. The grace of God was upon him. He had a powerful relationship with God the Father. As he lived in the center of the divine will for His life the grace of God was there. That is the same grace that is available to us through the same Jesus Christ living in our hearts by the same Holy Spirit. His death is our death, His resurrection is our resurrection, His favor with the Father is ours, His inheritance is ours. Make this a year to press in to know Jesus better. Let His Word dwell in you richly. Mortify the flesh. Cultivate the spirit. We should not have to flaunt our spirituality. It should be obvious. I love this verse, **Acts 4:13** “***When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.***”

RESOLUTIONS: Some people don’t like New Year’s Resolutions because they don’t follow through on them. I feel they are very important because it is a time of year to evaluate our situation and purpose to move in a better direction. We won’t do it perfectly but we won’t do it at all if we don’t take the first step. I like this helpful quote, “***It is about DIRECTION NOT PERFECTION.***” Point one: Growing Strong: A Healthy Body.

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION #1 Take care of my body and mind. Spend time with Jesus!

II. GROWING WISE: Filled with the Word of God

Luke 2:41-47 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. 46 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.

AMAZED: Notice here that Jesus had a strong grip on the Holy Scriptures. Even the teachers in the temple were amazed at his understanding and answers. One of the most neglected sources of power for our souls is the Bible. When the Word of God grips us, we live and speak with power and authority. It is not mere intellectual knowledge; it is the power of God that flows through the life of one that has been touched by the Word of God. The Word of God is alive, the Holy Spirit flows through it, Jesus defeated the temptations of the devil with the Word of God.

PARALLEL: It is interesting that two parallel passages in the New Testament demonstrate this so powerfully:

Ephesians 5:18-20 "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..."

Colossians 3:16-17 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

LEM: At a Lutheran Evangelistic Movement area conference in Newark, Illinois, guest teacher, Rev. Leonard Masted summarized it in this way **"A word filled Christian is a Spirit-filled Christian."** A person cannot be powerful spiritually unless they are filled with the Word of God. That is what makes preaching and Sunday school and personal study time at home so important. **Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."** Meditating on the Word of God changes our lives.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION #1-Get to know the Bible better.

III. GROWING UP: Embracing God's Plan

Luke 2:48-52 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. 51 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.

REVELATION: God the Father was revealing to Jesus what His life plan was. I expect that it came to Him the same way it comes to us. Jesus got revelation by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. We also know that angels visited Jesus and ministered to him and Moses and Elijah also talked with him. But time and again He went to the Scriptures to support his claims. The Word revealed who he was, the Holy Spirit spoke to him as he took time in the morning to commune with the Father. Jesus knew the will of God for His life.

PURPOSE: We also can know the will of God for our lives. God has promised to reveal it to us through His Spirit and Word. ***Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*** Jesus’ purpose was to show us the Father and to do His will. That will of God was to go to the cross, to pay for our sins so that we might become children of God.

SURRENDER: God has important things for all of us to do every day. The only way to experience the full sovereign power of God is to surrender to Him. Every time I give up the fight and say, “God, have it your way,” I can be sure the next day will be filled with divine appointments. One of my favorite book titles in the hundreds of books in my library is this: “The Power of a Surrendered Life.” Make 2022 a year of SPIRITUAL GROWTH. God invites us into His Word and wants to fill us with the Holy Spirit as we seek His face.

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION #3-Embrace my calling from God.

CONCLUSION: We have “unexplainable days” too. To Mary and Joseph, Jesus staying in the temple at Jerusalem made no sense. It was unexplainable. They didn’t expect it. Perhaps twelve years had caused them to momentarily forget about the visitation of the Archangel Gabriel before the birth of Jesus. You can be sure that on the walk back to Nazareth they reviewed the first Christmas, the angels, the shepherds, the stable, the star, the wise men and were reminded that God placed into their care, His only Son. God has placed into our care precious children too. Jesus is their Savior and He also is their example of growing up in the right way. One Christmas carol reminds us of this important fact. It is called “Once in Royal David’s City” and verse 4 is undoubtedly based on today’s gospel text. Here is verse 4: ***“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.”***

EMPATHY: Jesus ***“sympathizes with our weakness”*** Jesus knows, Jesus cares and Jesus is cheering us on. Look ahead to Him and run the race of 2022, of life, with endurance. Happy New Year. Amen

Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #60 “Jesus, Wonderful Lord!”

HOLY COMMUNION (Dave Fischer prep and help)

CHORAL BENEDICTION: (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: Ruth Antal

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

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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.

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