

Luke 2:40-52

The two qualities that we see in the boy Jesus in our text, but which are very lacking in this world...imagine that...are wisdom and submissiveness.

Jesus, it says, "*was filled with wisdom.*" What is wisdom? "*The fear of the Lord,*" Scripture teaches, "*is the beginning of wisdom.*" King Solomon was given wisdom from God, and the people over which he reigned were very blessed as a result. Children are blessed when their parents apply wisdom in the home.

No one is born with wisdom. We do not gain wisdom at school. We don't achieve it just by growing older. Wisdom is a gift from God. "*If any of you lacks wisdom,*" writes St. James, "*let him ask God...and it will be given him.*" Not all intellectuals have wisdom. Most, in fact, do not. They have worldly wisdom. But "*the wisdom of the world,*" writes St. Paul, "*is foolishness to God.*"

Tomorrow is Epiphany, and we recall the story of the wise men. They were smart. Super scientists we could say of them. But these magi became wise men only by following the star to the baby Jesus. The reason why the world is so lacking in wisdom is because the world does not search the Scriptures. And so the people of the world are not led to Jesus.

As a boy, Jesus did search the Scriptures. He did not know them when He was born. He did not use His divine powers until He began His public ministry at the age of thirty. He learned the Scriptures the same way that we do. By hearing them, reading them, being taught, studying them, meditating upon them. Jesus loved the Holy Scriptures. And you can be sure He was in them a lot. No wonder He was filled with wisdom. No wonder the doctors of the law in the temple were "*amazed at His understanding and His answers.*"

How wise are we? I'm not very wise, am I, if I am in the habit of leaving my Bible mostly closed. I'm not wise at all if I think I know enough of Scripture and do not need to keep being taught. And if we're not wise, how will our children turn out? And our grandchildren?

But if we're going to gain wisdom, as a gift from God, we're going to need to be submissive. This is the other quality we see in the boy Jesus. "*He was submissive to (His parents),*" it says. Which is really quite impressive. Think of it. Jesus could have said to them, "Hey, I'm God, so the two of you need to submit to me!" But He didn't say this. It wasn't in His makeup. He willingly, freely submitted to them. And not just to them. Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus, at all times, submitting to those in positions of authority.

We don't see much of this today. Which is a big reason why our nation is so messed up. Police officers are called pigs, and are refused service at some restaurants. Famous celebrities give the finger to our president. It doesn't matter who is in office; we are to show respect. And in the home, fathers and mothers are despised. At school, teachers are mocked. "*Submit to each other,*" writes St. Paul, "*submit to authority.*" Jesus did. He kept the Fourth Commandment. But in our day, it's a rare thing.

What about us? Are we submissive? To gain wisdom, we need to be. The one who is not submissive will not think much of the Scriptures and their authority in his life. We should be a light to those in the world, showing respect at home, in school, and here in church; giving honor to all in authority. Jesus did this without failing even once. But so often we fail. We need to repent. Submission starts now. If Jesus could submit, why not me? And doing so, we will gain wisdom.

Now consider that Jesus wasn't wise for His own sake, but for yours and mine. And He did not submit to show us how. He was submissive because we're not. Even at the age of twelve He was your Savior. Jesus was keeping God's Commandments for you and me even then because you and I fail to keep them.

And when He was thirty-three, He continued to be submissive as He willingly walked to the cross and did not resist. Jesus submitted His entire life. He is the opposite of sin. You see, sin never is submissive. It always controls, and captures, and binds.

When a baptized child of God, who should love the Bible, resists hearing it and studying it, it's sin in him that is not being submissive at all, but is binding and blinding this precious child of God. When a child dishonors father and mother, when a parent dishonors authority, it's because sin in them is refusing to be submissive.

But the good news is that Jesus became submissive even to the power of sin...your sin and mine. He let all the powers of darkness have their way with Him on the cross. But in doing so, He kicked the teeth out of sin. It has no power over you anymore, for you died to sin with Christ in your baptism.

And so you, my friend, are not lost. I say this because the world is so lost. No wisdom, no understanding of Scripture at all, and not submissive. No wonder the world is lost. Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was lost. But He wasn't because He knew exactly who He was. "*I must be in My Father's house,*" He told them.

And you, too, know exactly who you are. Not a lost sinner; a forgiven sinner...all of you are. You are baptized into Christ Jesus. And this makes His Father's house your house. And so you say with Jesus week after week, "*I must be in my Father's house.*"

Maybe at times you feel lost. Maybe some days your life is a wreck. But then you come here to your Father's house, and you remember you are a baptized child of God; your sins are forgiven...all of them are forgiven; you hear God's words to you; you receive His very body and blood. Here in your Father's house you are never lost. Believing this is wisdom...a gift from God. Amen.