



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Merry Christmas on this first Sunday of Christmas and the first day of the 12 days of Christmas. I know that at this point many of you are glad to see the hustle and bustle of Christmas be over. The Christmas season seems to start earlier and earlier each year. And what I have found is that it goes away quicker each year too. Guess that is a sign of getting old, the days move by faster.

Well, this morning I want to tell you that it is OK to keep singing the Christmas songs we all know and love as we still have 11 more days of Christmas to celebrate. This year because of how the weekdays fall, we have a Second Sunday of Christmas too, next week. On January 6th each year we conclude the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. We call that day Epiphany as we celebrate that the kings have, following the star, finally reached the new-born king. History suggests to us that by now Jesus is about 2 years old, when they finally arrive to welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

Not only does that seem like a fast forward to our thinking but our Gospel reading for this morning seems to have skipped over important events in the life of Jesus. Some of those first 12 years of Jesus life are still a mystery. Ah, there are many questions about Jesus early life I want to ask Him when I see him face to face. Where his terrible two's terrible for Mary? Did He fight with

his siblings? Did He ever have a temper tantrum or talk back to Joseph? Did He ever refuse to go to bed? Did he get good grades in school? Did He get sick or have acne like other kids? What kind of music did He like? And was he religious? Did He believe in God? And at what point in life did he realize that He was God?

Knowing Jesus was human, we can visualize him growing physically, intellectually, and spiritually as we all do. Well, our Gospel lesson today does not answer all these questions but gives us some insight as to what Jesus was like when He was 12 years old. So fast forward to the only canonical story of Jesus' boyhood as told by Luke. And so, the Gospel begins with the family going to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. It was usual for the family to join with neighbors and friends on the 90-mile trek to the festival. And after the Passover was celebrated the group gathered to return to Nazareth. Since many were traveling together, it was not so unusual that no one notice Jesus was not with the group. His presence was not missed for a whole day as his parents probably thought he was off with his cousins or friends.

Now I don't know about you, but I can imagine how Mary felt when she did realize that Jesus was missing. I have only had that experience once in my lifetime and it was not a good one. I would not wish it on any parent.

When Leigh Grace was in kindergarten, she took the bus to and from school. One day as I was waiting at the top of our 360-foot driveway, she did not get off the bus. It just drove on by. I was frantic and ran to the house to call the school. The secretary, Grace Tennes, said calmly that they would look for her but that she was probably on that bus and was headed home. After many prayers and tears, not necessarily in that order, the school called and said she was still on the bus. The driver was headed back to our home. She was sound asleep sitting behind the driver, and he just did not stop to drop her off, since he did not notice her there. Those were some of the most agonizing moments in my life. Today, even more than 30 years ago, I can remember how that felt, thinking I lost a child.

So, Mary must have been frantic. A day's journey back to Jerusalem and then three days looking for Jesus would have been more than I could have handled. Scripture says his parents were astonished when they found him. And Mary asked, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." Not sure I would have used such nice

or seemingly calm words. I suppose at that point they did not know whether to be angry or happy that they had found their son and that He was safe.

And Jesus, replies, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” Jesus simply is reminding them of who He is. He is His Father’s son. He has a special relationship with his Father in heaven and a special mission to carry out. He was not trying to be a rebellious almost teenager trying to break away from his parents. He is just pointing out the fact that He is aware of who he is and what his life will be like. I suppose Mary and Joseph should get used to it. And our story ends with Jesus returning to Nazareth with them. It is told that Jesus was obedient to them for the years to come.

Jesus is truly aware at this point that He is the Son of God. Some 18 years later, it will be public knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God as proclaimed by God from heaven when Jesus comes out of the water at His baptism. All present hear the words that day, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17

As a parent I do like the phrase that Jesus “was obedient to them”, to his parents from age 12 to when he began his ministry around age 30. Being the only perfect human, of course he would be obedient to his parents if for no other reason than to fulfill my favorite, 4th commandment given to Moses: Honor your mother and father. And later, we will see that obedience again as Jesus demonstrates it to his heavenly Father as he sacrifices his own life to save us all.

At his birth he was named Jesus which means “Savior”. Our text today gives us a glimpse into Jesus’ early years, a glimpse of the growing and maturing Jesus. For here we see his obedience to his heavenly Father and to his parents. And it is through his acts of obedience, that our Savior saves us from sin and death. Scripture tells us that He was obedient unto death for our disobedience. All our sins are covered in His final obedient act of dying on the cross.

Our disobedience to be faithful disciples, our disobedience to love one another, our disobedience to work together in God’s kingdom. Yes, all our sins are forgiven through Jesus’ obedience. Thanks be to God.

AMEN

