

Sunday, December 27, 2009

First Sunday of Christmas

INTRODUCTION

On the first Sunday of Christmas we find the boy Samuel and the boy Jesus, both in the temple, both growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and humankind. We too have returned to the house of God "to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God," who has gifted us with a savior. As the festival continues, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." It is Christmas, still.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW)

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READINGS

1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12–17

Luke 2:41–52

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26

Having dedicated her son Samuel to God's service, Hannah visits him every year when she and her husband, Elkanah, come to the Lord's house to offer sacrifices. God grants Hannah more children, and Samuel himself gains favor in the sight of all.

¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD"; and then they would return to their home.

²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people.

PSALM: Psalm 148

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD ¹from the heavens;

praise him ¹in the heights.

²**Praise him, all you an- ¹gels of his;**

praise him, ¹all his host.

³Praise him, ¹sun and moon;

praise him, all you ¹shining stars.

⁴**Praise him, heav- ¹en of heavens,**

and you waters a- ¹bove the heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name ¹of the LORD;

for he commanded, and they ¹were created.

⁶**He made them stand fast forev- ¹er and ever;**

he gave them a law which shall not ¹pass away.

⁷Praise the LORD ¹from the earth,

you sea monsters ¹and all deeps;

⁸**fire and hail, ¹snow and fog,**

tempestuous wind, do- ¹ing his will;

⁹mountains ¹and all hills,

fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰**wild beasts | and all cattle,**
creeping things and | winged birds;
¹¹kings of the earth | and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
¹²**young | men and maidens,**
old and | young together.
¹³Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
for his name only is exalted, his splendor is over | earth and heaven.
¹⁴**He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his | loyal servants,**
the children of Israel, a people who are near him. | Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: Colossians 3:12–17

Just as newly baptized Christians in the early church were clothed with white robes upon arising from the baptismal waters, so all who have received God's gift of life in Jesus Christ are covered with the character of Christ.

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:41–52

Jesus grew up in a family that went to the Passover festival each year. It was in this environment of faithful adherence to the law that Jesus grew into spiritual maturity and an understanding of his identity and mission.

⁴¹Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

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