

**1/3/2010**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY** Heavenly Father, when Your Son Christ Jesus was on this earth, He had favor with You and with His fellow men. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, we pray, that we might grow in the wisdom and knowledge of You, learning to believe Your Word, and responding in service to our neighbors as You would have us do. We pray in the name of Jesus, our incarnate King, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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

*(The young man Solomon looks to God for wisdom and maturity.)*

4 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. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** Ephesians 1:3-14

*(God blesses us with every spiritual blessing in Jesus Christ.)*

3 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.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON      Luke 2:40-52**

*(The child Jesus travels to Jerusalem with family, teaching his parents and religious teachers.)*

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. 41 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.

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.

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.**

**THE SERMON**

**“Growing into All God Made Us to Be”**

INTRO - Today is January 3. But we haven't yet had a normal workday or school day this year. Friday was a holiday. Yesterday was a weekend day. Today is still a day at the beginning of the new year when, in some ways, people have not put their goals and resolutions into practice. What are your resolutions? How many of your plans to change and improve are for you? How many of your resolutions are intended for your service to God?

- I. Our lives have all been blessed by the Lord God of the universe himself.
  - A. God created us and gave us life, talents, abilities, time. God made other people and gave us family and friends. Where would we be without the Lord
  - B. Sent His Son, so He would suffer for us. God loved us enough that He sent Jesus to die and rise again.
  - C. God Gives us the Holy Spirit so that He is with us at all times, strengthening us, comforting us, guiding us.
  - D. What are you doing for Him?

II. Look at today's lesson and see the example of Jesus.

A. Verse says, 52 **And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

1. In the middle of this interesting story from the life of Jesus, we have this example of growth from the sinless Son of God.
2. He grew **in wisdom and stature**, in mind and body,
3. He grew **in favor with God and men**, in relationships.
4. The example of Jesus, is one of personal growth.

B. People set resolutions for a number of reasons

1. We know our shortcomings.
  - A. We all have parts of our lives where we disappoint ourselves, and disappoint others.
  - B. We have turned away from our creator and father, and served ourselves in sinful behavior.
  - C. Some growth is repentance.
2. But there is another reason for personal growth. Last night our grandchildren were visiting. It is amazing to watch them grow. I think Jacob learned 2 or 3 new words just last night. He is becoming who God made him to be.
  - a. We are not just children of God by creation, but as we are born of the Spirit, through baptism, through every new start when we are forgiven.
  - b. We are growing as God's children into the people he made us to be.
  - c. We might be born of the spirit to serve as a leader or a servant, to praise Him with music, or to serve Him with our knowledge.
3. No matter who we are we have room for growth.

III. As we seek to serve God with our lives, the child Jesus sets us an example of growth that can help us here at the beginning of a new year.

A. **52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

1. What are you doing to make expand your mind in knowledge, in wisdom. Are you filling your mind with positive things that can help our life?
2. What are you doing to help your body to be healthy? Are you exercising, watching your diet?
3. What are you doing in your relationships, to grow in your relationship with God? Are you worshiping, reading Scriptures, fellowshiping with others, attending Bible Class?
4. What are you doing to grow in your relationships with others. Are you seeking to grow in humility? In love? Have you asked forgiveness, or forgiven others?

B. I did sent out an e-mail that suggested a resolution of worshiping weekly. That resolution can tell us one method for growth. But, today tells us a bigger picture, What to do. God calls for growth, as a resolution that not only improves our lives, but serves Him.

CONCLUSION - This year in sermons I am hoping to focus even more on the Christian lifestyle.

What does God call us to do in response to his love? What is the set apart, holy way that God calls us to live? In today's lesson Jesus gives us an example. He calls us to growth, balanced growth. We are called to grow **in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**