

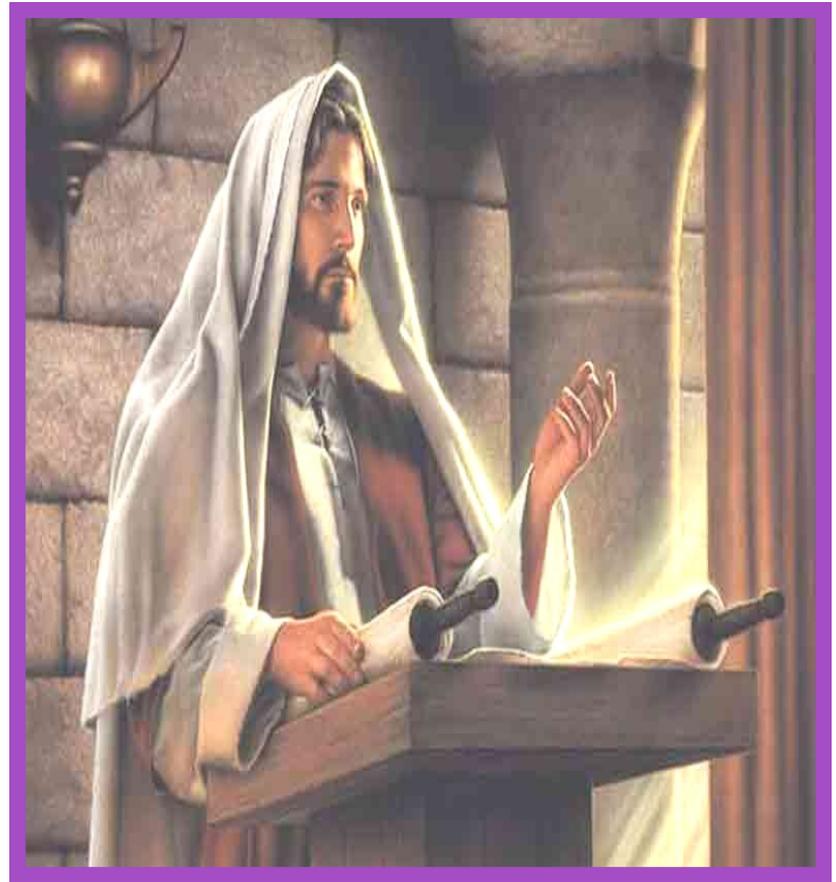


Ought you not for all these things pay them back at least with filial reverence? Why should the life of a father seem too prolonged to an un-filial son, or the common inheritance too straitened, when Christ Himself sought co-heirs of His own inheritance: Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen.



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**SERMON ON
THE FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
133 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

***SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY,
AND FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY***

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 2: 42-52

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

And when he was twelve years old. The public teaching of the Lord had its beginning from His twelfth year. For herein should be foreshadowed the number of those announcing the faith that was to be preached. Nor was it that He was heedlessly unmindful of His parents according to the flesh, Who in the flesh was filled with grace and wisdom, that he was found in the Temple after three days, but for a sign that He that was believed dead would present Himself to our faith, risen in heavenly glory and divine honor after three days of that triumphal passion.

How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? There are two generations in Christ: the one is Paternal, the other maternal. That which is Paternal is more divine (*divinior*), the maternal that whereby He has stooped to our need and benefit. Therefore what was accomplished in a manner above nature, above age, above what was usual, must not be ascribed to His human excellence, but must be referred to the power of His divinity.

Elsewhere, His mother pleads with Him for a miracle. Here she requires of Him a reason, since she still looks to the things that are human. But while here He is described as being but twelve years old, there He is spoken of as having disciples. See how the mother has learned to know her Son, so that she seeks a miracle from Him now in His full strength, who was astonished at this wonder in His boyhood.

He came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. What is the Master of virtue doing here but fulfilling the duties of filial piety? Are we to be astonished that He obeys His Father Who was obedient to His mother? A subjection this, not of dependence, but of filial love. Let the snake, emerged from his evil lair, uplift his head of heresy to jet forth poison from his abject breast. When the Son says that He *is sent*

(Jn. viii. 29), the heretic then declares that the Father must be the greater, and this that he may prove that the Son is imperfect, since He acknowledges that there is a greater than Himself; and that He may assert that He that *is sent* is dependent on the help of others.

Did He require human help that He might obey the will of His Mother? He was obedient to man, He was obedient to His Handmaid (for she said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*). He was obedient to His reputed father, and you are surprised that He should be obedient to God? Or is it a virtue to obey man, but a sign of imperfection to obey God? Learn even from human things to weigh carefully what is divine, and acknowledge what is due to the Father of love. The Father *glorifieth the Son* (Jn. viii. 43, 59); and, would you not have the Son glorify the Father? The Father by a voice from heaven proclaims that in His Son He is well pleased. Would you not have the Son, clothed in the garment of our humanity, declare with human voice and human affection that the Father is greater than He? (Jn. xiv. 28). For if great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and of his greatness there is no end (Ps. cxlvi. 5), it is a greatness which truly has no end, and receives no increase. Why do I not accept with devout mind that the Son, in taking on the flesh, is obedient to the Will of the Father, when I piously accept that the Father pays honor to the Son?

Learn rather the precepts that are profitable. Acknowledge what are true examples of filial piety. Learn what you owe to your own parents as often as you read that the Son departed not from His Father, either in will, or in work, or in time. For although they are two in Person, in Power they are One. Yet this heavenly Father has endured nothing of the labors of generation. To your mother you owe the invasion of her modesty, the loss of virginity, the peril of childbearing. For you she suffered wearisome illness, prolonged anxiety. Her pangs in the very fruition of her vows were a still greater trial. When she has brought forth that which she desired, she is delivered of childbirth, but not of care. What shall I say of the father's anxieties, for the future life of his children, their number added to for others' gain. Seeds scattered as by a farmer, for the benefit of future generations?