

Second Sunday after Christmas – 2025

1 Kings 3:4-15

Ephesians 1:3-14

Luke 2:40-52

He who is all wisdom, He who possesses and embodies and is the font of all wisdom grew in wisdom. It's a mystery of the incarnation. God of God is made man. God of God lays aside His divine prerogatives. God of God grows in wisdom even as He ensures that the entire cosmos continues its orderly path. One of our hymns has this line: "With milk was fed the Lord of all, Who feeds the ravens when they call" (Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One – The Lutheran Hymnal #104).

How many of y'all pray for wisdom? How many of y'all have ever experienced the pain of not knowing what to do? How many of y'all ever feel like a seven-year-old in the face of a problem too complex for you to figure out? I know that feeling. Wisdom and courage ought to be playmates. Wisdom and courage ought to be twin sisters that animate our soul. A wise person can be a coward. A courageous person can act unwisely to the detriment of those around him. Wisdom is able to discern the proper course. Courage is the power to act on wisdom. Perhaps 2026 is the year that we continually pray for wisdom and courage – it is quite likely that we will need both in equal proportions.

In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman who lifts her voice, beckoning people to turn to her. It's a powerful portrayal of our Christian faith. Here are a few lines: "Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks..." "...whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death" (Proverbs 1:20-21; 8:35-36). Just for the sake of clarity, let's define wisdom. "Seeing clearly what is right and just, the quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgment, the soundness of an action or decision." So, do you need this resource – wisdom? What is wisdom for anyway? Well, how to govern one's life, for starters. When to advance and when to pause, when to buy vs. when to sell, what to love, what to hate, what to lend your name to and what to distance yourself from, how to benefit one's family, how to make others stronger, safer, how to enhance justice, how to protect yourself from propaganda, how to detect evil, bad actors, growing threats. Wisdom is not solely the property of the aged, but they certainly ought to be leaders in this regard. I've met foolish old people and sagacious youngsters. It's a beautiful line: "He who finds me finds life."

Jesus wasn't lost but His parents lost track of Him. I'm sure that they were beside themselves, panicked over not having Jesus in their company as they made their way back to Nazareth. St. Luke tells this story to make you wise. This episode begs for your attention, attention to the details. It's Passover. Passover is only mentioned twice in the Gospel of Luke, here and at the end of the Lord's life, when He returns to Jerusalem to be crucified. Remember, in the Gospel according to Luke, to be lost is to be dead and to be found is akin to coming back to life (Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32). There's a time notice in this episode: "after three days they found him" (Luke 2:46). Three days... something is beginning to sound familiar. On Easter, the angel said to the women, "why do you seek living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). On

this occasion, Jesus asks His parents, “Why is it that you were seeking me?” (Luke 2:49). This whole incident is colored with blood, and death, and resurrection. It’s rich Christology; a prelude of what is to come. Jesus *must be* in His Father’s house (Luke 2:49). St. Luke writes this to make you wise.

Didn’t you know? Whenever someone asks you that question, what are they implying? Does that phrase ever come out of your mouth? Didn’t you know? It implies that something basic, something patently obvious and elementary has escaped the individual and that oversight results in surprise on the part of the questioning party. Didn’t you know? Mild disbelief or even slight astonishment that someone wasn’t aware of a fact or a situation that should have been perceived, a fact of common knowledge that shouldn’t escape anyone. Didn’t you know? St. Luke writes this to make you wise. Wisdom is calling to you. This isn’t intended to be a quaint episode of a pre-teen Jesus and His glorious wisdom, which is true enough. Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house? Must; it is a small Greek word of necessity, a word linked to Christ’s passion, a word that is used in conjunction with Jesus’ cross, His atoning sacrifice, His death. The word is used as a divine *necessity*, an absolute must in connection with God’s plan of salvation. Jesus used the word repeatedly. “I *must* (δεῖ) preach the good news” (Luke 4:43). “The Son of Man *must* (δεῖ) suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Luke 9:22). “[The Son of Man] *must* (δεῖ) suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (Luke 17:25). Over and over, divine necessity ushers out of His mouth – He must – didn’t you know? (Luke 24:26).

Jesus remains in Jerusalem so that He might be present in the temple where He belongs. Didn’t you know? Mary and Joseph weren’t aware of what was obvious to Jesus. I *must be* in My Father’s house. Didn’t you know? Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20). Jesus is *still* in His Father’s house. *This* is His Father’s house. He is present with us, present with His victory, present with His forgiveness, present with His love. Didn’t you know? Yes, we do know. We *do know* that He gives us His body and blood to eat and drink. We *do know* that by Holy Baptism He makes us a temple of the living God, giving us His Holy Spirit and dwelling in us, sanctifying us, saving us. We *do know*. We know that His Word brings light into our darkness. His Word brings light and hope and truth and purpose and grace – we *do know*. We know that there are false paths, false prophets who peddle what has the appearance of wisdom but is just religious charlatanism because there is no humility, no cross, no sacrament (Colossians 2:23).

Didn’t you know? It is a mild rebuke of His parents. It was deserved. Similarly, He rebukes us. When we follow the world and its “wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:18-25), when we doubt, when we wallow in self-pity, when we are slow to repent, when we prioritize something other than Him, when we ignore His Word. Didn’t you know that I animate this Word? Didn’t you know that I am present in this Word? Didn’t you know that I am the Word made flesh? Didn’t you know that the inscripturated Word has Me as its content? Didn’t you know that I am wisdom from God? (1 Corinthians 1:30). And there’s the rub – Christ *is* wisdom. Are you looking for Him now? Don’t you know where He has promised to be? The written Word of the Scriptures cradles the Word made flesh.

You *know* this because God has revealed it to you. “The sacred writings are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). Of all the assets you could possess, is not wisdom one of the foremost? Christ has saved you! That is wisdom. Death is not our master (Romans 6:8-9). Jesus triumphed over death and His perfect love drives out fear (1 Corinthians 15:55; 1 John 4:18). That is wisdom. The Bible is God’s inspired and inerrant Word, a Word that creates faith, a Word that reveals His glory (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 10:17; Romans 1:16-17). That is wisdom. Didn’t you know? The Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Nicene Creed – glorious and refreshing and guiding wisdom. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (Psalm 23:1). That is wisdom. Christ crucified is wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:23-25). Wisdom is alive in this Divine Service. Wisdom’s children sing her praises and gladly sit at her feet. May Christ crucified have His way with us this year, the year of our Lord 2026.