

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. You may be seated. So we have in our Old Testament lessons, Solomon, who has just recently become king and he is offering thousands of sacrifices on the altar at Gibeon. And this is again before the temple was made and created. So there were sacrifices being offered at all the holy places throughout Israel. Until the temple was formed, they were offered in various places. But he's offering thousands of sacrifices waiting for wisdom for God, because he's just become king. And so God comes to him and tells him to ask for whatever he wishes.

Now I would love to say to you today that I would answer the same way as Solomon. And I hope that that is the case. Although I have to admit, I can't be completely certain. But Solomon demonstrated extreme humility before God. Remember last week we talked about Ahaz or maybe a week before, he was told to ask for a sign from God and he said, "Oh, no, I'm not going to test God." And that angered God because God said, "I'm going to give you something and you refuse it." How rude is that?

Well, Solomon does not refuse the gift of God. God says, "Ask for anything from me." And Solomon says, "I have just been put into this large group of people as their leader and king. Give me wisdom. You blessed David who was righteous and holy before you. And now I ask that you bless me with wisdom." Now that phrase was a little bit interesting. You blessed my Father David, who was righteous, upright before you, who was holy and just. And I'm thinking, are you talking about the same David that I'm talking about? Because David was not exactly the most holy and righteous, at least not at times.

Murder and adultery were in his wheelhouse. These are things that he did. So how can Solomon say that God blessed him and that David was righteous? Well, David was not righteous because of his own actions. David was righteous because he was forgiven by God, and God declared him to be righteous, not because of David's will and his abilities and his actions, but because of his confession, because David recognizes that he was a sinner before God. And he confessed his sins to his savior. He didn't know how it was going to take place because the Messiah had not yet come, but he was waiting for his son who would be greater than him to come and redeem him. He put his trust not in his ability or in his efforts, but he put his trust in God's grace and mercy.

And that is the key. And we have that same righteousness. We can also be declared righteous before God, holy and just, not because of our own actions, but because of what it says in Ephesians that we are blessed by God in Christ Jesus who has given us every spiritual blessing. It is a gift given to us by God, not by our own effort, but by his choosing us, predestining us, adopting us as his children.

And so we have that because as we learn in the gospel lesson, Christ came to be the fullness of God's glory. In the fullness of time, at the right time, in the right place for the right purposes, Jesus Christ came. And here we have in the gospel lesson, the ending of the childhood narrative of Jesus Christ. We learn about his birth and we learn about his time in the temple when he was 12 years old. His family is going to the Passover Feast every year, but this seems to be the first time that he comes and he's just on the cusp of becoming an adult. 12 years old, 13, he becomes an adult in Jewish culture at that time.

And so as he's coming to the feast, and this is the first time we hear of the Passover Feast in the New Testament in connection with Jesus, and we hear some very deep parallels between this celebration of the Feast of the Passover and the last Feast of the Passover that Christ celebrated here on earth. You notice that he was gone. His parents didn't have a clue where to go for him. They didn't understand who he was or what he was doing, just like the rest of the people in Jesus' life were confused about who he was and what he was saying. And after three days.

Now, why in the world would it take three days? It took him a while. I mean, Jesus himself is in the temple and they went to the temple for the Passover, but the family looks for a total of three days. Why do we emphasize those three days? Almost as if three days might be significant later on in his life. In fact, they are. And you are to see that parallel and you just see that connection. This Passover, three days, the last Passover that he celebrates here on Earth, three days and he rises from the dead.

They find him. Think about all the people who were confused about Jesus after he died. We thought he was going to be our savior. We thought he was going to conquer the Romans. We thought he was going to save us from our sins. We thought he was going to be our leader. Now he's dead. What's going on? Where is he? Three days later, he shows up and they find him, or more importantly, he finds them.

So the confusion there, you can see that as well. And here, Jesus, declaring, these are the first words that we hear from Jesus, the very first words that are spoken by our Lord and Savior as a human being. And what does he say? Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? At 12 years old, he knew. He's making a declaration right here, a prophetic declaration that he is the Son of the Father.

He knows what he is here for. He is to be in his Father's house and he is to be about his Father's business. And what is that business? To learn and grow in the word of God and to love each other. And that is what he's doing. Unlike David and Solomon who could not live that holy and righteous life in themselves and had to rely upon the sacrifice and the hope of the forgiveness and the grace of God, He,

Christ lives it out perfectly. And Solomon, given wisdom by God later on in his life, begins to think that that wisdom and the riches and the glory that he has achieved are done by his own right. He begins to become proud of his own wisdom, proud of his own riches, so much so that he begins to wander away from God.

He forgets his humility. He forgets his dependence upon God. Christ, Jesus here shows the dependence upon his Father all the way through and lives that perfect and holy life that no one else could. And they did not understand what he was saying when he spoke to them. Again, throughout Jesus ministry, everybody's going, "What's he saying? Why is he saying that? That doesn't make any sense. Surely you don't mean you're going to die in three days, rise from the dead. That doesn't make any sense."

So we see Luke is setting up these parallels, the Feast of the Passover at the beginning of his adulthood, the Feast of the Passover at the end of his earthly life, before he dies, rises from the dead, and then ascends into heaven. And so he's preparing us. Luke is preparing us to see these connections and be prepared for the redemption that is to come. And we know that that redemption is for us because of what Paul says in Ephesians, that we have been predestined and adopted as sons. In love, God has done this for us. Before the foundation of the world, he chose us. And then he applied that choice to us in our baptisms, when we were sealed by the Holy Spirit and made a child of God adopted into the family.

And so we are called here to remember that Christ was about his Father's business, serving his Father so that he might serve us and give us the hope and the promise and the confidence of our salvation. Now, I know predestination is a strange word that has a lot of misunderstandings and misappropriations and misexplanations, but suffice it to say, scripture says this about predestination. Are you questioning your faith? Are you like David who have gone off and done evil in the sight of God and wondering whether or not you can still be loved by him?

Well, were you baptized? Yes. Therefore, you are predestined. You are a child of God. Therefore, he loves you and therefore you are forgiven. See, this election, predestination is all about being confident in God's grace to us. No matter how far we stray, no matter how imperfect we are, no matter how much fear and doubt is within us, God reassures us that we have been claimed by him, called by name and adopted, and therefore are secure and therefore can claim the righteousness and holiness that Solomon claimed for his Father David, we can also claim, not because of our efforts, but because of Christ's efforts given to us.

You notice in Ephesians how many times it says in him, "In him, we have received. In him, we have been chosen. In him, we have been redeemed through his blood. And in him, we have the righteousness of Christ." And so as we gather

the table to receive his real body and his real blood, we are reminded of the sacrifice that he made on that final Passover, where the blood of the lamb was replaced by the blood of the lamb of God. For us, in him, we have redemption and we are sealed in his promise.

So as we live our lives, let us walk in the confidence and peace that God loves us, that he has chosen us, that he has adopted us, that he has sealed us because he is our Father and because he has chosen us. Now that we are his chosen people, don't abuse that promise. Don't go off and do whatever you want because, "Hey, I'm chosen by God. I don't need to worry about it." But also don't doubt and don't be afraid. But no, you are chosen by God.

Trust him. Live your life. Serve one another. Help one another. And most importantly, be in your Father's house and be about your Father's business, because he loves you and he has claimed you. May his grace and his mercy and his peace be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, under life everlasting. Amen.