

## Grow Up With Jesus

✧ **Our perfect Substitute in obedience**

✧ **Our perfect Sacrifice for sin**

In the Name of Jesus who took our place, dear redeemed by the Christ of Christmas:

One of the great insights from our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys in Catechism is how technology hurt their ability to relate to others. Amazing they could express this so honestly. Growing up with so many screens has blocked them from friendships. The pandemic didn't help with remote learning and COVID isolation. One teacher said how glad she was to retire before all this techno-teaching hit. My gratitude for brothers on our Livestream team is for not having to record sermons at home. A dear sister in Christ suggested that I put stuffed animals all around my desk and preach to them. It's so much better here for children and parents and grandparents to **Grow Up With Jesus** in grace and wisdom. This is a lifelong quest of our time on earth, a true challenge on our way to God's glory in heaven. **Grow Up With Jesus.**

✧ **Our perfect Substitute in obedience**

Notice where Jesus was as our story unfolds today. We've been studying this in Bible Class as Ezra wrote 2 Chronicles about Solomon's temple to encourage the Remnant that returned from Babylonian Exile to rebuild the temple. Remember how some of them cried to see the tiny foundation of the Second Temple. Physically it would be no match to what Solomon had built. But the dear Holy Spirit inspired the Prophet Haggai to bolster their hopes with this:

*Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the surviving remnant of the people. Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look now? Doesn't it seem like nothing in your eyes? But now, be strong, Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest! Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Get to work, and I will be with you, declares the LORD of Armies. This is the promise I made to you when you left Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Do not be afraid! Listen, this is what the LORD of Armies says. Once again, in a little while, I myself will shake the heavens and the earth, the seas and the dry land. I will shake all the nations, and the desired of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of Armies. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of Armies. The glory of this second house will be greater than that of the first one, says the LORD of Armies. For in this place I will provide peace, declares the LORD of Armies." (Haggai 2:2-9 EHV<sup>1</sup>)*

When there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus to register the entire Roman world, that shook things up a bit. Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem...to Egypt and back to Nazareth. From there the family went each year to the big Passover Festival in Jerusalem...until Jesus the Messiah unseen so far by all but a few like Simeon in the temple, was twelve years old. Into the spotlight of history steps Jesus!

As in our Second Reading: *"Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings."* (Hebrews 2:10) How could a child be in trouble for staying too long at church? This Son of God and Son of Mary had never disappointed His parents. Jesus was the perfect child – always cheerful, eager to serve and obey, a joy and a delight for family and friends. No wonder Mary

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<sup>1</sup> EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2019. NPH: 800-662-6022, Amazon-Kindle, LOGOS.

after losing Jesus for three days would ask, ***“Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.”*** She was astonished at such strange behavior from Him!

A self-controlled teenager might go passive aggressive at this point. Maybe not say anything here, but wait till you get home! A public scolding! How can you obey the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment to honor your parents when they’re so wrong? So unfair? How do we heal the pain of politics and prejudice in our nation – now or in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century? See the research on our final hymn, “Go, Tell It On the Mountain” (CW21 361). It was first sung by our brothers and sisters as slaves on plantations before the Civil War, then in a traveling choir in the decades after. Our modern media can’t stand peace or else they would trumpet sacrifices like the African American brothers who lifted a wounded white police officer on their shoulders and carried him back to his unit. Peace with God came that first Christmas in the Christ Child, and kept growing up in Jesus until He’s even suffering from devout parents in His own temple.

Some come back with a smarmy: “Well, I’m not Jesus.” True, but God says, ***“You shall be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy.”*** (Leviticus 19:2) And, ***“Without holiness no one will see the Lord.”*** (Hebrews 12:14 NIV84) Jesus says, ***“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*** (Matthew 5:48) Not like Mormons trying to *become* perfect. God says, ***“Be perfect.”*** And eternal torment in weeping and gnashing of teeth awaits all who fail even once!

God’s law stands, yet all fulfilled in Christ Jesus in the temple as our Messiah, ***“the LORD our righteousness.”*** (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16) Awesome glory shines in Him who kindly asks His wayward parents, ***“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father’s business?”*** Even as a pre-teen Jesus knew His mission to save us from our sins. Therein lies the glory of that place. Before He died, He lived in place of you and me as **Our perfect Substitute in obedience.**

Trade the sweaty gym shorts and stinky socks of our own righteousness for a brand new uniform. As we begin our worship services, so live as baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ***“Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.”*** (Galatians 3:27) Wear the colors of Team-Christ with all His goodness, honor, respect credited to you by God the Father. **Grow Up With Jesus as Our perfect Substitute in obedience** and rest in Him as...

### ☆ **Our perfect Sacrifice for sin**

As begins our text, so we must see its ending as our beginning. Every year His parents took Him up to the Passover Festival, foreshadowing Jesus as the perfect Lamb of **Sacrifice**. After learning and asking questions and kindly correcting His human parents, Jesus ***went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.***

We’ll see again this Lenten season: ***“By only one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified.”*** (Hebrews 10:14 EHV) Jesus paid the price of your ticket to heaven with His holy, precious blood. Your Baptism puts that ticket in your hand. Holy Communion keeps refreshing it. But you’re not home free in the stadium yet. You have not yet crashed through the golden gates into that roaring crowd of saints and angels cheering your victory among Christ’s champions.

We still need to **Grow Up With Jesus as Our perfect Sacrifice for sin**. Like beautiful, intelligent Abigail saying to King David, ***“Let the blame be on me”?*** (1 Samuel 25:23ff) She took the blame for her foolish husband Nabal. Or think of Joseph relieving the guilt of his brothers after their father Jacob died in Egypt? They had sold Joseph into slavery. Now he was prime minister of Egypt who could slaughter them and their families with a word. Instead Joseph speaks grace: ***“You meant it for harm, but God meant it for good to save as it is this day many people alive.”*** (Genesis 50:20)

To **Grow Up With Jesus** is simply summarized through Paul to his dear Philippians, ***“Let us live up to what we have already attained.”*** (3:16 NIV84) Gratitude grows as we **Grow Up With Jesus**. Amen.