

## Audio Teaching Sermon

## Message #23

## Energized by the Spirit

## [ A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:19 ]

Hey there everybody. Greetings and salutations to each person out there listening to the word of the LORD. I am Pastor Jefferson, and this is **Message #23** from the DWJD Ministries’ Audio Teaching **Sermon Series**. Welcome. I am glad you are here, and I assure you that our LORD and Savior is also happy as well. You see, it was Him who sends folks like me out to do His bidding, as it were. **My job**: to entice you to reach a point where you want to learn all you can about our Savior & LORD, His Father God, and the Holy Spirit. I sort of serve in the role of being a **movie trailer**. These are defined as **‘typically a short advertisement, originally designed for featured films, which highlights key scenes of an upcoming movie.’** Sometimes they are referred to as previews, promo’s or coming attractions. They initially used to follow after the featured film, hence the name “trailer.” This practice was found to be somewhat ineffective as it was often ignored by members of the audience who would leave immediately after the conclusion of the film.

## [ B Preaching is Like a Movie Trailer 1:19 thru 2:34 ]

Today, theaters run about 20 minutes of trailers and advertisements first, starting at the posted showtime of the movie. They keep us guessing as to when the main event—the movie which we all paid for—will actually start. The point is, listening to my sermons alone, or any other preacher’s words by themselves will not lead to anyone’s salvation. And while I try and utilize the Word of God to the maximum extent possible, I still am unable to reveal the full message of the movie that is Jesus. Like a trailer, I am trying to bring out information regarding the Holy Trinity which is designed to persuade you that joining the road to holiness is a journey worthy of your time. And while I absolutely know that it is, doesn’t mean that you have figured that out yet. Let me state this clearly: even the very word of God alone, will NOT result in anyone’s salvation. Apart from Jesus Himself and the Holy Spirit, a person has an exactly zero percent chance of being saved.

## [ C Viewing the Full Length Movie 2:34 thru 3:59 ]

The proof lies in the original disciples. They all knew Jesus well. You could certainly make an argument that most of them had an intimate relationship with Him, built on His word and their interactions with Him. This could be said even for His disciple, Judas. But,

prior to the day of **Pentecost**, they each lacked a critical component—the **Holy Spirit**. He is the One who interprets the Word of God such that we can now not only view the movie that is Jesus, but fully comprehend the details of the plot, such that we can then be given **pis-TAY-os**. If you remember, that’s the faith awarded to us by **God the Father**, after regarding the determination made by His Son. Listen friends, I walked down the aisle of a church when I was 10 years of age. I’m here to tell you that I was fully aware of who Jesus was, who God was, and I accepted the idea of a Holy Trinity, which included the Holy Spirit. I believed the Bible was the Word of God and all the rest. I had zero doubt that any of that wasn’t completely true, just as the pastor told us. And yes, that was indeed the moment marking the beginning of my journey down the road to holiness.

[ **D** Fully Plugged into Religion 3:59 thru 5:49 ]

Of that I have no doubt. But, despite all of that, I wasn’t yet saved. Oh, I knew of Jesus, and I believed that He certainly knew of me, but the problem was I didn’t personally know Him. And for me, it would be decades before I reached the point of being fully-fledged achieving salvation. Make no mistake, over the whole of that time, I considered myself to be fully plugged into everything to do with religion. Hey, I attended services nearly every time the doors were opened. Even as a teenager, I regularly read the Bible and even had a daily devotional. I performed plenty of volunteer work within the walls of the church. I helped with missions. I taught Sunday school. You name it, I did it. But, as time elapsed, I began to feel frustrated by the lack of information coming from those church leaders who I trusted. The truth is I kept hearing the same information in the sermons and lessons week after week regarding a remarkably short list of Biblical topics. I was only being served milk and cookies. I never was fed any steak and potatoes. There were never any acceptable answers given to the really tough questions which were being asked. Like, *“What happens to the person who never hears the name of Jesus?”* I rejected that God Almighty would send such a person to Hell and the Lake of Fire. That wasn’t fair under any circumstances. A God of true love would never do such a thing to His creation. That would mean Jesus would have, at least in part, died in vain.

[ **E** Christian Mythology is a Thing 5:49 thru 7:18 ]

As I matured in age and wisdom, I quickly discovered that most preachers and teachers

of the Word actually knew far less than I did. When I would confront them over issues which I now call “**Christian Mythology**”, they would tell me that I was the problem. Their tactic was to put me off by quickly quoting some obscure Bible verse (without providing any context) and then assuring me that the issue resided in my lack of faith and study. Unfortunately for them, I saw the hypocrisy of their words. My search for the truth regarding the person of Jesus and the meaning of God’s word had gone largely unfulfilled because there was no one that I could ever find with any of the answers. The whole church scene simply wasn’t hacking it for me. I recall one dark night when I was outside alone, I found myself screaming out to God in frustration that if He were really real, He needed to guide me. I had reached a point where I couldn’t accept the dumbed down version that was being taught of Him any longer. I said that I refused to worship a God I couldn’t respect and esteem. I didn’t believe that a righteous and holy God would require His followers to exhibit blind faith—another example of Christian mythology.

[ **F** The Yeast of the Pharisees 7:18 thru 8:40 ]

God’s reply to me that night was remarkably simple. “*Now that I finally have your attention,*” He said. “*It’s time for you to get to work. I am willing to teach you now that you possess the correct attitude.*” God essentially told me that it was time to cease relying on the yeast of the modern-day Pharisees for my instruction. I needed to begin listening to Him, Jesus, as the Holy Spirit would reveal the true meaning of His words to me directly. You know, stop for a moment and think about our example, **Jesus Christ**. When He chose to remain behind in Jerusalem as a young boy, I believe that His intent was to clarify the teachings of the Pharisees of His day. Now, I do not think He, a lad of 12 years, was seeking any kind of hostile interaction with the Temple priests. No, not at all. But I do believe He was perplexed with their inaccurate and imprecise answers to His questions, just as I had been. So, the result was God the Father, via His earthly parents, removed Jesus from the Temple, and brought Him back to **Nazareth**, to complete His religious education there.

[ **G** Jesus Grew in Wisdom & Stature 8:40 thru 10:33 ]

Look now at **Luke 2:52**. It reads out of the Greek, <sup>1</sup>“*And Jesus continued to advance in wisdom* <sup>2</sup>*and stature,* <sup>3</sup>*and in grace* <sup>4</sup>*with God and men.*” So, as we usually do, let’s break down the verse. The **1<sup>st</sup> thought** is that Jesus continued to advance in wisdom. The

word we see for **continued** **to** **advance** is [1] *pro-eck-KOP-ten* and means **‘to progress, to make progress and to proceed.’** We discussed this word back in **message #14**. The word we find for **wisdom** is *soe-FEE-ah* and means **‘insight, skill or intelligence.’** This term refers to the wisdom that comes from God, encompassing both practical and spiritual understanding. It is often contrasted with human wisdom, aka the yeast of the Pharisees, which is limited and usually highly flawed. **Divine wisdom** is characterized by insight into God’s purposes and the ability to live righteously, which transcends mere intellectual knowledge. Rather it emphasizes a moral and spiritual dimension. The **2<sup>nd</sup> thought** tells us Jesus advanced in stature. The word for **stature** we see is [2] *hel-ik-KEE-ah* and means **‘age, physique or maturity.’** Jesus continued to grow into a man, as reflected in His gradually enlarging build, increasing years and expanding mental development. Like us, Jesus grew from boyhood into manhood. The Bible is also talking here about spiritual maturity.

[ **H** **Jesus Empowered by the Holy Spirit** **10:33 thru 12:22** ]

And the **3<sup>rd</sup> thought** of the verse tells us that Jesus continued to progress in grace. The word we find for **grace** is *KAHR-rih-tee* and it sounds like our modern word **charity**. It has a similar meaning; **‘the extension of grace, favor, kindness and blessing.’** It is a term understood to mean God’s grace extended without the expectation of receiving anything in return. The word **progress** is defined to mean **‘forward or onward advancement as in movement towards an objective or goal.’** Most translations of the Bible use the word **favor**, as if Jesus was garnering favor with God and men. This is an inaccurate view of the root meaning of this verse. When we look back at **Luke 2:40**, we find an associated verse which brings context to what we are now discussing. In **verse 40**, it is talking about the **boy Jesus**. It reads, *“The Child continued to grow and was strengthened, being filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”* The word seen for **was** **strengthened** here is [2] *ek-ra-tie-OO-toe* and means **‘to strengthen, to make strong or to empower.’** This word is only used twice in Scripture, here and back in **Luke 1:80**. There it is talking about **John the Baptist**. That verse reads, *“And the Child continued to grow and was strengthened in spirit, and he was in the deserted places until the day of the appearance of him to Israel.”*

[ **I** Empowered is Energized 12:22 thru 13:55 ]

I want you to notice the similarity between the 2 verses. In **Luke 1:80**, mentioning John, God clarifies that the child strengthening was in regard to being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Both John and Jesus were being increasingly empowered by the Holy Spirit as they continued absorbing the knowledge that follows the study of God’s Word. The Greek for **spirit** is **PNEW-mah-tee** and means ‘**spirit, wind or breath.**’ In the case of these men, the verse is speaking of their empowerment with regard to the Holy Spirit. The more they learned and matured, the greater their empowerment. It is exactly the same for disciples of today. The **4<sup>th</sup> thought** of the verse says the empowerment or energizing via the Holy Spirit affected both their relationship to God the father and their ability to interact with humanity. I want you to see that prior to each man beginning his respective ministry, they spent time secluded, studying and learning, away from people who did not know them. That is to say, each man did not seek or enjoy fame prior to the start of their ministry. And when God did call them to their role in serving the nation of Israel, they both emerged from relative obscurity, with the Holy Spirit leading the way before them.

[ **J** Three Parts of Every Person 13:55 thru 15:49 ]

So, **Luke 2:52** is a picture of their religious training. Yes, it’s true. Both Jesus and John each had to be educated and trained. Their Godly training serves as both a template and an example to us. Allow me to repeat it: , <sup>1</sup> “*And Jesus continued to advance in wisdom* <sup>2</sup> *and stature,* <sup>3</sup> *and in grace* <sup>4</sup> *with God and men.*” This verse clearly displays the three parts which compose every man. **Stature** is symbolic of the maturity of not only our **physical** body but our spiritual maturity as well. While **wisdom** is indicative of the **intellectual** element of a person, our conscious mind. And the saving **grace** or **KAHR-rih-tee** is applicable to the third part of us, which is our soul. And it is this divine grace that initiates our salvation. Thus, this verse in Luke is proving that Jesus is indeed our example and shows that we each must continue our discipleship education so as to further our progress such that our divine given wisdom and maturity will grow. The result of which leads to an increase in our empowerment by the Holy Spirit. Then, with exposure to God the Father, our effectiveness for preaching the Gospel and making disciples will be increased. I want you to notice that neither Jesus nor John the Baptist performed any work for God prior to the completion of their training period.

[ **K** Faith is Not of Ourselves 15:49 thru 17:26 ]

I want to finish by stating a few familiar words from Paul out of **Ephesians 2:8**. *“For by grace you are saved, through faith, and this is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”* The word for **grace** here is the same as we just studied: **KAHR-rih-tee**. The word for **saved** is [2] **ses-SOS-men-oi** and in the 2 places we see it used, both in this 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, it means *‘to be rescued, preserved or healed.’* The word for **faith** we have heard many times in these messages is, **pis-TAY-os** and is *‘the saving faith awarded to us from God the Father as recommended by Jesus His Son.’* That’s what Paul is saying in the verse. This faith is not of ourselves. We cannot generate or produce this faith. Only God can do that. And the word for **gift** we see is **DOH-ron** and it means *‘a gift or sacrifice.’* It’s used in the context of Temple sacrifices and offerings. It denotes something freely & generously given without an expectation of receiving a return. God sent His Son as our sacrifice, and His grace is indeed available completely free of charge. But as the Bible makes crystal clear—this gift from God, while certainly universal, is not randomly presented to just anyone.

[ **Z** Some Final Comments 17:26 thru 19:07 ]

Let me ask you a question: *“Do total strangers just walk up to you and offer to hand out a very valuable gift—say a 10-ounce bar of gold?”* By the way, should you ever find yourself facing that kind of situation, turn and **RUN away**—as it is absolutely a scam. Paul is saying that God is offering the gift of eternal life, which comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, a faith which cannot be earned or purchased by the work of our own hands. It is a true gift from God, awarded only to those who successfully build an intimate relationship with His Son. Gold is valuable, only because it is rare. No value can be placed on eternal life, as it is not only rare, but impossible apart from knowing Jesus. And as we observed with both Jesus and John the Baptist, this faith, **pis-TAY-os** must come from the study and contemplation of God’s word, which results in our advancement in wisdom, maturity and knowledge of the One who sacrificed for us. As we grow and progress, we receive increasingly more empowerment from the Holy Spirit. Well, that’s all the time we have for this sermon trailer, where we have presented more evidence for becoming a true disciple of Jesus. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God’s Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**