

Pastor Matthew Ude  
January 5th, 2020  
Second Sunday of Christmas

**Luke 2:22-40** <sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD "), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: <sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." <sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." <sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phaniel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

When I was growing up my mother was very good at watching out year round for gifts for us kids. When she found a good deal on something or something she thought we would particularly like she would buy it even if it was many months before Christmas or our birthday. She would buy it and hide it somewhere in the house. Considering how many kids there were in the house, how many gifts that translated into, and the fact that our house was not particularly large, you would think that every once in a while we would stumble across some of these gifts. Yet I can't ever even once remember seeing any present least of all one of my own, before it was wrapped and placed under the tree. Perhaps some of my siblings did but I don't remember ever seeing them myself. It is very likely that the gifts were sitting there in plain sight sometimes and I simply did not recognize them as gifts.

The Lord also prepared gifts long in advance ready to be revealed at the right time. It is these gifts of which Simeon speaks in our text. Gifts which Simeon says were openly prepared right in before the eyes of the whole world. And yet the world did not recognize what was going on. Gifts which were prepared and waiting from the foundation of the earth but are now revealed.

The greatest of these gifts is of course Christ himself. But with him come all the gifts of God, some of the most important of which Simeon draws out attention to.

### **Christ Enters His Temple with Gifts**

#### **Peace - Light – Revelation**

##### **Peace**

There are many kinds of strife in this world. War of course, two men fist fighting also, but also political strife, also strife in our marriage, also the strife of financial problems, and many more. Many of us might be dealing with the mental and bodily strife caused by too many Christmas cookies and pie.

To which of these does Simeon refer? None of these of course. Simeon does not speak of peace from any of the strife associated with this world, but rather peace with God through the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins.

It is a peace which prepares us for death, not a peace which prepares us for earthly life.

I've mentioned before that Scripture does indeed have many things to say about this life. It gives us guidelines for marriage which if followed will give us happier marriages. It gives us guidelines to finances, guidelines for politics and education and family. God's word has something to say about all most every aspect of life on this earth and listening to these warnings will provide us with a better life on this earth. However these things are all secondary. They are not the primary goal of Scripture.

The primary goal of scripture is not to prepare you for life on this earth, but life in the world which is to come. The primary goal is to prepare you for your death.

How does that hymn go?

“Teach me to live that I may fear the grave as little as my bed.”

This is the peace which causes Simeon to rejoice. Having seen the salvation of God he may lay down his head in death with peace and confidence that he will raise in life. Here is the salvation which the Lord has prepared, a Savior to wash away my sin and present me holy and glorious before the Lord.

Peace in this world is difficult to be sure, but still easy compared with peace on the day of your death. But this is the peace which Christ brought with Him and is the true marker of a preacher of the gospel.

Is the pastor preparing me for death? That is a question you should always ask yourself about any church and any pastor. How well they do explaining the text, how dynamic they are, how relatable, how well they follow the church year, etc. All these things are secondary. What matters most is are they preparing you for peace in death by the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

## **Christ brings peace with God**

### Light

Camping tip: If you want to turn a light on, first put the lamp in a tent or a screen tent, because otherwise the moths and bugs will swarm around the lamp and your head. This is very annoying.

Just as a lamp attracts bugs, so Christ's birth attracts sinners. At least those who know they are sinners and are seeking a way out of their sin.

Just as a lamp attracts bugs, so the light of Christ's birth attracts men from every corner of the earth.

The shepherds, the wise men, Simeon and Anna all gather around the Christ. But many more than that.

We confess in that hymn "How should I not have known Isaiah would be there"

And so Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Elijah, and David and Moses and Abraham, and Noah and even Adam and Eve. They all saw that light from far far away and gathered around the manger.

As Simeon foretold in our text that light still shines and still brings more and more and more bugs gathering around the only spiritual light in this world.

"the people who in darkness sat" – this phrase is not limiting but rather descriptive.

That is it is not saying, which people? Those who sat in darkness, rather it is saying "all people sit in darkness"

To all people none of whom have previous known anything but darkness to them Christ brought light.

## Revelation

Simeon prophesied that this child would reveal the hearts of many. And right away here the heart of Anna is revealed.

There is a story told about a bookstore owner who when he was young married his sweetheart. However his wife grew restless and discontent working in a bookstore in a small town and was determined to leave her husband and travel the world. Since he could not persuade her otherwise the bookstore owner put a candle in the window and told her he would keep it light in the hope of her return. Many many years later the wife did return and there was the candle waiting for her in the window however when she went into the book store the man did not remember her. Although he continued to light the candle every evening yet he had forgotten the one for whom he light it.

There are two danger in our service to God. One is that we become bored with the Word. We think we know it all already and that we don't really need to come to church. We like the wife run off and follow after things we think are more exciting and adventurous than going to church every day.

The other danger is that we stay and go to church every Sunday and do all the things we are supposed to do, outwardly. Yet inwardly we have forgotten what we are waiting for. And when Christ comes to us, in His word, In His sacraments we do not recognize him. In this way we are like the bookstore owner.

Jesus coming was a light that shone into the hearts of many people and revealed what was hidden there. There were many in Israel like the bookstore owner. Many who diligently went through the motions, but did not recognize the one for whom they supposedly were waiting. Forexample the high priest, for whom the lighting of the candle, the ceremonies of the temple, had become the all important thing, they opposed Jesus and spoke against him. For others, like

Zachaeus, who had wandered away and gone astray He was the bright morning star calling them home. And yet there were still many others, like the apostle Nathanael, who had neither wandered nor forgotten but recognized Christ for whom he was and rejoiced greatly to see him.

Anna also was one of these. She did not run away, nor did she forget whom she waited for. She only had seven years of marriage, and then lived alone for 84 years. But for the entirety of that 84 years she faithfully served the Lord, and never forgot what it was she was waiting for. The Lord granted her this gift then that her eyes were open to recognize the Lord when he was before her and she rejoiced to see Him.

Christ is the light that reveals what is in our hearts. Yet He shines into our hearts not for the purpose of judgment but in order to cleanse the sin there.

If we have wandered away, He is the light to bring us home. If we have forgotten Him, He has not forgotten us. If we are faithful in service, He is a light to our path and the joy of our heart.

Amen