

Sermon 18th April 2021

Luke 2:22-40

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

Good morning everyone, what a blessing it is to be here with you all today. Thank you, Pastor Ross, for giving me this opportunity it is such a privilege. Isn't it so exciting that we can gather here today and talk about Jesus as we continue our journey in Luke chapter 2. God sent his son Jesus for us. A God that has created the world, the seas, the mountains, the trees, the animals. He also created us, human beings in his image and has given us his holy spirit that lives within each one of us if we allow him to. That's big.

Last week Pastor Ross preached on Luke 2:1-21. He talked about the most important birth ever – the birth of a saviour who was born for us. Jesus who defines greatness and is a living saviour who gives us peace. Pastor Ross reminded us how vital it is to share the good news of Jesus with people who don't know Him. Of how God calls us to be his ministers and to give God all the glory. A God who sent his son to walk with us, die for us and who was raised for us. How amazing is that?

This morning we are in Luke 2:22-40 and I have the honour of sharing about the consecration of God's own son. Jesus Christ, already sacred, the lamb of God, who would one day give his life up for all mankind, is being taken to the temple to be presented to the Lord. Mary and Joseph take with them a pair of doves or two young pigeons to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the law of the Lord.

We are all very familiar with the verse in Matthew 19:14 where Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" and he blesses them. Well today's message is about Jesus himself being taken into the temple as a baby to be presented to the Lord.

Let us pray, before I read the scripture. Father God we thank you for today. We thank you that we can come before you together and get to know you more. We praise you Lord for all that you have blessed us with and for caring for us and loving us the way you do. In Jesus mighty and holy name, we pray Amen!

Read the passage

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"[a]), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."[b]

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

*29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss[c] your servant in peace.
30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."*

33 The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. [d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that the very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

I just love how within these 18 verses Luke intertwines the human and the divine elements of Jesus. Luke starts off with how Jesus is taken to the temple for consecration as all firstborn males were. In verse 26 he calls Jesus 'The Lord's Messiah' and finishes off in verse 40 again saying the child grew and became strong.

JESUS BRINGS SALVATION

Luke 2:25 says Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

Simeon knew the Messiah was coming but he didn't know when. He was waiting for the whole of Israel to be rescued and he knew his salvation could only come from Jesus. He was old and would have been waiting a very long time, yet he remained faithful to the path that God had set him on. He trusted God would keep his promise and that he would see God's Messiah before he died. He didn't complain, he didn't grow tired of waiting and he didn't lose hope.

Simeon teaches us that even when we don't see God and things don't happen in our time, we need to be so full of the Holy Spirit that we can hear God's voice when he speaks to us.

How did he know this was the Messiah all of Israel was waiting for? Because he was filled with God's Holy Spirit. Luke tells us he was holy and devout and God's Holy Spirit was upon him. Simeon is such an example of someone who was filled with the spirit. God's Spirit gave him understanding and led him to move into the temple courts at the very moment Mary and Joseph got there with baby Jesus. He took Jesus in his arms and praised God with these magnificent words;

*29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss[c] your servant in peace.
30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."*

Jesus is all Simeon needed.

He sees Jesus and says he has seen God's salvation and acknowledges this salvation is for all nations, all people.

What about us folk – Is Jesus all we need?

JESUS BRINGS HOPE AND REDEMPTION

Luke 2;36-38 says **36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. [d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.**

Anna is such an example of a spirit filled woman. What we see about her is that she is old but not helpless, she didn't let her age keep her from serving the Lord. She was between 84 and a 100 and something and she was still serving the Lord. Luke tells us she was a widow. She had become a widow only after seven years of marriage, she may have been in pain but this didn't make her bitter. Anna never left the temple mount platform but she didn't feel trapped.

When I was preparing this message, Anna reminded me of my Grandmother my Aji who some of you have met. My Aji is 82 years old, she is a widow. My grandad built her a house but she can't live in it by herself anymore so she lives with her daughters. She must get sad and at times lonely but she isn't bitter and doesn't blame anybody. She fasts and is a prayer warrior. She loves the lord and never misses the opportunity to share her faith with others. I know I am blessed through her prayers.

Anna could have seen being old, being a widow, never leaving the temple, as her limitations but she didn't. How often do we let things get in the way of God? Instead verse 37 says BUT she worshipped night and day, fasting and praying because she allowed God to fill her with the holy spirit.

And what does she do when she sees baby Jesus, she gives thanks to God and speaks about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. What about us folk, who are we talking to about this Jesus who died on the cross to redeem us from sin?

BEING OBEDIENT AND WILLING TO JESUS

Luke records for us one of the great lessons of the new testament in what does a spirit filled man look like and what does a spirit filled woman look like? Back to back from verse 25 down to verse 35 we see a spirit filled man named Simeon and a spirit filled woman named Anna. Through Luke's account of Simeon and Anna the theme Pastor Ross talked about continues from last week's message in who God's heart is disposed to, to do his work.

Last Sunday in Luke chapter 2 vs 1:20 we heard about the Shepherds, lowly, poor, humble yet obedient and willing. Today we talk about Simeon and Anna. Both of them old, Simeon – waited a long time on God, Anna a widow, living in the temple with limitations yet both obedient and willing.

This is such a powerful testament of hope for us in that God can do his work through each one of us if we let him.

Our pre-requisite? Be obedient, be willing and allow God to fill you with his holy spirit and trust him with all your heart.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

God led the Shepherds to the manger. The Shepherds didn't keep this good news to themselves but spread the word to others and all who heard were amazed at what the Shepherds told them.

God's holy spirit led Simeon to move into the temple courts at the very moment Mary and Joseph got there with baby Jesus. Simeon took him in his arms and praised God. Simeon wasn't just waiting for his own salvation, he was waiting for the consolation of all Israel.

God's spirit led Anna to Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus. She gave thanks to God and spoke about Jesus to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. She didn't keep this to herself

Now imagine, we are standing at the steps that lead up into the temple. Down below is the city of David. Herod cut these monumental steps going up to the temple. A wide step, a narrow step, a wide step, a narrow step, why? So that people would come slowly into the presence of God. Mary and Joseph walk up with Baby Jesus in their arms. What do you do? Do you reach out to take Jesus into your arms or do you watch from afar?

GOD'S GIFT TO US

Folks, the good news is that even today God is giving us his only son. His Christ, the anointed one, Messiah, the one who fulfils all the promises of God. God sent Jesus as a baby for us, who died on the cross for us, whom God raised from the dead for us, who ascended into Heaven and God gave us his holy spirit. He didn't leave it at that. He also made our bodies a temple so that his holy spirit can dwell in us - Wow!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.

Last week Pastor Ross asked; what does the birth of Jesus mean for you - are you just peeking into the manger to see the baby?

Today I ask; What does the gift of God's salvation through Jesus do for you? What are we doing with this gift that God has so freely given us?

Most of us here today have accepted Jesus as our saviour, our redeemer and our Lord.

Share your testimony, share the joy of your sins being forgiven with others, with everyone as Anna did. Rest assured in God's gift of salvation for life everlasting as Simeon did. Share the good news of Jesus as the Shepherds did.

How much space is there in our life for God's Holy Spirit? What do we need to get rid of to make that space?

Let's not ask what God can do for me. But ask what God can do through me.

Be obedient, be willing and God will fill you with his Holy Spirit to do his work.

Let the blessings God has blessed you with flow onto others.