

Sermon for the 1st Sunday after Christmas

Sermon Text: Luke 2:22-40



²² And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ And he came in 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, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for the glory to your people Israel.” ³³ And His father and His mother marveled at what was said about Him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.

In my short life, I have met almost no one who hates Jesus. On the contrary, almost everyone loves Jesus. In Hindu homes, Jesus often finds His place next to Krishna or other deities. In Islam, Jesus is likewise very highly thought of and is named with the word of praise, “Hasrat.” Even people who don’t believe in God at all think Jesus was a very good person and that it is worthwhile to follow His example. Even when so many people admire Jesus, only a few people can recognize that Jesus is the Savior of the world who died for our sin. To recognize this Jesus who is God among us, we need the Holy Spirit. We see that also in the story of Jesus’ birth. All who gather around the baby Jesus are specifically led there by the Holy Spirit. And so it happened with the old priest Simeon. His entire life, he waited for the great Savior of Israel, without really knowing who it would be. As Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus

into the Temple, the Holy Spirit showed the old priest once again very clearly that this child would be the future Messiah. The one who was to come! As the Holy Spirit showed Simeon this, he immediately began to sing: He sang an old psalm of praise that we sing to this day after the Lord's Supper. *Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have your salvation.*

Dear friends, we are gathered together here today to see Jesus. Some of you are not directly in the church, rather you celebrate with the digital service from afar. Perhaps you are sitting in your living rooms or somewhere else. And yet, we are all together. We came together here because we want to see Jesus. We don't want to just respect Jesus like one might respect a saint or a prophet. No, we want to know Jesus who is God with us. And He who wants to open heaven to us and who will bring us to God. Through Jesus, all our sins are carried away and we can have peace with God. If Jesus really is God with us, then it is also clear that we couldn't recognize this God by human means. Because then He would not be God but only a good person. Just as it happened to Simeon, so it must happen to us. The Holy Spirit must lead us to Jesus. No one can see Jesus by their own reason or strength.

Today I want to invite you to see the baby Jesus. Not with human eyes, but with the power of the Holy Spirit, as Simeon did. To be honest, I am amazed. Because Simeon waits his entire life for the Savior whom God would send. And as the Savior finally came, it was a child. The joy that then springs forth from Simeon is in no relation to the child who, at 7 days old, must have been a helpless bundle. And yet the old Simeon flips completely out and calls this small bundle wrapped in old cloth, the Savior of the world! Dear friends. That's just like Jesus! That's just like God! He doesn't come as we expect. He gives us no evidence. And He doesn't come down from heaven with great fanfare. No, He comes to us very unremarkably! So that it is incomprehensible to our human understanding. Perhaps we are disappointed in this Jesus. Perhaps we want a Jesus who instantly changes the world or does other great things. But God doesn't do that! Instead, He does just one thing. He gives Himself. For Simeon, this child in his arms was more than enough. What can be more than God with us? For many, this will not be enough. That's why Simeon sees with his prophetic eyes, that this child would be a stumbling block for many. And for others, however, He will be a light and salvation that shines into the whole world. Jesus is this light. He shines into the whole world. And in this Jesus, it is decided what will become of mankind. Simeon is allowed to see all of this. He holds the child in his arms and the light dawns on him. In this Jesus, nothing and no one can separate me from the love of God. From now on, he won't need anything or anyone. Whoever has Jesus, has everything! ²⁹ *Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; Amen.*