**Feb 2, 2025** Lk 2:22-40; Malachi 3:1-4; Heb 2:14-18

* Many years ago, before ordination, I just learning about preaching as a Layreader, and I was counselled by my supervisor (rector) that in preparing a sermon, I should never attempt to integrate all the readings from the lectionary.
* I realize that attempting to preach on all the lectionary readings in the same service can definitely result in a scattered sermon, but the reason my supervisor counselled me to not attempt to do this was because he was afraid I would discover contradictions.
* I now realize that he was wrong. (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16)
* We never have to make excuses for Scripture. It always stands on its own. (we may not understand)
* So I will be looking at both the OT passage from Malachi and the Gospel reading from Luke.
* This morning’s gospel reading and the theme for today is the presentation of Jesus in the temple.
* This may concern some people because it is showing Jesus, who is God, following worldly customs.
* Reality however is that Jesus was a Jew and was brought up both validating and following, strictly, the Jewish religious practices.
* Having said that, we can also note that Jesus

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didn’t have time for many of the religious leaders who were really hypocrites and he told them so.

* “***You hypocrites, Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you; These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”***(Matt 15:7-9)
* The presentation in the temple goes back to the Book of Leviticus where we can learn quite a bit about Jesus and Mary & Joseph.
* 1st, the law required that following the birth of a boy, the boy is to be brought to the temple following a 33 day wait for purification where a sacrifice would be made for him and if a first born, he would be consecrated to the Lord.
* 1st thing we learn is that Mary & Joseph would be considered as **poor**.
* We look back at Leviticus and discover that the required sacrifice was a year-old lamb and **only** if the family couldn’t afford a lamb, then they are to bring two doves or two young pigeons.
* Luke tells us that it was a pair of doves or young pigeons that were offered for Jesus.
* Then we have the encounters with Simeon and Anna.
* Simeon was old but we read where it was revealed to him by the HS that he would not

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die before he saw the Christ (Messiah).

* Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. (Nunc Dimitis – Evening Prayer Service)
* He basically said OK God, I am now ready to die because You have fulfilled Your promise.
* Also, in all this Jewish law requirement, we should not overlook Simeon’s words that this was “**A light for revelation to the Gentiles**” – that’s you and me.
* Then there was Anna who was an 84 year old widow who we read never left the temple but worshipped day & night, fasting and praying.
* She similarly spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.
* In other words Jesus was the Redeemer for Jerusalem. He was the Messiah.
* Very rich accounts of the acknowledgement of who Jesus was.
* Then we look at the OT reading from Malachi
* Something we should note about Malachi is that it was written in the 5th century – 500 years before Christ.
* Yet it is engrained with the message of the NT Bible – the message of Jesus.
* There is the acknowledgement of John the Baptist where we read “***I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me.***” (Mal 3:1)
* The exact same message that we read in Isaiah

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40:3, and that actually happened.

* We can trust the Word of God.
* Now we know that, in preparation for Jesus, John the Baptist’s primary message was repentance.
* Repentance is very important. It means that we are sorry for our sins and desire to go in a new direction with our lives. Repentance is our gateway to salvation.
* We read these words in 2 Cor 7:10 concerning repentance: “***Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.***(2 Cor 7:10)
* Then we have a very profound statement in Malachi that is echoed loudly in the NT.
* “***Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple”*** (Mal 3:1)
* First it is about seeking the Lord: In Matt 7:7 we read these words of Jesus: “***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you***.”
* In Malachi we read, “***Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple”***.
* When we seek the Lord, He will come to his temple.
* Where is his temple? St Paul tells us:
* “***Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?***” (1 Cor 3:16)
* The word of God always speaks for itself.

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* The Word of God speaks truth.
* The Word of God speaks life and freedom.
* The Word of God always points to Jesus who is our salvation. Amen