

"The big reveal" Luke 2:32

December 30, 2018

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LSB 375

1. Of the Messiah (Lord's Christ, Consolation of Jerusalem) to Simeon and Anna in person!
2. Of God's plan of salvation through the Messiah for all people, revealed to you in Word and Sacrament!
3. Of God's plan for you to reveal His salvation to the lost by shining the light of the Gospel
4. Of sinful man's hearts either rejecting or receiving God's plan revealed on Judgment Day

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Consolation of Israel. Amen.

Our text is taken from the Gospel reading of St. Luke chapter 2 - the occasion of the visit of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus to the temple 40 days after His birth to fulfill the purification demands of the law, offering a "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

It was during this visit that two of God's devout followers, Simeon and Anna, directed by the Holy Spirit, personally witnessed, their Savior Jesus, who moved them to great joy because of purification of their souls.

Their testimony recorded for us this morning, moves our hearts to great joy by the Holy Spirit. We too witness in God's temple, through His word, our Savior, the Light of all people! We hear again Simeon's words known to us as the Nunc Dimittis in our liturgy, the "now depart" song we sing after receiving the Lord's Supper.

(Lk. 2:29-33 NKJ) 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

Yes, not only were Simeon and Anna privileged to see the Lord's Christ, that is the Messiah, but Mary and Joseph, having settled into the normal routine of caring for a newborn, were reminded just who their newborn was. The little bundle of joy who cried and slept and made baby sounds was the salvation of all peoples, the Light of the world to the *Gentiles* and the glory of the Lord's people Israel.

This was the big reveal moment for Simeon, Anna, who were seeing Jesus for the first time. But it was also an unexpected but much cherished moment of strengthening for Mary and Joseph and of course the baby Jesus, who heard the God inspired words from these prophets about their Savior who was destined for the fall and rising of many.

And for all of us who were moved by the Holy Spirit to come to His temple this morning, we too marvel, and are strengthened that this baby Jesus, God in the flesh, has shown His light of salvation into our hearts.

Every time this Gospel is proclaimed, that Jesus is the salvation for all people, it's as if we are opening a Christmas present anew and seeing with awestruck eyes how great is our gift for us. Like little children, we encourage each other to peel back the wrapping, "what did you get? what did you get? ...to see the ever shining love of God in our midst.

And with Anna we give thanks to the Lord, and tell others who are looking for the redemption in Jerusalem, "look what I got! look what I got! Look what you got! look what you got too."

The Holy Spirit used the visit to the temple as an evangelistic moment of the Gospel through the witnessing of these two aged saints. And the Spirit turns our "what did I get?" into a "look what you got too" when we are moved to share the Good News to other *Gentiles*.

It's a continual revealing, to hearts that have seen, and a big reveal to those who never have known the Gospel. Oh, that we should be so privileged to be the ones to share this gift of the Light of the world to another soul darkened in sin - the gift "prepared" before all time according to the merciful counsel of the Holy Trinity, for all eyes to see.

If you've ever watched a show like *Treehouse Masters*, there's a moment after the work of building the treehouse is completed, where the new owners are led with their eyes closed into their backyard. Then the master builder tells them to open their eyes for the big reveal. To their amazement their is beautifully crafted home built into their trees with rope bridges and many extras. They are overcome with joy as they cross the rope bridge into their new fun space.

The big reveal for Simeon was a moment of great joy as he lifted up the baby Jesus in his arms. He could now cross into heaven because he had seen the bridge of his salvation looking back into his eyes. Death was no longer something to be feared. Simeon could depart in peace for the Lord's Christ would make peace for the world sins by bearing them on the cross. By His death and resurrection, the Light of life would shine for the world to see.

Simeon uses the word "revelation" specifically - literally, in the Greek, an apocalypse, a making known of the hidden. This revealing of God's plan of salvation through His Son Jesus is for all people to see.

And we know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. How will they hear unless the Good news is revealed?

(Rom. 10:14-15 NKJ) And how shall they hear without a preacher or proclaimer?

15 And how shall they preach or proclaim unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Simeon and Anna's aged feet were directed to the temple to see and then went about proclaiming what they had seen. What beautiful feet!

And all of us who come to the altar this morning with penitent hearts for our sins, are revealed the beauty of the miracle of God's forgiveness in with and under the bread and wine, the very body and blood of Jesus. It's our apocalyptic moment, our big reveal moment. Now I can go in peace, for my eyes have seen the salvation. But not only, do I go in peace but I go proclaiming the peace that I have seen - Christ crucified and risen. What beautiful feet you have when you, like Anna, go about proclaiming what your eyes have seen!

For Simeon, he was specifically given the promise that he would see the Lord's Christ. The big reveal occurred for him when out of all the babies that were being brought to the temple, the Holy Spirit told him, that's the One you've been waiting for. God always keeps His promises.

And when God's word says to us this morning from Matthew 26:

(Matt. 26:26-28 NKJ) "Take, eat; this is My body."

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

God keeps His promise to us, included in the many, that our sins are forgiven by the very body and blood we are receiving. Simeon and Anna weren't yet privileged to receive this sacrament for it hadn't been instituted yet, but we are. And we, who are given Jesus' very body and blood can now depart in peace, proclaiming what we have seen, eaten and drunk.

We have seen the Lord's Christ, like Simeon and Anna the Lord with eyes of faith before we should depart from this world. Thanks be to God! All people need to see the Lord's Christ and believe before they should die that they may depart in peace.

At the end of the year, there are always the lists of the famous actors, athletes and notable people who have died in this year, 2018. The title of the

list often reads, "Those we have lost..." Lost - what a depressing word. The world has no consolation for death. No, explanation of what's next. Those who die are only lost.

Included in this year's list was **Roger Bannister**, First Runner To Break 4-Minute Mile Mark, Dies At 88. On May 6, 1954, Britain's **Roger Bannister** hits the tape to become the first person to break the 4-minute mile in Oxford, England. Mar 5, 2018.

Death shows no partiality to the rich, famous, or powerful. The fastest athlete in the world, will also cease to run. His or her heart will cease to beat and the body which was glorified with medals and accolades will return to dust.

So will be our end eventually. This day hasn't been revealed to us, only God knows, but what has been revealed to us is that there is life after death, thanks be to the Consolation of Israel. The baby whose soul would be pierced also says Simeon, for Jesus soul would suffer our sins, would also rise again.

And this moment in history would "reveal the thoughts of many hearts". One cannot be a casual onlooker of the crucifixion of Jesus. One cannot be neutral to Jesus. Either one believes He is the Messiah and Savior or not. All hearts will be revealed, at the final judgement. It will be for the falling or rising of many - falling to hell or rising to heaven.

That will be the final big reveal. When all hearts will be laid bare and those who have trusted in the Babe of Bethlehem will receive their glorified bodies that will run better than 4 minute miles. For those who have rejected Jesus, their bodies will suffer eternally in torment where there is no running away from this punishment.

So we see how critical it is for God's people to be active in our proclamation like two ordinary but devout lay people Simeon and Anna. The light of the world must shine to all people before the final reveal. And it shines through you and me who have received this peace in our hearts. Go now revealing the peace you have seen to the world still darkened in sin. Amen.