



Free Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
in South Africa

Sermon for Sunday after Christmas (Proper B) 2017

My eyes have seen the Redeemer!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Luke 2, 27-34:

- ^{ESV 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 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."

• **Let us pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, enlighten our minds so that we will see with eyes of trust, hearing Your word, the Redeemer of the world. Amen.*

• Dear Body of Christ!

- The birth of Jesus is a real birth. Mary held the child in her arms. This birth was prophesied, many times, as we have heard in the services this season. And after eight days, we hear that Jesus was circumcised and the name the angel proclaimed was given to Him, *Jesus*, meaning, He will save His people from their sins.
- Today, we hear, how Jesus, through His parents, adhering to the right counting of days, forty days, was brought to the temple in Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. He was the first-born son of Mary and every first-born was holy to the Lord and had to be redeemed, bought free from the Lord with a sacrifice.
- And we hear how Mary and Joseph bought Him free with the sacrifice for the poor, "a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons".
- Jesus is born under the Law of God. He is born into a poor family. He is fulfilling the law of Moses from day one! Did Jesus need this, as Son of God? Certainly not.

He did this to fulfil the Law *for us!* He was not a rebel against His Father's will. He fulfils it! The Redeemer is redeemed for us!

• And there are surprise witnesses waiting, two of them, Simeon and Anna, who will furthermore confirm who this child really is.

• Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel, a long time. And we hear, the Holy Spirit was upon him. This means, he was a prophet. In OT times only prophets received the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of God in certain occasions. It was revealed to him, that he would not die until he would see the Lord's Christ, the Lord's Messiah, the Lord's Salvation.

• On that specific day the Holy Spirit led him to the temple and there He found Jesus in the arms of Mary. He took Jesus in his arms and blessed God and said these famous words, which we know so well from the Nunc Dimittis, in our liturgy of the Lord's Supper [29-32]: *"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;..."* Simeon had waited so long for that day. He couldn't depart from earth. Now, he was ready to depart in peace, knowing that God's prophecy has been fulfilled, according to His Word. And then he gives the reason *"for my eyes have seen your salvation"*.

• Let us pause here for a moment. He says, with his own eyes he has seen the Lord's Salvation! We ask, what has he seen with his eyes? Strictly speaking he has only seen a little child! But, because this information coming from his eyes is placed in the right context of his mind, namely that this child is the Anointed one of God, he sees much more than only a little human being. He sees Israel's Consolation, Israel's Redeemer in his arms. He sees the fulfilment of God's prophecies in his arms!

• Dear congregation, when we see things, it depends all on what our mind associates with what we see! Our eyes are not working separate from our minds. They are linked. Simeon saw in full reality: 'I am holding the Lord's Salvation, the One who will save Israel from its sins in my arms'. It depends on what word you believe about that person. In Simeon's case, the Holy Spirit had convinced him, that this is Christ!

• In, with and under the human nature the godly nature was present. In the same way we need the Holy Spirit- we need to be baptised- to believe that we encounter

the real Christ in the Lord's Supper. We receive of the Body of Christ in our mouths in, with and under the broken piece of bread. We drink of the blood of Christ in, with and under the blessed wine. Our eyes only see bread and wine given to us by the servant of the Word, but the Holy Spirit convinced us to believe the Word of God spoken at the Lord's Supper, "this is my body", "this is my blood", and so we see, we eat and drink much more than mere bread and a sip of wine!

• In this act we realise that God remembers us, remembers the New Testament He has given us, and therefore forgives us our sins and unites us with Himself and strengthens our faith. Yes, Jesus has died for your sins! He is alive and present. He is the host of the meal of salvation, which He hands to us through the servant of the Word.

• And this salvation, prophecies Simeon, God has *'prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to His people Israel.'*

• For this we are witnesses, because we are of those Gentile nations who have seen the light, who believe the revelation God has written down for us in His Holy Scriptures! Yes, here I am, I am one of those. Its true, I see that light Simeon was speaking about. I know who Jesus is and I trust God's Word on what it says! It applies to me and to all people!

• We are speaking about real things here, revealed by the Word of God and we believe this Word through the Holy Spirit! Anyone who rejects the Holy Spirit will not see what we see, as most of the leaders of the Jews also did not see what Simeon saw in the human person called Jesus! The difference is not in what our eyeballs and their eyeballs saw. The difference lies in what Word we believe concerning what we see. The Word of God reveals the Truth, whilst the word originating from human beings, can only deny the Truth.

• Why is that? Because fallen human beings put everything they see in the context of what is possible in their own logical framework, mostly informed by their own personal experience. But this world-view rejects everything beyond what's possible in their minds! So, there is nothing wrong with their eyes. The Pharisees would later on see the miracles Jesus did and yet they would interpret them away! Its not only what you see, its what you think while you are seeing it!

• Its a battle for your mind! That is exactly what repent means, be converted in

your mind! And where this happens, the Holy Spirit is at work, because we cannot accomplish this!

• And so we have Simeon and Anna, two elderly, who waited all their life for Jesus. And they were used by God to prophecy on our behalf, so that we can be assured, Jesus is the Salvation of God in person. You cannot have it more tangible, more real than a physical body living body, embodying the Salvation act of God. Jesus is God's Grace in body and Spirit. These two prophets are quoted in the Gospels and together with the Word of the Apostles they form the foundation of the church, revealing who Jesus is!

• And that is also something we can confirm, that Jesus was a sign that was opposed, a stumbling stone, over whom many in Israel stumbled. His death exposed all human thoughts of blindness. His Word of the Cross, taught by the Holy Spirit, shed light on its true meaning. Yes, that is true. His death is our life. The prophecy of God given through old Simeon is true. Jesus is the Christ and therefore His Word gives us what it says it does. By hearing the Truth we see God's Salvation giving Himself to us at His table. **Amen.**

The Lord Jesus Christ says: "Surely I am coming soon.'Amen. Come. Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of you." Amen.