

Service for Week 30<sup>th</sup> Dec – 5<sup>th</sup>

January 2025- By Chaplain Andy

### Opening Prayer

Living God, we do not find it easy to live by faith. We want some idea of what the future holds, some assurance that things will work out as we hope.

Teach us that the future is ultimately in your hands, and to trust that, whatever life, or death, may bring you will lead us safely through.

In Jesus Christ's name. **Amen**

### Say to yourself- The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

**Amen**

### *Bible Reading Lk 2:22-40*

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord")

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 upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 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, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

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

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

***Thanks be to God***

## Reflection

It was the Jewish religious custom then to take your firstborn baby to the temple to be dedicated to God. This goes back to the time of Moses when firstborn children were to serve God in the temple and community throughout their lives. But in fact, the Levites (descendants of Levi) actually served in the place of all newborn males in Israel.

When Mary and Joseph arrived at the temple with the baby Jesus, a man named Simeon took the baby from Mary and held Jesus up in his arms. Simeon was an elderly man living in Jerusalem who had great faith and had been given a message by God's Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing Jesus Christ. On that particular day he felt that he had to go to the temple and knew straight away that Mary's baby was the Christ that he had been waiting for his whole life.

Simeon says to God "now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation..... a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." He knows for certain that this baby that he holds in his arms has come from God. Simeon then says these prophetic words to Mary : "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword

will pierce your own soul too." Words that came true for Mary at the foot of the Cross.

Also, in the temple there was Anna a prophetess who was eighty -four years old. She also acknowledged the baby Jesus as being the Christ and said that the moment all the people had been looking forward to had arrived.

These two elderly people had lived with an expectation throughout their lives that God would come to them in a physical form that had been prophesied in their ancient scriptures - scripture which is now our Old Testament. Can you imagine just how overjoyed they both were to have lived long enough for their hopes to have come true, and their feeling that they could now be at peace.

All of us can experience that same peace of mind today knowing that Jesus did come into our world and he really is alive through God's Holy Spirit in us. That knowledge of God through the small baby Jesus brought Simeon and Anna purpose to their lives, as the living presence of Jesus with us each day brings meaning and purpose to our lives today. **Amen**

## Closing prayer

Lord in the words of Simeon -  
'for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight  
of all people, a light for revelation'

**Amen** Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett