

The First Sunday after the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord  
St. Luke 2:33-40  
December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### When They Had Performed All Things

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord is presented in the Temple. Isaiah calls it the House of Prayer for all people. But the Temple segregates. It divides men from women, Jews from Gentiles, and priests from laity. Nor is the Temple in which He is presented the Temple of the Old Testament, the one built by Solomon according to Divine command. That was desecrated and destroyed. This Temple was built by wicked Herod. And yet, still, despite the desecration of a Roman eagle and other sacrilege, God sanctified it. He made it His place. The blood of animals was spilled. The aroma was pleasing to God. He chose to dwell there on behalf of His people. But it was no more permanent, with its brick and mortar, its beams of cedar from Lebanon, than the roving canvas Tabernacle of Moses. Do not forget that the Temple in which our Lord was presented and laid in Simeon's arms; where as a boy He taught the teachers; where He preached and healed and baffled His vain enemies; and from which He drove out the money-changers would not last. It was destroyed. It no longer exists. It has been gone now for over 1,948 years. A religion, as empty and false as modern Judaism, calls it "a sacred place." Zealots use it as an excuse to kill and maim on behalf of their wicked, ugly god Allah. And even if a temple like Herod's should be rebuilt, God will not dwell there again. For He has raised up for Himself a new Temple which man did not build, but that men did tear down. He rebuilt that Temple on the third day and now all the sacrifices for the atonement of mankind are fulfilled in Him.

So, it is that we do not need either the Temple of Solomon nor of Herod. We have the greater Temple. We have a Temple that is older than those others, older even than Moses' Tabernacle, older than the sacrifice that clothed Adam and Eve as they were expelled from the garden; and more lasting too. Those other places were only shadows of Him Who has now come. Those temples are fulfilled in Him Who died, but Who lives again. The good they did, they did on account of faith in Him accepting the sacrifices offered to Him. His once and for all time sacrifice is now atones for the sins of the whole world. He is the One to Whom we now go to receive forgiveness, which He bestows through His means of grace and the work of the Holy Ghost. He is now the place of God's gracious presence among His people. He is present with us through the means of grace: through preaching, Holy Baptism, the Absolution, the Lord's Sacrament, and whenever two or three are gathered together in His Name.

He is Immanuel—God with us—God as one of us and for us. He is the Atonement and appeasement of God's wrath, the Passover Lamb that takes away not just the sins of those whose doors are marked, but the sins of the whole world whenever they believe on His Name. It is His Blood

that is sprinkled upon us, distributed from the Cup, which gives us faith, that makes us clean, makes us His own. He is the House of Prayer for all people, interceding for His spiritual brothers, and teaching them to pray. He is greater than those types that went before Him. He does not segregate. In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female. And in Him there are no laymen. All believers are priests according to the order of Melchizedek, His own order. All who confess His Name are members of the royal family, too. They offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and moved by their request He spares the world of His greater wrath. He is not bound to time or space, to real estate. He dwells in the hearts of men, making them the temple of His Holy Ghost where His own loving Father is addressed by grace as our Father.

That being said, do not think that you can just willy-nilly take the Lord Christ with you in whatever way you see fit. You belong to Him. You do not control Him. You cannot just put Him in your pocket and take Him out when it is convenient. He is present when and where He chooses to be. In times of old He chose to be in the Temple, on the mercy seat, between the Law and man that He might shield us from the threat of death. Now, in the everlasting Day of the Resurrection, He has promised to be present in the Word of Absolution, in the Word that is heard and preached, and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and all of the means of grace for you. In those places, according to His promise, He is present for you through the working of the Holy Ghost. That is where you need to be; where He tells us He is going to be found. You belong to Him, so be where He has called you to be and where He can be found. The Shepherds when they heard the Good News did not abide in their fields, the Magi from the East did not think on Him from afar, but both groups, Jews and Gentiles alike, both went to where He was to worship Him. So also, Simeon was spirited to the Temple, Anna was as well. They came to the place where God had promised to be and where God was coming anew that the New Temple might replace the old. Simeon and Anna saw and blessed that day and were glad.

God has called you to be where He is, where He has said He would be. That does not mean that where He promises to be is always going to be gushing with an emotional high or a brain thawing revelation of His grace. Indeed, He does give those times, and we give thanks for when they come and are glad in them. But ours is the life of faith and that means believing in the Word and His promises. Even when we feel cold and dead inside, when our brain has gone solid, and our soul seems lost in a foggy, make-believe world, and the only emotion is a lackadaisical melancholy, even then we live by faith, we trust God's Word. In such a case, faith boldly says, "So what of it? The Word is true. I'll believe in that! No matter what, I know that God is good, that God is true, that God is here for me as He has said that He would be. I'll believe in that." Such is grace through faith in the Lord + Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, time is not without an end, and neither is your sorrow or your pain. Christ lives. Christ is coming back. For now, while we wait, He is here for you in the places He has promised to be. It is that perfect torn-down and built-again on the third day Temple which is put into you this day by way of bread and wine that you yourself would become what He is—the place of His gracious presence, His own beloved in whom He is well-pleased, the abode of His Holy Ghost, the Temple not built with hands, but by His Word. He is presented here for you, and He is present here today, for you so that in you He might perform all things necessary for your salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

#### **The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*