

The Festival of the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Candlemas)
St. Luke 2:22-32
February 2nd, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation

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.

It has been forty days since Christmas. This day marks the end of the Christmas cycle, even though Epiphany will carry on until next Sunday. So, if you have not taken down your Christmas decorations yet you are in the right. Even though the Christmas season has reached the end of its cycle, we will continue to get glimpses of this Feast throughout the Church's year. We will hear our Lord's birth announced at the end of March. We will hear of the visitation of His blessed mother to her cousin Elizabeth at the time of the naming of St. John the Baptist. Therefore, throughout the year we are reminded of the birth of our Savior, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

Thirty-two days ago, we also heard our Lord + Jesus being named and circumcised. On that day He was called + "Jesus." He was designated to by our Savior. That is what our Lord's Name means, "Savior." It was the Name that was told to the Blessed Virgin Mary by which He was to be called. His Name was not just something by which He was called, but also tells us about Who He is and what He does for us and all mankind. He was born to save mankind from sin, death and the power of the devil. As we will hear more about in the coming weeks as we grow ever closer to Holy Week and His death on Good Friday.

At both His circumcision and His presentation in the temple today, we observe that our Lord + Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses. Of course, this is part of His active obedience for us. He fulfills the Law on our behalf, since we are unable no matter how hard we try. We always come up short in obeying the Commands of the Lord God Almighty. And, as I pointed out at the time of His circumcision, our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ, could not have obeyed and fulfilled the Law of Moses if it were not for His devout and righteous parents. His parents had to have Him circumcised. An eight-day-old child cannot request such things from his parents. Nor can a forty-day-old child request that his parents take him to the temple to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Therefore, since our Lord + Jesus is born to devout parents, the Law is fulfilled.

The Evangelist St. Luke in today's Gospel tells us another enlightening thing when He quotes the Book of Moses, commonly called Leviticus. Since we have been studying these things in Bible study, you all should have a better understanding of these things. But, as a reminder, since we are prone to forget, the Evangelist St. Luke reminds us today why our Lord + Jesus has to be presented at the temple. He says, *"Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD."* Every boy

who is the firstborn is holy to the Lord. What that means is that every boy born in the nation of Israel was pointing forward to this Child Who is being presented at the temple at forty days old. Every firstborn son of Israel was a reflection of the grace of God, because they were a foreshadowing of this Boy's birth to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. Every firstborn boy was a reflection of the Savior, Who was born for us and Whose Feast we celebrated forty days ago.

The firstborn sons of the nation of Israel were a picture of our Savior and a picture of God's grace, on account of the tenth plague in Egypt when our Lord God punished Egypt's false worship and unbelief with the death of all the firstborn of Egypt, of both man and beast. In exchange for the event that led to their escape from slavery and bondage in Egypt, now all firstborn boys would be holy to the Lord. All the firstborn of Israel would be a reminder of our Lord's salvation through the death of the firstborn of Egypt. They would be reminded by having to come to the temple and offer a burnt sacrifice—a sacrifice that was wholly burned and dedicated to the Lord—and a sin offering—to remind them that they were born in sin. In other words, their salvation was brought about by death, and they were reminded of that through the death of animals. *"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons"* in the case of our Lord + Jesus' presentation at the temple.

All firstborn boys of Israel were a picture of the salvation of our Lord God. But, this Child, born to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Joseph her husband, was conceived of the Holy Ghost. He was not just named "Savior" but He was the salvation of the Lord God in the flesh. He was the embodiment of our Lord's saving grace. Our Lord + Jesus is the Savior of mankind.

And from what does He save mankind? He saves them from their bondage and slavery to that evil pharaoh called sin, death and the devil. Only instead of the death of our firstborn sons, He offers up His life as the Firstborn of all the living. He is the Firstborn Son Who dies on our behalf. He is sacrificed as a payment for our sins. He suffers our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. And His sacrifice is accepted by the Lord God, because He obeyed and fulfilled the Law of Moses. Even has we are shown that He does for us today.

He is holy to the Lord. He is the Lord. He is holy. He is without sin and hating sin and fulfilling the Law for us, so that He might suffer for us, and sacrifice Himself for us. All so that we might have life and have it eternally. He gets death. We get life. He gets punishment. We go free. He saves us, and we celebrate this day for we have a Savior Who we cling to in faith. He provides all that we need for our salvation. Our Lord + Jesus is our Savior. He is our salvation.

Today, we behold our Savior. Even as we hear about Simeon in the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke. He took the Child up into his arms and blessed Him and proclaimed that he had seen with his very own eyes his salvation. And not just his salvation, but he holds in his weary-from-waiting-for-death hands the salvation of the whole world. This Savior was not just the Savior of the people of Israel from the bondage of sin and death, but He is the Savior of all men, especially those that believe on Him for their salvation. Our Lord + Jesus, our Savior, is a Light to enlighten all of us Gentiles, even as He is the glory of the people of Israel, who were saved from their bondage to Egypt.

Just as Simeon took the Child up into his arms and saw his salvation so that he could now depart in peace, we too receive the Lord + Jesus in His Body and Blood onto our tongues and He gives us forgiveness, life and salvation. Having received these great gifts—the gifts that He won on the cross through His once and for all time sacrifice for us—we are now able to depart in peace just like Simeon. In this meal our sins are forgiven, and we have salvation through the eating and drinking of our Savior's Body and Blood in bread and wine.

Forty days we have celebrated our Lord's birth in the flesh. Soon, for forty days we will lament our sins and behold with the eyes of faith the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross.

And then, we will rejoice as our Lord is resurrected from the dead. In His resurrection, we see a picture of our own resurrection from the dead. We see a picture of all the saints risen from the dead and dwelling for all eternity with our Lord as we celebrate for all eternity the marriage feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom to His Bride, the Church.

Knowing through faith that this reality waits for all of us, we rejoice as Simeon did that day at the temple. For he knew that the eternal rewards that he had been waiting for were about to be his. We too, can depart in peace knowing that our eternal home in Heaven awaits us. There we will join with all those who have gone before us. We will be reunited with our loved ones who died in the faith. And we will sing with them and all the angel hosts the praises of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ—the Lamb Who was slain for our salvation, and who paid our penalty so that we might be freed from the bondage of sin for all eternity.

Behold the Lord in His temple! He has come to fulfill the Law for you and be your Savior. This is the grace and lovingkindness of the Lord God. 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!