

The Festival of the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St. Luke 2:22-32
February 2nd, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

They Brought Him Up to Jerusalem

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought Him up to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.’”

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.

My dear friends, it has been forty days since we celebrated the Nativity of our Lord, since we celebrated our Lord God being born in our flesh. On that day our Lord + Jesus opened the virgin womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She had not known a man. Her virginity was intact. Our Lord’s birth opened up her sealed womb, and thereby symbolized the opening up of the veil to the Holy Place in the temple, even as He did on the day of His death when He was crucified. And it in the temple where we find our Lord + Jesus and His parents on this day. This is our Lord’s first visit to the temple. At only forty days old our Lord is first brought to the temple to be presented as the first-born male child of Sts. Mary and Joseph. All firstborn males were holy to the Lord. They belonged to Him, and therefore they must be redeemed, that is, bought back from the Lord God with sacrifice and payment.

Here is the process by which these things were done in order to fulfill the Law of Moses: The Blessed Virgin Mary entered the Temple through the “gate of the first-born,” waited at the gate of Nicanor while the offering of incense was being made in the Holy Place. She then proceeded to the highest step of the stairway which led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel. Here a priest took the sacrifice from her hand and made the offering. She was then sprinkled with the blood to indicate the cleansing. Finally, she paid five pieces of silver into the Temple treasury, placing the money into one of the trumpet-shaped treasure-boxes which stood in the Court of the Women.

This law really concerned only such women as became mothers after the usual course of nature, that is, after they had had intercourse with their husbands and conceived in the usual manner. The Virgin and her Child might fitly have claimed exemption because the Virgin Mary was found to be with Child by the Holy Ghost. She had never known a man. St. Joseph did not know her sexually until after she gave birth to the Lord + Jesus. But Christ humbled Himself so completely for the sake of us sinners, so completely did He want to become flesh of our flesh, that He submitted even to this humiliating rite of purification in the Temple. Note also that in the Evangelist St. Luke’s Gospel he includes St. Mary’s

husband St. Joseph in this rite. For he states, “When the days of *their* purification according to the Law of Moses was fulfilled. Therefore, both of our Lord’s parents revered the Law of Moses—the Law of God—regarding their firstborn Son.

Since mankind is born in sin, the Lord God required a sacrifice for the birth of a child. This was done forty days after the birth of a male child, and eighty days after the birth of a female child. Sinners demand a sacrifice for their sins. Our Lord + Jesus Who is without sin, Who is born without sin, Who took upon Himself our flesh but without sin, still subjects Himself to the Law through the actions of His righteous and devout parents. These things are, as is often the case with the things regarding our Lord, are shadows of things to come. Our Lord + Jesus opened up the womb of His mother Mary as a symbol that all those who are born from Mother Church are born like He was born, spotless and without sin through faith in the promise.

Our Lord is brought to the temple, so that an offering of sacrifice might be made for Him. This points to His sacrifice for us. The male children of the poor were redeemed with the sacrifice of two turtledoves and two pigeons, one of each bird being for a burnt offering and one of each bird for a sin offering. We are redeemed back from sin, death, and the power of the devil by the burnt offering and sin offering of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, Who offers up His holy, innocent suffering and death as a ransom for us. At His death the veil in the temple was torn in two. No longer is access to the Lord God barred from mankind. We now have access to the heavenly Father through the Lord + Jesus, Who opened up the womb of His mother Mary, and opened up the womb of the mother Church so that all those who believe and are baptized are born anew out of water and the Spirit.

We who have been born from above, born through water and the Word, now have access to the heavenly Father through faith in the Lord + Jesus. We can now cling to Him Who perfectly fulfilled the Law of God. Already in our Lord’s first forty days He has shown His obedience. He was circumcised on the eighth day. He is presented before the temple on His fortieth day, and His mother is purified according to the Law of Moses, and fulfills all the requirements of the Law of purification, the sacrifices and offering of five shekels, which is not mentioned, but we can assume that they did not leave anything out, for St. Luke tells us that they did as was commanded of the Lord. Through His earthly parents our Lord fulfills the Law when He is unable to do this by Himself. In a little while, we will see our Lord begin His earthly ministry with His temptation by Satan in the wilderness. There He establishes at the beginning of His earthly ministry that He will be obedient to the Law of God. He will fulfill the Law of God perfectly, for only the Lord God is worthy of honor and obedience.

He will then become the replacement—the eternal replacement—for the animal sacrifices that were completed daily in the temple, night and day. He is the once and for all time sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He is the once and for all time sacrifice for those who believe on His name. He is our once and for all time sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, we will not die but live eternally in Heaven. Our bodies will rest in the grave, and our souls will be transferred to Heaven. There we will join with all those who have an eternal access to the Lord God heavenly Father through faith in their only Savior and Redeemer, the Lord + Jesus.

For our Lord + Jesus has opened up not only the way for us to be born out of the womb of Mother Church through the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, but He has also opened up our graves through His resurrection from the dead. He is the Firstborn of all the living. He the Firstborn from the dead. He is the Firstborn of those who no longer are plagued by sin and death. We will get to enjoy this reality when we are united with Him in Heaven; when we are reunited with all of our loved ones who have gone before us in faith. We will join with all the ones who live forever and ever in Heaven. We will live forever in Heaven. For our Lord + Jesus has offered up His life as ransom for ours after being our sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross to pay for all of our sins and trespasses.

We have been baptized into His death, so that we may also rise with Him in His resurrection. He has fulfilled all that was required by the Law to be fulfilled. Just as His mother and father fulfilled the Law of Moses regarding the purification rite. Because of our Lord's obedience to the Law of God, we now have access to the heavenly Father. We can call on Him and He will answer us through His holy Word. We can confess our sins and trespasses, and hear the announcement of absolution pronounced upon us by the ministers of the Word sent to us by Him. He has opened for us the way into Heaven, so that we need not fear death and shame. For He has perfectly fulfilled the Law for us, and had split the veil of the temple in two so that we may have access to the heavenly Father, now and throughout eternity. Thanks to the Lord God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!