

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, December 26, 2024

By: Jan Davis

Today is Thursday, December 26 and we are studying the song of Simeon recorded in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke following the birth of Jesus.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed and holy Lord, in the early morning of a dawning December day, I seek Your presence. As I complete my Advent journey and celebrate the birth of Your Son Jesus Christ, my heart overflows with love and joy. In these busy days, I find a few moments of stillness. I slow my breathing, quiet my mind and prepare my heart to reflect on the message of Simeon, a prophet of old. I listen for the message You have for me today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being 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." Luke 2:33-35

REFLECTION

The closing words of Simeon's prophecy cast the shadow of the cross over this joyous celebration. It is the same for us. We cannot celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas without the acknowledgement of His cross at Calvary. Without His Good Friday suffering and death and His Easter Sunday Resurrection, the holiday of Christmas would bear no significance or carry any weight of importance.

What Simeon explains in the words of his wise and prophetic song is that God's plan of salvation has been brought forth for all people, but, there will be opposition. The Messiah will invite criticism. He will bring division. He will reveal the ugly truth lurking in human hearts. There will be a time of sorting and separating, a judging of good and evil. Some will fall because of Him. Some will rise because of Him. And His own falling will proceed His rising. Jesus will fall at the cross before He rises in glory.

These future events, warns Simeon, will bring His mother Mary great pain. Her soul will be pierced as if with a sword. Her heart broken. Simeon's warning to Mary is inevitable. God's comprehensive plan of salvation is bound to encounter human resistance and evil opposition. It does to this day.

On this twenty-sixth day of December, the Christmas celebration has passed for us. Perhaps this morning you are facing trash bags full of torn wrapping paper, a sink full of still dirty dishes, and containers of leftovers in the fridge. Maybe you are wondering what difference yesterday made after all. Is the world ready to move on after singing the annual bevy of Christmas hymns?

Will we go about our way and forget that the birth of Jesus has changed the world forever? The incarnation of God altered the reality in which we were born, live and one day will die. Simeon waited a lifetime to see the Messiah. Let us spend a lifetime singing his praises, telling His story and sharing the truth of the Gospel - God's good news.

Ask: How will this year's celebration of Christmas change me going forward? How can I keep Christmas alive all year long? How can I share the Good News of Jesus?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, thank You for the celebration of Christmas and the many blessings of family and friends. Help me to keep Christmas all year long and hold the love, joy, hope and peace of Christ in my heart. Bring me from the creche to the cross, from the manger to the tomb and from the Incarnation to the Resurrection. Remind me of the miracle of Christmas born in a manger, Jesus - the gift of salvation You offer to me and to all the world. Amen.