

THE FIRST 15

Friday, December 27, 2024

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Today is Friday, December 27 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

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, 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 on him. Luke 2:36-40

REFLECTION

Following Simeon's song of prophecy, we meet another Temple prophet. Her name is Anna. An octogenarian. Widowed, faithful and pious. Like Simeon, she was also waiting for the Messiah to come. Her prophetic intervention is a stamp of assurance on the words Simeon has just shared. She affirmed His recognition of this baby boy - He is the redemption of Israel and the long-awaited Savior of the world.

Luke records multiple recognitions of Jesus in his Gospel. Jesus was recognized as the Christ Child. The infant John the Baptist recognized Him in utero and jumped in the womb. Elizabeth recognized His pregnant mother Mary as the mother of the Lord, the Messiah. Zechariah sang of His salvation after nine months of silence. The angels knew who the baby was and filled the sky with their jubilant song. The shepherds went to find Him lying in a manger. The magi traveled far distances to come and worship Him. Simeon saw Him in the Temple and Anna confirmed the recognition of God's one and only Son. Now it was time for the family to go home to Nazareth.

Mary and Joseph had done everything required by the law. Their newborn Son was circumcised, named the name the angel instructed Mary to name him, dedicated in the Temple and the offering for Mary's purification was made. All was accomplished in Jerusalem as it should be. The young couple had a son to raise, a long, dusty trip back to Nazareth on a donkey

and a return to everyday life. The ordinary returned after the extraordinary events of past weeks. Mary had swaddling clothes to attend to and a hungry infant to feed. Joseph had work to do in his carpenter shop. Daily life would resume for Joseph and Mary and routines would set into place. As Christmas has ended and we return to our normal work after the holiday season, everyday life will resume for us and our routines will return.

Perhaps while Mary and Joseph were working at their tasks and holding their infant son, they remembered the Songs of Christmas. Humming the tunes, remembering the words. "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Mary). "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel because He has come to His people and redeemed them" (Zechariah). "Glory to God in the highest heaven, peace on earth, good will to men" (the Angels). "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Simeon). In our everyday tasks may we remember the Songs of Christmas. May our voices join their voices, may our song be their songs, day in and day out, at Christmas and always.

Ask: Now that Christmas is over, how can I remember God's promises in the Songs of Christmas throughout the upcoming new year? As Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth to follow God's will and enact the routines of daily life, how can I best live out my everyday life according to God's plan?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord God, thank You for this Advent journey learning the Songs of Christmas. Let me keep these songs in my heart always and live with the joy of Christmas as I go about my daily life and everyday routines. Remind me of the good work that You have for me to do day in and day out and help me to faithfully fulfill Your plan for my life. Guide my steps and guard my heart in Your love, mercy, grace and peace. Amen.