



Praying Together



Simeon
February 2021

Dear Friends,

As promised in last weeks letter, I am going to pick up where we left off with the lovely story of Simeon. Simeon was an old man who had served God faithfully in the temple, and was content to do so until the Lord took him home. We read in Luke's Gospel that it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

It struck me as I was reading this passage again, that Simeon would have no idea about what exactly to expect. Yes, he had been told he would see the Messiah before he died, but was he expecting to see him in the form of a baby? Maybe he was expecting a grown man to come up to him one day and say 'Hi Simeon, I'm the Messiah, you can go now'! It's interesting how, even though we are so familiar with these Bible passages, we can still discover a new way of experiencing them. On the day that the Messiah was revealed to Simeon he was guided by the Spirit to go to the temple on this particular day, and, there he recognised the baby Jesus as the Messiah. Let's read this lovely story for ourselves. This passage of scripture is said at our Evensong Service and called the Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon) which in Latin means 'Now you dismiss':

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

*"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."*

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary. 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too'.

(Luke 2:2-35)

Simeon was the first person to predict that Jesus would come, not just for the Jews but for **all** people and he was also the first person to predict Jesus' suffering and warn Mary of the pain she would experience as his mother.

For us, Simeon is an example of strong faith and trust in God. There was absolutely no doubt in his mind that he would see the Messiah before he died and with this fulfillment he was ready to 'depart in peace'. He is the faithful servant, fully trusting in God's word and obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

For those of you who may be interested, I am attaching a link to the Church of England's Prayer for the Nation. This is a response to the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused so much suffering and sadness, with more than two million lives lost worldwide. We are invited to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each evening from February 1st for the whole month.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said:

"Prayer changes things. It changes things by inviting God into the room. At this challenging time when all of us are fearful and anxious, and when so many are suffering, it is the one thing we can all do. We can pray and invite God to change us, giving us the solace, strength and comfort, we need for the difficult winter that is ahead of us. Let's pray together at this difficult time."

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/stories/prayerforthenation>

Let us Pray:

In darkness and in Light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A prayer for those in need

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid, or in isolation
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A Blessing:

*May God keep you in all your days. May Christ shield you in all your ways.
May the Spirit bring you healing and peace. May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness
from you and pour upon you blessing and light. Amen*

Ali, on behalf of St Michael's Church, Marbury