LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NC 2/2/20

Nunc Dimittis

In the Name…

Let us pray…

The Gospel of Luke is unique in that is has the Benedictus from Zechariah, The

Magnificat from Mary, and now the Nunc Dimittis from Simeon. They make the

connection to Abraham and the Judaic faith and the redemption and salvation of

Israel. Zechariah is only found in Luke and Simeon as well. Boy do they

have a lot to say. We are going to look specifically at Simeon today. He is

introduced simply as a man I Jerusalem. But there is more, “He was a righteous

and devout man.” A man of true Old Testament piety and faith. So far nothing is

revealed as to where he is, he is just in Jerusalem. Like anyone of the

Hebraic faith, he longed for the coming of the promised Messiah. He was looking

for the consolation of Israel. Consolation means comfort received after a loss

or disappointment. Comfort received after some suffering has take place.

Jewish loss or disappointment at that time may have been the fact was yes they

have their temple but even that is under Roman rule as is all of their sacred city

Jerusalem. Or it might mean consolation as in the second choice, Simeon was up

for any consolation from God for Israel. For him the ideal would have been the

Messianic hope of which the prophets had spoken.

He had a special measure of the Holy Spirt, Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit rested

upon Him. So he was more than a holy, righteous and devout man, The only other

time we see that was when the Holy Spirit came to His baptism in all the gospels

in one way or another.

The Holy Spirit said he would not see death until he saw the Lord’s Messiah. God being Lord’s Messiah, not just any Messiah, but the Lord’s Messiah, because there may have been false Messiahs at that time. He would see the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by that same Spirit, Simeon went into the temple. Mary and Joseph brought in child Jesus to be purified, or as Luke says, to do for Him what was required under the law. We would have thought he would have been brought to one of the temple priests, but Simeon took Him in his arms. The Spirit caused Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus to be intercepted by Simeon, a holy and righteous man, adjectives that never describe the temple priest or hierarchy. Simeon took Jesus into his arms and praised God. Simeon then becomes the mouthpiece from God,

He says, “God is now dismissing his servant in peace, that is his work of waiting for Messiah is done, his work as God’s servant on this earth was done and he can die. It was a manumission in a sense for. Read the piece from February 1 if not in children’s message. I have been reading African/ Americans in North Carolina and it would make you think Greensboro started it all, there is a historic marker in Durham that tells of the Royal Ice Cream sit in three years earlier. But those first event, no matter which was first, brought a peace which said all forms of segregation needed to be stamped out non-violently.

Simeon said he could die because his eyes had seen the salvation which God had prepared in the presence of all peoples . I will change that slightly and say, we have seen God’s salvation for all peoples and we need to be part of making that happen on earth. Bryan Stevenson was one that say that. He graduated from Harvard law school in the 80’s and could have practiced in in any lucrative law firm, but chose to go to Alabama and the not for profit Equal Justice Institute and has been working ever since to bring Equal Justice to those wrongly convicted having exonerated over 130 over the past three decades. The film Just Mercy tells his story of how devouted he was to the cause. His colleague Eva Ansley said she had seen good lawyers before but never one that related to those he was working with as if they were family. Just Mercy will be on our summer spiritual cinema list.

Simeon took the child Jesus in his arms just like family, when Jesus spoke with, ate with the poor the lame the sick, He related to them as if they were family.

The salvation Jesus brought was universal, not to one ethnic group, the Jews, but salvation for all peoples, those to which injustices have occurred, those who have had privilege, those who can pay the big bucks to watch in the super bowl stadium or those who said their $20 to get some wings and watch it free on a small screen. His salvation is for the half time entertainers and those maintenance crews that transform the field into a stage and back again in a matter of minutes.

That is brought back home to us when Luke says He, Jesus, Messiah is a Light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. No one is left out.

Simeon’s words brought home the words of the angels to both Mary and Joseph BC Before Jesus birth. Mary and Joseph were amazed at all that Simeon was saying about Him.

But he also gives a warning of the coming struggle that Jesus would undergo and the suffering. He would be opposed and the inner thoughts of many would be revealed, religious leaders, Roman leaders, the soldiers, the crowds and Mary, a sword will pierce your soul too.

Simeon was so positive up till then, but oops, he spoke a half sentence too much, and ended with a downer, but he was saved by good old Anna, who continued his theme of praising God and referred to the child Jesus as the redemption of Jerusalem.

When everything required by law was finished, they returned to Nazareth and the child grew in wisdom, and became strong and the favor of God was upon Him, and we the recipients of Jesus’ redemption can rest assured that the favor of God is upon us.

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