



St John Lutheran Church

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Text: Luke 2: 25-40

Theme: Amazing Peace

Some years ago, there was a man going door to door, soliciting contributions for a Lutheran Orphanage. **He knocked on** a door and was greeted by an exasperated homemaker. **"Would you like to make a contribution to our Lutheran Orphanage?" The man asked. Much to his surprise...the woman said "yes, just a minute!" The woman turned and hustled off...she returned** a few moments later and said **"here they are ages 2 and 4!"**

There are times when parents of very young children feel moments of extreme exasperation...**yet even** then we know that these little bundles, as much work as they are, **are indeed** gifts from God. **They are a blessing** to us. **During this week** as we celebrate our Lord's Birth...**we take** time out to recognize and to give thanks for the greatest gift of God...**His One and Only Son. Jesus Christ who came as our Savior to Bethlehem...Jesus Christ** who comes to us today with His Peace and His Presence...**Jesus Christ...who promises** to come to us again as our Triumphant and Glorified Lord and King!

One of the many gifts God brings to us is the gift of His Peace! **During the Christmas Season**, many folks will talk about peace. **This peace is** expressed in many different ways. **We sing "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled". We speak of** being at peace with our fellow man as well as with God. **But today... how** many people really know peace??? **How many people** can even define peace for themselves??? **Is it, just not** being at war with another? **Or is it** peace of mind...**a contentment** that comes from way down in our core...down in the pit of our being? **Is it Peace** with God, that we all too often read about, but seldom fully take the time to understand? **More often than** not, when we speak of real peace we are usually standing at the foot of the death bed of a loved one whose earthly battle is over and they are at peace with the Lord... **in His very Presence!**

Today we are going to look at Simeon... **the aged** man of the Temple and servant of God. **Simeon, like Mary**, was given a song to express his joy and his faith. **An apt title** for his song might be **"Amazing Peace!" In this song** we are reminded that we have nothing to do with this peace. **Peace is God's doing...all of it. God is THE DOER** in our peace with Him...**we are never** to forget that! **The question is "How is this great peace given to us??"**

The answer is TRUE PEACE COMES AS RESULT OF KNOWING AND TRUSTING IN SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!!

In our Scripture lesson we read in vs. 25 that Simeon was a righteous and devout man. **He was righteous** because he trusted that God would in fact send a Savior to the world. **Simeon waited in** the Temple as for this Savior to come to the world... **for the** Savior that would fulfill God's promise! **The One for** whom Simeon waited was to be THE PRINCE OF PEACE!

Our text tells us that Simeon had to wait no longer. **The Prince of Peace** was brought to the Temple by His Mother Mary and His step father Joseph, so that He might be consecrated to God according to the Law of God. **While this family** was in the Temple... **the Holy Spirit** led Simeon to Jesus. **Simeon took this** Prince of Peace out of His mother's arms and as He looked at Jesus he broke into song.

God let Simeon understand that **THIS BABY**, was the promised One...**the Messiah** to save not only the Jews... **but the whole world!** **"Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a Light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the Glory of your people Israel!"**

Simeon was led by God to believe that in Christ...**this Christ** he held in his hand...**God was** making peace with mankind. **Through this special child... which he** was honored to hold up before God...**God would** give His

people peace of heart...**peace of mind ...and peace** of soul that could be found nowhere else in this universe! **The Peace of God** was now Simeons and Simeon held that peace in his hands. **We can only** imagine the complete joy that Simeon must have felt...**he had** seen with his own eyes and held in his own hands the **Promised One of God** who would bring peace!! **Simeon knew the** joy of his God keeping His Promise of salvation!!

Make no mistake...this peace that this Child brought to Simeon that day would not come easy. **Simeon was able** to see this as well. **AS he handed** the child back to His mother... **Simeon told** her that many would be saved by believing in Him...**but he** also told Mary there will be great suffering as well. **He told Mary that "A sword will pierce your soul too."** **This is the** first reference in Lukes Gospel, that the Peace of God would come at a steep price...**it would** come by means of the Cross! **And as Mary** would be there to watch it all,...**she too** would suffer as she witnessed her Son Suffer the very pain of Hell for the whole world! **No... God's Peace** did not come easy at all!

During the week before Christmas, as we go about our lives...**it is** hard to find people who are really at peace with themselves...**with God** or with other people! **Most people we** know... **even the** meek and the mild mannered, easy to get along with folks have trouble. **We live in** a world where somebody is always mad at us for some reason. **Sons and daughters** grow up and many times they do not meet parental expectations.

Children sometimes look at their parents as too controlling...too un-loving and stern, when all parents want is to protect the kids from the world. **Friends disappoint us**, strangers take advantage of us and we look around and wonder why we have to live like this!

Even in this time of peace on earth and good will toward men...**we just** don't see to much of the real thing in living color! **The truth is** that the Peace that Christ brings, **not only** passes peoples understanding...**it passes** people around the world completely!! **We have become** so busy and self absorbed that the pace of life has overcome and drowned out the purpose of life... **so that** we have no pace at all!

We know that Christmas time if very difficult for many. **Suicides always go up...people become** depressed and despondent to the point of utter despair. **People search for** peace, but their search in vain and they come up empty...**frustrated and demoralized!** **For many, after** the momentary joy of unwrapping the presents in over...**there is** only the reality of paying he bills and getting back to work! **The holidays will** come and go and with the season gone ...**is also** the hope of peace gone. **A Peace never** understood or comprehended in any worldly way at all!

No doubt that day in the Temple, the pace was frantic...**people scurrying** around to get done all that needed to get done, and when they were all done...**none had** found the Peace that Simeon was led to by God. **We need to** ask ourselves "**are we so busy, that we overlook the peace that God has led us to?"** **Are we so** busy that we overlook the gift of Peace we have been given? **Are we trying** to find peace in getting that perfect gift, putting away enough money for the future or paying off our house? **Are we looking** for peace in the things of this world....**so that** we miss the One who has been given to us free and out of a Holy and Perfect love?

I like to watch boxing on cable...**that and** the Discovery Channel seem to be about the only thing worth watching out of 58 some channels. **I had sat** through all of the pre-match hype and promotion and the fight had just started...**Pat came** in to innocently ask me a simple question. **I turned to** giver her an answer... **and bingo...**the fight was over...**a couple** of quick punches and it was all over! **I turned my head for just a moment and it was over!!**

My friends, we are not to let the things of this world distract us from what Christmas is really about. **We do not** want to turn our heads for even a moment...**we never** want to take our eyes off of Christ and the Amazing Peace He alone gives us! **Jesus was given** to us to reveal God to man and to then save man from his own sinful and wretched condition. **We dare not** miss it, because to miss it means never being at peace. **Never having a** content heart, never knowing what real peace is all about!

What does all of this mean to us here in Libby today??

Friends, this all means that like Simeon who waited patiently in the Temple for God to fulfill His promise... **we too** are to wait patiently with joy and hope of the Promise that is yet to come. **Our text says** of Simeon that he "**was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him!"**

It was the Holy Spirit who built Simeon's faith so that he could wait expectantly... **probably with** a gleam in his eye and a smile on his face! **We too have** been given the Holy Spirit in our lives...**the Holy Spirit** who builds us up and kindles and expectant faith! **Peter in Acts 2:38ff "Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this promise is for you and to your children and to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call."** Each one of us has God living inside of us...**He was** given to us in our baptism... **so that** just like Simeon, we wait expectantly and with hope of our Lord who is to come!

The color blue we use to symbolize this season of Advent is a color of hope. **Hope...blue, like** the waters of our baptism...**blue, like** the Heavens we are to inherit in our Lord's Kingdom! **Blue, the color** of hope and expectancy! **Blue, the color** of hope we have in this same Christ Child that Simeon bore up in his hands, before God and all who could see!

Our hope is not built up from the things of this world...**it is** not built by those things men say...**it is** not built by the wisdom of this world or anything in this world. **Like Simeon, our** hope is rooted and based solely on the Promise of God!! **The Promise of** a God who cannot lie and the Promise of a God who keeps His Word... **even to** the point of giving His One and only Son so, that we might live!! **That is what** our hope is based upon! **We need to look nowhere else for peace and joy and hope!**

Once Christ has been made known to you...**you have Peace! Most of us** take that very simple statement too lightly! **I will say it again...once Christ** has been made known to you... **you have Peace! Peace comes only** through Jesus Christ...there is no other. **Peter again in Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved!"**

Simeon was an old man. **He probably had** a hard time hearing and even seeing what was going on around himself...**yet through** a God given faith, Simeon was given the eyes to see that this Child was **THEE ONE** who would bring peace with God! Knowing that...**nothing else** mattered... **Simeon had** his peace in his hands and he was able to sing "**Lord now you are letting your servant depart in peace; according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your Salvation....!**

My friends...take the faith and the gift God has so freely given you and rejoice as you have something more valuable than anything this mortal earth can produce...**true Peace with God. Embrace it...cherish it and** share it with others for it is truly amazing. **Abundant life in** Christ is ours, now and forever! **Our gift is** described so simply by Paul in his letter to the Philippians 4:6-7 **He wrote "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the Peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!"**

There is no greater gift than God's Peace... **it is yours** through Christ Jesus the Risen One who will come again...**In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit...Amen!**

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