

Living With Open Hands

~ not clenched fists ~

Luke 2:21-38

The Great Reversal

Advent

- A time for all ages – babies/children, young parents, older seniors
- Our story today speaks to the inclusiveness of the Christmas story – the birth of Jesus for all ages

Setting the Scene

Luke 2:21-24

Travel to Jerusalem

The young couple are observing two ceremonies:

1. Purification of Mary – offering 2 turtledoves (poverty)
2. Presentation of the firstborn son – Hannah & Samuel story (1 Samuel 1)

Raised in Faith & Devotion

- Jesus is raised in an environment of faith and devotion to God
- The greatest gift we can offer our children – to open the door of faith
- Plant the seed of spiritual curiosity and selfless guidance

Simeon

Luke 2:25-32

A Model of Righteousness

- Simeon lives in hope and confidence in God
- He is led by the Holy Spirit in all of his ways
 1. 'Holy Spirit rested on him' (v25)
 2. 'revealed to him by the Holy Spirit' (v26)
 3. 'Guided by the Holy Spirit' (v27)

The Spirit Leads

- Causing Simeon to meet the Holy family
- Not just coincidence
- Living open to the Spirit's guidance

Simeon's Song

- Imagine holding the Creator of the Universe
- The joy, awe and wonder of Simeon as he holds the Christ child (v29-32)

Song Highlights

- i. Peace – shalom (v29)
- ii. Salvation (v30)
- iii. Good news for all people (v31-32) – Gentiles as well as Israel
- the parents are amazed at these inclusive words of prophecy

The Shadow of the Cross

- The child will be a catalyst (v34)
- Some will fall, others rise
- A sign to be opposed or a sign which draws

A Revealer of Hearts

- The child will reveal the hearts of all he touches (v35) – some open/ some closed
- It speaks to the crisis of decision
- Moving towards or away from God

The Cross Brings a Measure of Pain

- Mary's pain – a sword passes through her heart
- 'Take up your cross and follow me' – discipleship is not a stroll in the park
- Light always causes a shadow

Anna

Luke 2:36-38

A Similar Faith

- Anna reinforces Simeon's message both in life and action
- Devoted to God in prayer and worship
- Knowing suffering she did not become bitter
- A further model of faithful living

Anna's Prophecy

- Brings hope and encouragement to all who are waiting upon God
- 'looking' = waiting (v38)
- Some pathos as the child will ultimately be rejected

Going Forward

Relinquishment

- Relinquishment is about surrender to God – moving from an attitude of clenched fists to open hands
- A position of faith as a young child to her parents

Peace

- Surrender (an attitude) brings peace (shalom) - 'Now I depart in peace' (v29)
- Not having to control everything
- Let it go and follow the Spirit's leading