

Remembering God's Work Among Us

Luke 2:22–32 (NRSV)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” 25 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 on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27 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, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 29 “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Simeon.

Simeon is among the interesting characters who make an appearance during the birth narrative of Jesus. When the time came for Joseph and Mary’s new baby to be dedicated, they went to the temple in Jerusalem to perform what was required. While they were there, they met Simeon. By the way, this is the only place we encounter this man in the Bible or Christian history.

Simeon was a devote follower of God who was filled with the Holy Spirit. He lived with anticipation, longing for God to do His work in the nation of Israel and in the world. He had been given a special mission by the Lord: he was to serve as a watchman who would keep watch for the coming of the Messiah, through whom God’s redemptive work would be accomplished. God had told him he would live to see the Messiah.

On the day, Joseph and Mary brought their child to the temple, the Holy Spirit nudged Simeon to go to the temple. When he saw the baby, he knew his mission had been fulfilled. He had seen the Messiah. No doubt for the remainder of his life, he looked back at that event as the most meaningful of his days on earth.

When he saw the child, he sang out to God, “Master, you are releasing your servant in peace.” I used to think this was a request to die. But in reality it was a statement of mission accomplished and in many ways an invitation for the next assignment.

This morning, I want you to join us in reflecting on how the Jesus has showed up in your life and among us in 2017. Like Simeon, where did you encounter Jesus. My hope is for this to be a corporate and interactive message. I have asked a few folks to join me up front. There are

some questions on a handout in the bulletin. In a few moments, I will ask you to answer one or both of them.

Those up front are going to share a few highlights of seeing Jesus show up in our areas of ministry – Worship, Grow, Serve and Reach.

Worship – Brett, share with us a story of how Christ has showed up in worship in 2017:

Now it's your turn: Please take a couple of minutes to jot down answers to the questions on the insert. (Need a musical interlude)

Grow – Natalie, one of the places where we have seen Jesus show us is when He sent you among us. We are grateful. In the area of Grow, where has we seen Jesus showing up.

Serve – Staff WIG – 100 new people engaged in serving

Reach – Eric, tell us about Jesus showing up in the Reach area of ministry.

Looking to see how Jesus has been engaged in our lives elicits several things. It gives us hope for what lies ahead. For Simeon, his experienced became a well-spring of praise and gratitude.

Let us join in giving thanks for God's work in our lives.