

Sermon Notes: February 2, 2025

[Lectionary Readings](#)

Focus: The Presentation of Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple

I found the flow of today's text interesting. Below is an overview of Jesus' parents going to Jerusalem to present (dedicate) Jesus in the Temple. *Personal note:* when my oldest was a baby, I would lead Compline with her every night before bed. There, with a bottle and easy chair, I would sing the 'nunc dimittis' or Song of Simeon from the prayer book liturgy.

(she loved it, but she was, after all, a captive audience as she could not, at that point, crawl away) Here are some touch points on "The Presentation":

The Purification and Presentation of Jesus (Luke 2:22–24)

Purification Ritual: According to Leviticus 12:1–8, a woman was ritually unclean for 40 days after the birth of a male child and required purification (The first seven *really* unclean then 33 more, just unclean. Mary and Joseph adhered to these customs and would consecrate the first born in keeping with Exodus 13.

The Offering of the Poor: "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" point to Mary and Joseph's humble economic status, but faithfulness to the "law."

Interesting detail: The word "holy" (v. 23) not only refers to ritual consecration but foreshadows Jesus' unique role as the one who would fulfill God's plan of redemption.

Simeon's Encounter with Jesus (Luke 2:25–35)

Simeon: He is a man who had faith in "The Consolation of Israel": Simeon saw Jesus as a revelation of the promise described in Isaiah 40:1 and Isaiah 61:2. Simeon is part of the faithful few who were watching out for God to get busy redeeming Israel. Jesus filled him with hope and a sense of completion.

The Nunc Dimittis (vv. 29–32): Simeon's song echoes the Psalms and Isaiah (e.g., Isaiah 49:6). Jesus is a light to the Gentiles and glory to Israel and sets Simeon/ us free as God has promised.

Interesting detail: The Latin title *Nunc Dimittis* comes from the first words of the song, "Now you dismiss" (v. 29). It has been used for centuries in evening prayers and sometimes funerals. When John Coltrane played "A Love Supreme," as perfectly as he thought he could, he stepped off the stage, put down his saxophone, and said "Nunc dimittis."



Prophecy to Mary (vv. 34–35) "Falling and Rising of Many": Jesus will be a divisive figure, challenging the powerful while lifting the humble. It is in the same spirit as his mom's song in the Magnificat (Luke 1:52).

"A Sword Will Pierce Your Soul Too": This is a metaphor for the sorrow Mary will experience, particularly at Jesus' crucifixion (John 19:34).

Interesting detail: Simeon's prophecy links Jesus to the "suffering servant" in Isaiah, who is destined to face rejection but also bring redemption.

Anna the Prophet (Luke 2:36–38)

Anna's lineage and longevity: Anna is a member of the tribe of Asher, a northern tribe often overlooked in Scripture. Her old age and devotion highlight her role as a faithful witness to God's work.

Prophetic Role: Anna is one of the few women explicitly named as a prophet in the New Testament. She joins the ranks of Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah.

Response Anna proclaims hope for "all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Her public testimony contrasts/supplements Simeon's personal prayer.

Interesting detail: Anna's life of fasting and prayer echoes the lives of other temple figures like Samuel and foreshadows how we are called to live together in a community of hope.

The Return to Nazareth and Growth of Jesus (Luke 2:39–40)

Obedience to the Law Mary and Joseph fulfill "everything required by the law," showing their commitment to God's covenant even as they go home.

The Growth of Jesus "Filled with Wisdom": Jesus grows in divine and human understanding. Luke 2:52 tells of Jesus increasing in grace and favor.

Interesting detail: The phrase "the favor of God was upon him" mirrors a sleepy, young Samuel called by God (1 Samuel 2:26). You will remember that great story where God was calling to Samuel repeatedly. Samuel thinks his mentor, Eli, is calling him. But Eli figured out God was calling, so he told Samuel to go back to bed and say, "Speak God, your servant is listening."

Themes

Jesus' old and new Jesus in the temple bridges the old and new.

Simeon and Anna represent the faithful longing for Messiah.

Nunc Dimmitis Simeon (and we) experience freedom in Jesus

My baby long ago approved this message, and I hope you find peace in the story.

We are set free to go in peace through community, with hope for our next year together, starting with the Annual Meeting! **Todd**