

Sermon December 27th, 2020

Jesus Our Redeemer

On Christmas Eve we hear the story of Jesus' birth, and the proclamation by the angels that Jesus is the saviour that God has promised to send into our world to redeem us. Like the poor Shepherds, we hear these words with hope and anticipation for what Jesus is about to do in our world.

Today on the first Sunday of Christmas Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple to be dedicated to God (**Image**). When Jesus is presented before Simeon, he blesses Jesus, confirming the angel's proclamation, that Jesus is indeed the saviour God has promised to send to us to redeem us, and to glorify God to all people.

In response to this blessing, the prophet Anna proclaims Jesus as this saviour to the people who have gathered around her (**Image**). People who are longing to experience redemption from their suffering. Through Anna's proclamation, hope and anticipation continues to grow with the people as Jesus is now being identified by people of faith in the community as the messiah. The saviour. The redeemer.

For both Simeon and Anna who have waited a long time for this moment, they can now die in peace knowing that Jesus will grow up to redeem their people, and the whole world from oppression and suffering.

Now, the gospel isn't the only place where we hear about this proclamation of redemption for God's people. For the Israelites, we hear in our reading of Isaiah, that God will save God's people from their suffering in Babylon. The people live with hope and anticipation as they hear this proclamation. Some argue that this section of Isaiah was written as the Persians were liberating Israel from Babylon. So, this proclamation was becoming a reality in their midst.

For the early Christians, Paul reassures them as they face persecution and suffering that God sent Jesus into the world to redeem them from suffering. And that Jesus is still healing and redeeming them through the Holy Spirit.

A common theme throughout our Christmas readings this morning, and those we read throughout the Christmas season is that God sends Jesus into our lives to redeem us from suffering. This is the promise God is

fulfilling for the people, for us, for all when Jesus is born and dedicated at the Temple. The messiah is here. The redeemer is here, and will grow in wisdom until the day he will appear at the river Jorden to initiate his ministry.

A ministry where we bear witness to this Christmas proclamation through Jesus' words and deeds. A Ministry where we see that Jesus heals (**Image**), forgives, and shows hospitality to many who he encounters along his journey. Redeeming them from their suffering. Giving them hope for a better future.

As we walk with Jesus from his birth to his baptism. From his transfiguration to his suffering. From his death to his resurrection. From his ascension to the day of Pentecost. We see that Jesus' powers to redeem us are not limited to his brief life with us on earth. Christ, redeems us from sin and death in his resurrection. Giving us eternal life. Christ continues to redeem us through the power of the Holy Spirit that he breathed on his first followers on the day of Pentecost. That he breathes on us on the day of our baptism.

We cling to this Christmas proclamation that Jesus is our redeemer, whenever we face suffering in our lives. Maybe you are suffering from a job loss or are grieving the death of a loved one (**Image**). Maybe you are dealing with a cancer diagnosis or you are suffering from depression. Maybe you are dealing with a sore back from shovelling all that snow we received just in time for Christmas (**Image**), or you are feeling lonely during this period of isolation and restrictions. Whatever you are suffering from, feel reassured in this Christmas proclamation that Jesus is our redeemer who redeems us from our suffering.

We witness this redemption coming to life when we hear the scriptures being proclaimed (**Image**). We witness this redemption coming to life when we reflect on the many times where we, and our loved ones have experienced God's healing and redemption from suffering.

As we reflect on these experiences, we see that sometimes it is in feeling Christ's presence that we experience healing and redemption from our suffering. Sometimes it is what Jesus says and does to us through our brothers and sisters in Christ that we experience healing and redemption from our suffering (**Image**). Sometimes it is through some unexplained

miraculous intervention by Christ that we experience healing and redemption. Sometimes it is through a devotional or worship moment where we experience healing and redemption. Sometimes it is through the words and actions of our brothers and sisters from other faith traditions where we experience healing and redemption (**Image**).

Christ works in all times and in all places to fulfill this proclamation that Christ is our redeemer.

Today, both Simeon and Anna proclaim to us, like the angels said before them, that Jesus is our redeemer who has come into our lives to redeem us from our suffering. Today, Paul reassures us that Jesus continues to do this work through the power of the Holy Spirit.

May we feel comfort and peace in this proclamation as we journey through a Christmas season like no other.

Let us pray, loving God, we give thanks that you send Christ our redeemer into our lives to save us from our sufferings. Help us cling to the proclamation of your angels, Simeon, and Anna, as we face suffering from this pandemic. Give us hope in this proclamation that next Christmas season will be a season where we will experience your wonderous redemption. **Amen.**

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