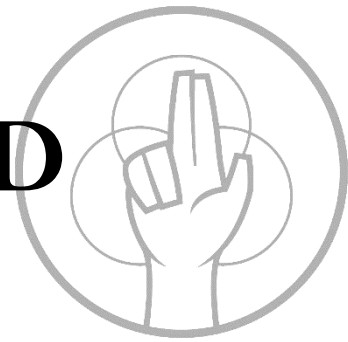


In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #12 – HOMEWORK



THE SONG OF SIMEON

*In peace, Lord, you let your servant now depart according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for ev'ry people,
a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory, the glory of your people Israel.*

In Luke 2, Simeon holds the eight-day old Savior of the world in his arms. He has seen the Lord's salvation with his very own eyes. Like Simeon, at the sacrament of Holy Communion, we have been in the presence of the Son of God, our Savior. The Holy Spirit enabled Simeon to recognize that the infant carried in Mary's arms was the Lord of heaven and heaven, hidden in humble flesh. Like Simeon, the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes of faith to recognize that the body and blood of our Lord is hidden in the humble bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

"The Song of Simeon" is also called the "Nunc Dimittis," which in Latin means "Now you dismiss." At the end of the Divine Service, the Lord allows us to go in peace, having not only seeing, but also tasting our Lord. Since the fourth century, the Christian Church has sung the Nunc Dimittis as the last prayer in the Service of Evening Prayer. Since the sixteenth century, the Nunc Dimittis has also been sung immediately following Holy Communion. This is a distinctively Lutheran contribution to the Divine Service.

THANK THE LORD

*Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He renews his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia! Alleluia!*

The natural response after receiving a gift is to give thanks. After communicants have received the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in the sacrament of Holy Communion, they naturally want to express their thanks to the Lord. They do that with the song "Thank the Lord," which is a fairly recent addition to the communion liturgy. It is found at the end of the Service of Word and Sacrament.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, King David wrote a psalm of thanksgiving for the occasion of the Ark of the Covenant being moved to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16). This was a national day of celebration for the nation of Israel. As part of this celebration, David provided breads and cakes for the worshipers to enjoy. The worshipers ate and drank in praise and thanksgiving in the presence of the Lord. After eating the body and drinking the blood of the Lord in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, worshipers give praise and thanksgiving in the presence of their Lord.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

(1) We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this Holy Supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(2) O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(3) Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The prayers following Holy Communion underscore the blessings received in the sacrament.

THE BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace. Amen.

The name of the Lord is the beginning and end of the Divine Service. Worship began in the name of the three-in-one God. Worship ends with the three-fold blessing of the Triune God. As the pastor invoked the name of God in the invocation, now He asks for the Lord's blessing in the benediction. The last word of the service belongs to the Lord as He places His blessing upon His people. The Benediction is more than a prayer or a wish. By His holy name, the Benediction grants God's blessing upon His worshipers for the rest of the week.

God's name was placed upon us in our Baptism. The sign of the cross was made by the pastor from the head to the heart of the baptized. Now, in the Benediction, the pastor reminds us of our Baptism as He once again makes the sign of the cross over the worshipers. (Worshipers may also make the sign of the cross on themselves as the pastor makes it over the whole congregation.)

With the same name that worship began, the Triune God sends us back into the world, to live and share His name. The pastor places the name of the Lord upon God's people in the same way that Aaron, the high priest, was to put God's name upon the people 3400 years ago (Numbers 6:22-27).

Digging Deeper

Read Luke 2:29-32. Jesus is the fulfillment of Simeon's "song." How is Jesus "light" for those living in darkness (the Gentiles) and "glory" for those who have no power in their nation (the Jews)?

Read 1 Chronicles 16:1-10. David composed a song of thanks for the occasion of bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. What verbs did David use to encourage the people to worship the Lord in verses 8-10?

Read Numbers 6:22-27. The word "Lord" is repeated three times in the benediction given to Aaron, the high priest. Why do you think the word Lord is repeated three times in these few verses?

How do the words "The Lord bless you and keep you" (verse 24) reflect the Father's work?

How do the words "The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you" (verse 25) bring to mind the work of the Son?

How do the words "The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace" (verse 26) reveal the work of the Holy Spirit?

Some churches have a sign at the exit of their parking lots that proclaim to the church members: "You are now entering the mission field." After Christians have had their faith strengthened through Word and Sacrament and worshiped their Lord and Savior, now they will want to share that faith and Word with others. Let's look at how the early Christians shared their faith and God's Kingdom grew because of their work in His mission field.

Read Acts 3-4. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the apostle Peter healed a lame beggar. After this, the religious leaders in Jerusalem had Peter and John put in prison. When they were released, Peter and John went to their friends and reported everything that had happened. Because they continued to preach Christ's name – even after they were commanded to be silent (Acts 4:18-20) – God blessed them. What were some of the outward blessings that the Christians enjoyed (Acts 4:32-37)?

Read Acts 6-7. Stephen was one of the men chosen to help take care of the widows and needy. Stephen was seized because the religious leaders could not argue with him since he was filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Stephen was then brought before the high priest. He gives an excellent summary of how the people of Israel continually rejected God and persecuted His representatives. What was the conclusion of Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:51-54)? How did Stephen display the heart of one touched and changed by the love of Jesus' love (Acts 7:59-60; Luke 23:34, 46)?

Read Acts 8:1-8. The devil used Saul to ravage the young Christian Church by persecuting Christians, putting them in prison, and even putting them to death. Instead of the Church being crushed, what did Christians do as they were scattered by the persecutions (Acts 8:4)?

Read Acts 8:26-40. Philip began his evangelism encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch by asking a question, "Do you understand what you are reading?" This question gave Philip the opportunity to explain how Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's Old Testament prophecy. Read Isaiah 53:1-12 and pick out phrases that point to the coming Messiah, and explain how Jesus fulfilled them.

Give examples of how you have or might use questions to lead people into a deeper discussion about Jesus.

Read Acts 9. How did God use the former persecutor, Saul, and convert him into Paul, His apostle to the Gentiles? How did God use His once timid Peter to boldly preach and grow His Church?

Read Acts 10-11:18. How did God demonstrate through Peter and Cornelius that Gentiles were a part of God's plan of salvation?

Read Acts 11:19-30. The Church continued to grow, so Barnabas and Paul were brought together into a missionary team. For a whole year they met with the church in Antioch. What was so special about the disciples in Antioch (Acts 11:26)?

Read the rest of Acts as you have time. You will notice that whether it is Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Philip, or other early Christians, they continued to fulfill Jesus' mission: "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

Daily Bible Reading: Read John 8-14.

Memorize the following passage: Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Digging Even Deeper

Who do you know that needs to hear the news about Jesus and what he has done for them? Is it a family member? Is it a friend? Is it an enemy? Is it a co-worker or acquaintance? Is it someone you cross paths with every day or the neighbor that you say hi to every morning? First, pray for these people. Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to them about Jesus. Then invite them to come to worship services and Bible classes with you. Regardless of the response or results you see, keep talking about the peace you have in Christ and the future you have in heaven!