



'Nunc Dimittis'

Of all the Christmas narratives from the holy Gospels, I love the story of Simeon the most. Here was a man of God who was waiting patiently for the Lord's will to be shown. He had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Lord's plan of salvation, and so he waited. And waited. And waited some more. He was getting older, and still he waited.

Life is like that. Waiting. Praying. Hoping. **"How long, O Lord?"** the Psalmist cries. And often times, so do we. Then the worry sets in. Does the Lord hear our prayer? Will He ever answer us and visit us with His mercy?

Satan loves to use God's patience against us and cause us to despair: 'Maybe God didn't hear my prayer; perhaps He really is angry at me for what I did, for what I failed to do right.' Yet our Lord is merciful, He is listening, and He does answer prayer! Always!

How do we know this? Well, what happens Sunday by Sunday in the Divine Service? As we enter into the church, we come before our Triune God who is here to bless us. The Lord of heaven and earth did not establish His Church on earth to destroy His people, but to save us! From the *Invocation* through the *Benediction*, our heavenly Father is here to forgive us all our sins for Jesus' sake. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to teach us and lead us into this truth of God's forgiveness, guiding us to see our Lord's presence here for our good.

And as we near the end of the service, something incredible takes place. Having confessed our sins, knowing our need for Jesus' blood bought gift of salvation, Jesus' own body and blood are offered to us in Holy Communion! Jesus is here! For you! For your salvation!

As we approach on bended knee, our open mouths receive Jesus' body in that wafer of bread. Jesus comes to us, individually, that He might bless us with full healing, a complete restoration to godliness and holiness which we need as we continue to battle this flesh and blood of ours which

only wants selfish desires. Christ's blood is then poured out on our sin-parched lips, marking the door of our hearts with the blood of eternal passover!

Jesus claims us as His own brothers and sisters in this sacrament! In such a very real and concrete way, Jesus has come to us, to give us everything He won for us on Calvary, and He does it week after week because our Triune God knows we sin much and regularly need this forgiveness to combat our sinful flesh and the devil's ways in this world of fear.

Having been given this tremendous food of eternal life, we resume our place in the pew, adoring our Triune God who is right here for our blessing! He is not far away from us; He has not left us to fight the battles of daily life on our own. He is right here; we have beheld His glory, tasted and seen that the Lord our God IS good! And so we join Simeon in a song of eternal praise:

"Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of ev'ry people: A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel," (DS1)

In Holy Communion, we have beheld Jesus! We know the end of our story now. We will not be condemned for our sins because Jesus has taken them all away and nailed them to that ancient tree. We are free from sin, from worry of eternal death, and free from Satan's accusations because Jesus is our Lord and Saviour! We can depart in God's peace!

Each Sunday, we are readied for eternity! No matter what life may throw at us, we know our eternal home is set and prepared for us, and that frees us from any worries we might have. All thanks to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

In Christ's service,
Rev Joel V. Kuhl, Pastor