

Pastor Roy's sermon from February 2, 2014

Children's sermon: flashlights. How does light remind us of God?

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Simeon and Anna faithfully wait. Hoping, trusting that God is going to visit Jerusalem in their lifetime. Waiting to see the fulfillment of the promise. Not necessarily knowing what it is for which they wait. But when they see the baby and young family, they somehow know, and Simeon prays a prayer of release, now that he has seen the dream fulfilled.

"It's all good now. I see the salvation of God. I see God with us. I see Light for all people. All in a baby. How curious. . .but true. All according to God's promise of mercy." Simeon's prayer is a prayer of final trust and safe keeping. Many traditions use this prayer canticle for its nightly devotion. The prayer is one of hope and rest--whether it be for nightly sleep or in death to enter the life of the ages.

We also use this prayer as a song or canticle after communion. This prayer sums up well our life of faith. After communion and before going to sleep are important times to be reminded of the essence of our faith. Times of assurance and comfort. Times of remembrance. Communion is about remembering Christ with us, God with us. God in the bread. God in us. If we can see God in the bread and cup, then we can see God all around and within. We are remembering.

Of course, sleep can be restful, or fitful. Remembering faith before we sleep can remind us the nature of our lives. Lord, let your servant depart in peace, for these eyes of mine have seen the savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see, a light to enlighten the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

A life of remembering faith and trust is a life well lived; life without true regrets, full of compassion, mercy, and humility. It is the best we can live. Of course, there will be accidents, and errors, and disappointments along the way. But those who are mindful of humility will have no reason to make excuses, for integrity and confession walk hand in hand. Prayers like Simeon's help us to accept that the light and salvation of God shines on everything and everyone.

Are we aware of God with us? Are we remembering light and salvation around us and within?

Awareness and mindfulness of God's presence takes discipline—it's a life long journey. It's a life task which we can either make a priority or handle as we muddle along. I don't think it's possible to live without in some way seeking and searching for the eternal. Eternal meaning, purpose, release from the constant pressures of living without giving up *on* living. Seeking one who would say, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Call the divine what you may, everyone is seeking God. Everyone glances Godward throughout the day.

We remember God. We forget God. Remembering God can be an anchor for hope and wellness. We fail to remember God when we are successful and claim the credit all for ourselves. We also forget God when we feel like failures and despair. Those moments which feel so good that we are unaware of the Spirit of God flowing around us. And those opposing moments that go so poorly for us and we turn inward and are keenly aware of our shortfalls and weakness. We are self-conscious and not God conscious. We despair because we fail to seek God around us and within us.

Natural highs and lows can actually be sign posts to remind us that we are forgetting God, that we are forgetting our faith, that we are stepping away from the wisdom and mercy that keep us sane, and whole, and in union with God and all of creation. When we are in union with God we are well. Life flows into us and from us. We receive life, we give life. We are working with God and God's people.

The moment we are brought back to remember God is a holy moment, a good moment. They happen many times throughout a day. They ground us and give us roots. Let us embrace them, look for them, be drawn to them.

Thanks be to God.