

“My eyes have seen....” Luke chapter 2 verse 30

Simeon was an old man living in Jerusalem. All his life he had been looking forward to what the gospel of Matthew calls “The consolation of Israel”, the promised messiah. He had been given a special revelation by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Christ.

Moved by the Spirit one day, he made his way to the temple, where he saw a young couple who had brought their eight day old baby to be presented to God and circumcised, according to the Jewish custom. The chances are that he had seen many such families, but something within him told him that this one was different, the one he had been waiting for.

Outwardly, Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus would have looked no different from any other, but Simeon was a man who was used to hearing the prompting of the Spirit in his life. He was someone who had clearly acquainted himself with God, not just by becoming familiar with the scriptures, or by observing religious rituals, but by seeking God on a personal level. “The Holy Spirit was on him” says Matthew. Simeon's knowledge of God was a personal experience. He had attuned himself to hearing the voice of the Spirit.

Because of that, he was able to recognise Jesus, even though what was presented to him was no more than an ordinary family among a crowd of ordinary people. Nothing about them would have made them stand out, especially, from anyone else. Yet Simeon identified the infant as being the one that the nation of Israel had been waiting for for many centuries.

We have spoken in recent days about people who asked “How can I know?”, “How can this be?”, “Where can we find?” and the shepherds, who said “Let's go and see”. All found something that must have looked unimpressive in the light of the messianic prophecies. Yet they recognised the fulfilment of those prophecies in Jesus.

When we think of God, our first thought is an almighty being who performs mighty acts of power. But we often don't appreciate that God's mighty acts of power frequently begin with things that seem insignificant in human terms. It takes the eyes of faith to see the hand of God in the things that seem unimportant to the world, but God is able to reveal his love, power and truth to our hearts through these very things. Let's seek God for the spiritual sensitivity and vision to see small intimations of his presence and activity.

Prayer.

Father, you are working and speaking all the time, even in the small and the ordinary. Please open the eyes of my heart to see your presence wherever it is, and to be encouraged by the smallest sign of your working. Please grant me, like Simeon, to recognise the small beginnings of your greatest works. In Jesus' name, amen.

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