



Which may lead us to wonder.... When we come to this place of worship each Sunday, obedient to the expected norms of our own faith tradition, having put the acceptable amount of offering into the plate, do we leave here unchanged? Or Changed? Are we somehow drawn into more than we have asked or imagined? Mary and Joseph left the Temple that day changed by the prophecy of Simeon and Anna. They to return to the world, to offer Jesus to all who were seeking salvation and light.

As his followers we too are called to offer Jesus, to have our own lives changed, as we go out into the world with the good news of the Gospel. Where are the places in our world where we might present Jesus? Perhaps we could present Jesus at our workplace, at school, or in committee meetings. Checkout lines and waiting rooms offer holy space for sharing faith. Some of us may be called to present Jesus to those who have great wealth, or to those who are living in poverty. The truth is, any place is a good place, a temple, where people are waiting to be presented with Jesus.

No one, not even wise, devout, Spirit-filled Simeon and Anna, ever said that it was going to be easy. In fact, it's often a challenge to go to the hard places and do what we are called by God to do. A musician must practice in order to use his gifts to make music. An athlete must exercise her muscles to be strong and able to compete. In the same way, it takes practice and dedication to become followers of Christ, to get our bodies, minds, and spirits to work together to create wholeness, to create strong relationships with Christ and with one another. Just as we have to get up off the couch if we ever hope to be good at whatever we are called to do, we must get up off of our pew to be a follower of Christ. We are called to share what God has given us, we are called to go to all the places where Jesus has not yet been presented, to present Jesus to those who have long awaited the light of Christ.

We start small and build our strength and endurance. Serving in a ministry here at church, making a commitment to daily prayer and study, visiting a parishioner who cannot get to church, or volunteering day or two each month. We start a conversation with someone we notice sitting on the margins, give a bag of food to a food pantry, or invite a friend to church. We write a note to someone we know is carrying a burden, or take a meal to someone so busy caring for another that they have no time to cook. In all these small ways we are practicing, exercising, building up our faith, and presenting Jesus to others.

What is amazing is that we have no idea how many people are watching; people who see us being like Jesus, and then, in seeing, begin to long for a relationship like that. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, Tertullian, an early Christian theologian and writer preserved some amazing words of pagans who observed the Christians, "See how they love one another." So many people today are longing for, searching for, a way of living that is kind, loving, and generous. They are waiting for salvation. What do they observe when they see us outside of our Sunday morning hour in church? We are here because we have seen the Savior, because someone presented Jesus to us. Who is not here yet because they are waiting to see the light of the Savior in us? Let's close by saying together the Song of Simeon, found on page 120 in your BCP....

Lord, you now have set your servant free

to go in peace as you have promised;  
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.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.