

Our Mighty God Is Ever-Faithful

Introduction: Reflecting on the year soon past, where have you seen God's might for you? His faithfulness to you?

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

²² When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

1.) This section begins and ends with Mary and Joseph doing everything required of them and baby Jesus at the Temple. How does this demonstrate God's faithfulness?

2.) How did God demonstrate special faithfulness to Simeon and Anna? How is their faith in the coming Savior expressed?

3.) Jesus would be "light" and "glory." Explain those words and how they were applied to the two main groups of people in the world, Jews and Gentiles.

4.) Analyze verses 34 and 35. Why would Jesus cause a falling and rising in Israel? Why would people speak against Jesus? What do Simeon's ominous words to Mary mean?

Second Lesson: James 4:13-15

¹³ Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

1.) Is James condemning the making of plans? How does bringing God into our planning reflect itself in our attitude towards the future?

Sermon: Isaiah 40:25-31

²⁵ “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.
²⁶ Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name.
Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.
²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”?
²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.
²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;
³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

1.) What qualities of God are communicated by the vast cosmos? How might our sinful nature use that truth against us? (v. 25-27)

2.) What are some occasions when we are tempted to think that God has “lost sight” of us?

3.) As we head into a new year, how do the following reassure us and give us pause?

- The LORD is everlasting (“the God of eternity”)
- The Creator of the ends of the earth
- Not grow tired or weary
- Understanding no one can fathom