

2015-02-01 Sue Diggory

Candlemas - Luke 2: 22 – 38

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

Talk

The following symbols were on the table

Candle, shell, Christening dress, Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, pictures of the Temple in Jerusalem and a pigeon

- Today it is just 40 days from Christmas, the time when Jesus was born. And we have our crib figures of Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus to remind us of that – I know he is no longer a new born baby but in our time line he is only about 6 weeks old.
- Today in our church calendar we remember one of the first things that happened in Jesus' life, something that happened to every first-born Jewish boy not long after he was born. He was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem by his parents and offered back to God, according to the law of Israel. This ritual goes back to the days of Moses and as part of the ceremony a sacrifice had to be offered in exchange for your child and if you were poor like Mary and Joseph you offered a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.
- In our Bible story we heard how God had promised Simeon that before he died he would see the Messiah and how when Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the Temple the Holy Spirit brought him there at the same time and that as Simeon took the baby in his arms he realised that this was a very special baby – the Messiah that he had been waiting for all those years and we hear those well-known words of Simeon's prayer of praise which is said in traditional evening prayer each day
- *Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'*

- Simeon knew that Jesus would be a light in our dark world not just for the Jesus people but for the gentiles, non-Jews people like us.
- We know that Jesus is the light of the world, but Simeon also knew that this would not be easy either for Jesus or his parents as he warns Mary that *a sword will pierce your own soul too* – he warns that for Mary life will not be easy and we know that it wasn't because she was there watching as Jesus died on the cross
- There was someone else in the Temple that day, an old lady called Anna and she too recognised how special and we are told she praised God and began to tell people about Jesus.
- But we still have some other things on the table and they are reminders of the other part of our service today, water, a shell and a white dress all symbols of baptism and today Nicholas and Malina have been brought by their parents, not to the Temple, but to the church, Holy Trinity here in Crockham Hill, to be baptised into the family of the church today, so that they too can become lights to shine for Christ in the world, and as part of their baptism they will be given a candle, lit from the big Easter candle as a symbol that they are to shine as his light in the world.
- So, today as we celebrate 'The Presentation of Christ at the Temple' or Candlemas as it is often known, we have both a time of looking back to Jesus birth, the time when God came into the world in human form as it is the last festival of the Christmas season and it is also a beginning to look forward to Lent, and the time when Jesus died to make it possible for us to be in relationship once again with God, and traditionally it is a time when we think about how we can take the light of Christ into our homes and into our lives and although we haven't got lots of real candles here today we do have the lovely ones that the Sunday Club made as a reminder of Jesus' light going out into the world.
- Jesus said 'I am the light of the world and whoever follows me will have the light of life and never walk in darkness, and now we are going to baptise Nicholas and Malena so that they too can begin their life journey as part of the church, as those who are called to shine the light of Christ into the world.

