**Isaiah 61:10-62:3 (ESV)**

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. [11] For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. [62:1] For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,

and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. [2] The nations shall see you righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name the mouth of the Lord will give. [3] You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,

and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

**Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)**

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. [6] And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" [7] So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

**Luke 2:22-40 (ESV)**

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord [23] (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") [24] and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." [25] Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26] And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27] And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, [28] he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, [29] "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; [30] for my eyes have seen your salvation [31] that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, [32] a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." [33] And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. [34] And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed [35] (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." [36] And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, [37] and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. [39] And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. [40] And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

**“The Spirit of Christmas”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father who has given us His Son, Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen. As with last Sunday being Christmas Eve, so this Sunday sets us upon the eve of a New Year. Plenty love to celebrate how we move from 2017 into 2018. Of course, eyes watching that transition of time fall across the planet also demands concerns for safety. This is especially true for Las Vegas that only three months ago had a massive shooting. Such concerns over New Year’s celebration has led to requesting state funds triple the amount from last year[[1]](#footnote-1), doubling the amount of law-enforcement, and doubling the number of quick response teams.[[2]](#footnote-2)

You cannot get around the fact how we live in times of heighted security. Yet, if dealing with dangers to life is the priority, how easy is it to miss seeing what is good. When Joseph and Mary went to the temple, it was to follow the Law’s demands of purification for both Mary and her firstborn male child. No one would have seen such actions unusual for any Jewish family. The religious leaders would have ignored such a menial task at the temple. Likewise, Herod was surely busy managing his affairs before Roman Law. Only Simeon and Anna were present to celebrate the ultimate good that stands against all darkness. The desire of God is for all generations to endure the times by faith in the peace given to us by Jesus Christ.

1. **Humanity faces division simply by being from different generations of time and space.**
2. Simeon & Anna exemplified the past.

* Who knows how old Simeon actually was and if he even had a wife and kids? Who knows how God would have him die?
* What we do know is that the Holy Spirit revealed to him, “that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” (Consolation for Israel’s tragedies)
* Anna was different from Simeon, she had seen death take her husband as a young woman now an older widow of many years.
* Her hope was beyond the hands of men for who could raise the dead, who could undo the damage death left? (Redemption for Jerusalem’s spiritual slavery)

1. Mary and Joseph were parents of the present.

* They were keeping the Torah or the Law, which purification at the temple recalled God’s claim upon the firstborn males out of Egypt.
* Unfortunately, this family was of low standing compared to others considering what they provided for sacrifice. (two turtledoves/pigeons)
* Mary received the attention by Simeon not Joseph, which surely reminded this father that he had an adopted son.
* Finally, like any mother, she felt that bitterness having heard, “and a sword will pierce through your own soul…” (God’s prophetic Word)

1. The infant Jesus stood out for what was the future.

* God becoming man as a child tells us children are precious to Him no questions about it, since all are born under the Law, so all need redemption.
* Unlike Jesus, children of humanity are not born sinless as Job reminds us, “Who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous? (Job 15:14)
* To be present before the Lord is important, because a child is easy prey for the Devil who, “prowls around like a roaring lion…” (1 Peter 5:8a).
* Children need the other generations but 1 kings warns repeatedly, “he walked in all the sins that his father did before him and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God”(15:3)

1. **The presence of Jesus pours out what every generation needs from God.**
2. To older generations, there are good tidings of great joy given to you in Christ.

* Simeon could sing and so can you against death, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word…”
* What the Father sent by His Son is comfort for all the nations, because this “peace on earth” is fixed upon Christ against the power of death.
* For those who have seen great loss with age, like Anna, this Christ child comes to set the prisoners free from grief.
* This means looking forward for Jesus has promised, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death” (John 8:51).

1. To working generations, especially parents, marvel at what God’s will is for you in Christ.

* Since Jesus is the perfect sacrifice to the Law, God’s claim upon our families is purity of sins forgiven by His grace.
* Rather than status, consider the riches of life secured for family in Christ, which Simeon and Anna praise as the most precious treasure.
* Since God’s will is always about salvation, we rise or fall based upon our reaction to Christ in our lives just as Joseph had to believe.
* In the same way, Mary’s child is already marked with that sign opposed to the ways of man for Christ glorifies the cross as His way of peace.

1. To younger generations, grow and become strong in wisdom with God’s favor upon you in Christ.

* God creates life and the mission of Jesus is to save the least saying, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them…” (Matt 19:14)
* Age does not matter because sinners just need Jesus who says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).
* Rather than prey for the Devil, Christ’s presence by Word and Sacrament brightens future generations with the light of God.
* What children need are thoughts, words, and deeds set upon Christ proving He is the peace for all generations.

As time counts down, there will be plenty of looking back on 2017. There is lots to consider of what will come of 2018. Some will want to deny the times. Other will get caught up in the times. Still others will not know what to do with the times. Yet, when it was time for Jesus to come to the temple Simeon and Anna saw what God promised for all time. Our security and celebrating is more than what time brings together one night a year. Instead, the fullness of time has come from God and faith worked by the Holy Spirit is in Christ for humanity. The desire of God is for all generations to endure the times by faith in the peace given by Jesus Christ. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. https://www.reviewjournal.com/business/tourism/record-number-of-security-forces-slated-for-new-years-eve-on-las-vegas-strip/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.rt.com/usa/414409-nyc-vegas-security-nye/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)