

Lk2:22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

2:23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"),

2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

2:25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

2:26 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.

2:27 So he came by 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,

2:28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

2:29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

2:30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

2:31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

2:32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

2:33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

2:34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

2:35 "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

2:36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

2:37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

2:38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

2:39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.

2:40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

December 28, 2025 Luke 2:22-40

Sermon Title: "Now Have We Seen Your Salvation"

[From Today's Sermon]

We have reached the last worship service of the year. Though many things have happened, we give thanks that we are here today, supported and guided by God.

Is there a situation worse than the worst, a reality too hard to accept, too unbelievable, too painful to believe? Yet both Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, came to understand later that what God says will surely come to pass, that prayers are heard, and that God works all things together for good.

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:11)

In the new year too, we are kept alive by our trust and faith in God. We have a way to live.

“There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.”

We need comfort and salvation. This wounded, weary world cannot endure without the Lord's comfort. Everyone hungers and thirsts for love and comfort. They seek salvation. When we fervently pray that we cannot die until we see the Lord's salvation manifested in this world, until we see with our own eyes a revival of comfort and salvation for many people, the Lord will show us the results.

Good morning, everyone. After Christmas ended, last weekend brought snowfall, plunging us straight into the cold of midwinter. I hope you have been keeping well.

The year 2025 is drawing to a close. Only four days remain. What kind of year has it been for you? Many things happened—perhaps you were tossed about, faced unexpected twists, or experienced events like a bolt from the blue. On the 25th, Christmas evening, I decided to update my smartphone's software. After backing up my data on my computer—something I usually do directly on the phone—I attempted the update via the computer this time, as I hadn't done it that way in a while. But no matter how long I waited, it wouldn't proceed. I tried again and again, but it still wouldn't move forward. I contacted support and tried several solutions they suggested, but nothing worked. Today marks the fourth day since then. My phone and LINE remain completely unreachable. My apologies to anyone who tried to contact me. I haven't even responded to messages from my cram school students saying they'll be absent. Now, everything from my home's electricity and air conditioner to my door lock is managed by my smartphone. Even in the car, the navigation and music depend on it. My notes, phone book, and every single photo are stored on my phone. A new smartphone arrived this evening. If I can successfully restore the backup I saved on my

computer to it and get everything back up and running, I'll breathe a sigh of relief. But will it work? Only now do I truly grasp the grief, despair, helplessness, and pain felt by those who've lost their homes, possessions, or families in any disaster. Just as a small cut on our skin lets water seep in, when our hearts feel pain, I think we can understand others' suffering just a little bit. Even as I write this, I wonder how many people are enduring anxiety, hardship, pain, despair, disappointment, and loss. I hear there was another massive bombing in Kyiv, Ukraine, and people in war zones are enduring the cold. Just the other day, there was a major accident on the Kan-Etsu Expressway. I imagine those involved are at their wits' end right now.

For these three full days—just three days—my smartphone, which I never put down and relied on constantly, stopped responding altogether. It fell into a state of amnesia, so to speak, refusing to answer anything I asked. It made me realize that if our family, friends, or even ourselves were suddenly struck by illness and lost our memories, this is what it would be like. It also made me think that when the time comes to leave this world, even if we want to speak, we won't be able to. Yet we have gratitude and hope: both the sick and those who lose their memory will be lifted up to heaven after death. There, we will receive healthy bodies—no, even more wonderful, heavenly bodies—and live happily forever in heaven.

#### Introduction: 1 Corinthians Chapter 15

15:35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"

15:36 You foolish person! For what you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

15:37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel— perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

15:38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

15:39 Not all flesh is the same flesh, There is human flesh, animal flesh, bird flesh, and fish flesh.

15:40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. The glory of the heavenly is different from that of the earthly.

15:41 There is the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon, and the glory of the stars. For star differs from star in glory.

15:42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.

15:43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Since there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

15:45 As Scripture says, "The first man Adam became a living being." But the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

15:46 The first was not spiritual, but natural; the spiritual came later.

15:47 The first man was from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven.

15:48 Those who are made of dust are like the one made of dust, and those who are heavenly are like the one who is heavenly.

15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

15:50 Brothers and sisters, I declare to you that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

15:51 Now I will tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

15:52 For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

15:53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

15:54 When this perishable body puts on the imperishable, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

15:55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, stand firm and immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Thus we have the ultimate comfort: even if our bodies, possessions, lives, families, and friends are all lost, we are still protected in God's hands.

Matthew 10:1 Then Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

10:2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: First, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;

10:3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

10:4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. 10:5 When Jesus sent these

twelve out, he instructed them, saying, "Do not go into the paths of the Gentiles, and do not enter any town of the Samaritans.

10:6 Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

10:7 As you go, proclaim, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, and cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

10:9 Do not take gold, silver, or copper in your belts.

10:10 Do not take a traveling bag, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the laborer deserves his food.

10:11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave.

10:12 As you enter the house, greet it.

10:13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

10:14 If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that house or town.

10:15 Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. On the day of judgment, the land of Sodom and Gomorrah will be more tolerable than that town.

10:16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

10:17 Beware of men, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues.

10:18 You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

10:19 But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time.

10:20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

10:21 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against their parents and have them put to death.

10:22 You will be hated by all men because of my name. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

10:23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. Truly I tell you, Before you finish going through the towns of Israel, the Son of Man will come.

10:24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

10:25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If

the head of the house is called Beelzebub, how much more will the members of his household be called!

10:26 So do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known.

10:27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops.

10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father's will.

10:30 And even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

10:31 So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

10:32 Therefore, whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

10:33 But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

10:34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

10:35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

10:36 And a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.

10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

10:38 And whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

10:39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

10:40 Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

10:41 Whoever welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person because he is righteous will receive a righteous person's reward.

10:42 And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to preach. They were expected to face great persecution. Yet it is said that even though persecutors can kill the body, they cannot touch the soul, for there is God's deep protection.

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

10:30 And even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

10:31 So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

God's eyes are upon us. He knows all our circumstances and our thoughts. He knows our problems. And God is a God of power, able to provide solutions beyond what we can imagine.

Psalm 139:1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are acquainted with all my ways.

139:4 Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord.

139:5 You hem me in behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it.

139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

139:8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there.

139:9 If I take the wings of the dawn, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

139:10 even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me fast.

139:11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light around me become night,"

139:12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

139:13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

139:14 I praise you, for you are awesome and wonderful. Your works are wonderful, and you know me intimately.

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We now turn to today's Scripture passage.

Luke 2:22 When the days of their purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, Joseph and Mary took the child Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.  
2:23 This was done to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord,"  
2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is stated in the same Law, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Leviticus 12:1 The Lord also spoke to Moses,  
12:2 saying, "Speak to the Israelites: 'When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male child, she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstrual impurity.  
12:3 On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.  
12:4 She must undergo thirty-three days of purification from her blood. She must not touch anything holy or enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.  
12:5 If she gives birth to a daughter, she will be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstrual impurity. She must undergo sixty-six days of purification from her blood.  
12:6 When the days of her purification are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.  
12:7 The priest shall offer them before the Lord and make atonement for her. Thus she shall be cleansed from her blood discharge. This is the law for a woman who has given birth to a son or a daughter.  
12:8 If she cannot afford a lamb, she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

This passage concerns the purification offering, and Leviticus 12:8 states:

"If she cannot afford a lamb, she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons..."

Neither Joseph nor Mary came from wealthy families. The Lord was born into such a household. As the lyrics of Hymn 121, "In the Manger" (Words: Rev. Yasushi Yuki), state:

1. In the manger, His first cry was heard;

In the carpenter's home, He became human.

He bore every sorrow of the poor,

Every anguish of life, every pain.

Behold this Man!

2. Forgetting to eat, seeking the oppressed, becoming a friend to the friendless, heartbroken—behold this man!

3. Having given all, receiving nothing but death in return, lifted upon the cross, forgiving His enemies—behold this man!

4. Behold this man! In him was revealed love beyond compare. Behold this man! He is the living God who became flesh.

2:25 At that time, there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him.

2:26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Savior whom the Lord had sent.

The Consolation of Israel. Why does the Kingdom of God need consolation? The Kingdom of God—yet there was deviation. Even when Jesus came, the chief priests and scribes ignored Him, openly showing hostility, and there was the darkness of human hearts that drove the Lord to the cross. Comfort, salvation is needed. If this is true for God's people, what of those who do not know God? Darkness covers the whole world, and all people are wounded and utterly weary. Yet Simeon did not give up; he kept praying. He spurred his aged body on, never ceasing to pray. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he believed in God, believed in God's comfort, and prayed persistently for the salvation of this world. God told him, "Your eyes will see salvation; I will fulfill your request while you are still alive."

Do we possess such fervent prayer? Do we have that deep, passionate prayer that refuses to die until God answers? In this way, we too desire to keep praying for our families, friends, communities, nations, and the world.

2:27 Moved by the Spirit, he entered the temple. And behold, his parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the Law.

2:28 And taking him in his arms, Simeon blessed God and said,

2:29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

2:30 for my eyes have seen your salvation,

2:31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:  
2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."  
2:33 His father and mother marveled at what was said about him.  
2:34 Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed—  
2:35 And a sword will pierce your own soul too, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

There is the phrase "all nations," meaning the Gentiles. This signifies salvation for the whole world. Salvation for all humanity.

"To cause the fall and rising of many in Israel."

To fall means to acknowledge one's past wrongdoing and bow down before God. Is there not a path to "rise up" from there?

"A sign to be opposed," and "so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"—this also signifies that people's hostility and rebellious thoughts toward God will be exposed, and that human sin will be laid bare without reservation. All those who should have reverently welcomed God instead drove Jesus to the cross, and many people cried out, "Release Barabbas! Crucify Jesus!" Yet salvation appears precisely where sin is confirmed. The doctor's work begins where illness is diagnosed.

Luke 5:20 Seeing their faith, Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."  
5:21 Immediately the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"  
5:22 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?  
5:23 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"  
5:24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he said to the paralytic—"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."  
5:25 Immediately the man got up in front of them, took his mat and went home, praising God.  
5:26 Everyone was amazed and glorified God, filled with awe, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."  
5:27 Later, as Jesus was going on, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth. "Follow me," he told him.

5:28 And leaving everything, Levi got up and followed him.  
5:29 Then Levi hosted a large banquet for Jesus at his house, and tax collectors and many others were dining with them.  
5:30 But the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"  
5:31 Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.  
5:32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2:36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old, having lived with her husband only seven years after her marriage,  
2:37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.  
2:38 This old woman also came up at that very hour and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.  
2:39 After they had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

The true heart of man is revealed: "A sword will pierce through your own soul too." You will feel the pain of that piercing heart. Yet we too were saved first, comforted, and sent forth for healing in this sinful world. Therefore, believing in this great salvation for the world, we pray that we may continue praying until we see it, even if it means dying, and that we may never give up praying, even when cold water is poured on us or we face hardship.

◇**Prayer: Heavenly Father God, we thank You for today's worship. At the end of this year, we deeply reflect on and give thanks for Your gentle guidance, Your comfort, and Your mighty work of salvation. Amidst all manner of difficulties—upsets, misfortune, downfalls—what have we to fear if the risen Lord is with us? Please comfort and strengthen us in the new year. Lead all who suffer into Your salvation and peace. Bless our families and our community. Use us. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.**