

1st Sunday After Christmas

27-12-2020

St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Isaiah 61:10-62.3 Rejoice in the Lord, He will bring righteousness

Psalms 148 In Everything – Praise the Lord

Galatians 4: 4-7 Through Jesus we are heirs and children of God

Luke 2: 22-40 Simeon and Anna acknowledge baby Jesus in Temple

Introduction

Today is the first Sunday after Christmas.

In the Gospel reading today we have moved on from the birth of Jesus.

On Friday, Christmas day, we heard about the Angels and Shepherds, and those who were witnesses to the birth of Jesus. Today in our Gospel reading we have the story of Jesus' Presentation in the Temple. Today I would like to explore the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, and also from the Galatians reading what it means for us to be heirs of God.

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

The presentation of Jesus in the temple was a normal activity that would have happened in Jesus time. It would have been a familiar ritual for Jewish people.

But of course, with Jesus, we see something different. We hear of how both Simeon and Anna acknowledged who Jesus is.

We hear these words from Simeon:-

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

And then to Mary he says:-

'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

I'm not sure how you feel about these words, but I'm sure it would have been confronting for Leeza and I to hear them if they were told to us when Emily or

Luke were born. Simeon filled with the Holy Spirit is witnessing to who Jesus is and he has only just been born. We would normally allow people to grow up and live their life, before we pass judgement on their legacy.

We also hear of the faith of Anna:-

³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Simeon and Anna both show us wonderful examples of faith in God. And because of their faith they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and enabled to do God's will, proclaiming the significance of Jesus.

What does this mean for us?

The reading from Galatians today tells us that if we place our faith in God, through what Jesus has done for us, then we also become heirs.

Galatians - Heirs

So, what does it mean to be an Heir?

An heir is someone who is destined to inherit something.

So as heirs, those who accept and follow Jesus, are the inheritors of God's Kingdom. In other words, choosing to follow Jesus means we get to be with God forever. We are no longer able to be cut off from God.

In the time when Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians, to become an adopted child in the then Roman world was a special privilege. In light of this let us look at the words from our reading again:-

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶ And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

What a privilege it is to know that we are heirs!

Conclusion

Today in the season of Christmas, we continue to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. If we accept this child as our King, then we can become Children of God ourselves. We have the assurance that we are heirs and inheritors of all God's future plans.

The challenge before us, when accept this wonderful good news, is to continue to live now, as if we are Children of God. Amen.