



Guided by the Spirit

Luke 2:22-40

It had been revealed to him (Simeon) by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

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,

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God

December 28, 2014

Thought For The Week

Scriptures:

Hebrews 12:1, Matthew 9:36

The Stadium Was Full

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1)

We went with our friends to a Detroit Tiger baseball game. We hadn't attended a Tiger game for sometime and I was looking forward to it. We had to drive about an hour to get there and then spent another hour parking and walking to Comerica Park. But it was worth it.

The fourteen-year-old stadium is an architectural marvel. The old Tiger (Brigg's) Stadium was a great place too, but it had a lot of shortcomings when compared to modern stadiums in other cities. There were numerous obstructions, uncomfortable seating and very few amenities. However in Comerica Park the entire seating area is open to the field of play with little to no obstructions. The outer ring houses many attractions including some pretty good restaurants and amusement areas. Our visits always seemed to come with a feeling of anticipation and excitement each time we attended a game. Baseball, Mom, apple pie and Chevrolet, that's my favorite saying, although Lemon Meringue is pretty good too. Anyway, back to the game.

They were expecting a capacity crowd of 41,681 people since Detroit was on a path to win the American League Pennant. Seeing all those people gave me an appreciation for what 40,000+ people looked like when gathered. When I glanced around the stadium, I was amazed at my thoughts! Each of these people represented someone Jesus died for - people who either needed to know Christ or needed to learn how to have a closer walk with Him. The whole stadium was filled with this need.

"Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36)

Well, we certainly weren't *dispirited* that evening. It was a fun evening and everyone was cheering and having a great time. I realized that I was watching the great crowd in the stadium, and the Bible tells us WE have a great crowd of witnesses watching US run the race & cheering us on. Kind of exciting, isn't it? Let's not lose heart or get lost along the way. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Pray with me, Father, we know You are watching us, Jesus is interceding for us, Your angels are guarding us & the Holy Spirit is instructing and comforting us. In addition, we have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Thank you so much for

Your care and protection. Thank you for the opportunity to bring others into the Kingdom so they too can have everything You provide for Your children. Amen.

Happiness depends upon your outlook on life. - Find the good in all situations
Attitude is just as important as ability. - Keep your attitude positive
Passion, find yours this year! - Do what you love and you will never work
Positive thoughts make everything easier. - Stay focused and stay positive
You are unique, with special gifts, use them. - Never forget that you have talent

New beginnings with a new year
Enthusiasm, a true secret of success
Wishes, may they turn into goals

Years go by too quickly, enjoy them. - Wisdom often comes from your elders, listen to them. If you are one, be careful what you say
Energy, may you have lots of it. - Take care of yourself
Appreciation of life, don't take it for granted. - Live each day
Relax, take the time to relax in this coming year. - Keep a balance in your life

Stewardship Thought For The New Year

The start of a New Year gives us the feeling of a fresh start, a new beginning, and new opportunities. It is a time when people feel that they can begin anew with their lives.

Common resolutions are to lose weight, exercise more and eat healthier; or to spend more time with family. Still others include managing money better and being more organized.

If you are looking for some helps in your New Year's resolutions, here are a few ideas to get you started:

Practice gratitude – Cultivate a grateful heart. Every day, express thankfulness to the Lord and to others. Keep your heart compassionate and loving.

Encounter the Lord each day – Find time to be with the Lord each day. Have a conversation with the Lord. Give your joys and worries to Him. Allow God's love to transform them.

Be present to others – There is much celebration and mourning, joy and sorrow in peoples' lives. It is a blessing to share those times with others. The gift of your presence to others is more valuable than you realize.

Resist overwork – There is a pressure to produce, meet goals, be successful. But activities that lead us to overwork, constant fatigue and worry do not give glory to God. Life requires balance, down time and letting go of unrealistic goals.

Nurture friendships – Our friends are those we choose to be with, we spend our evenings, we vacation & we go to them for advice. Friends are gifts from God. Friends have a mutual need for each other's time and love.

Give more – Good stewards realize that everything they have is entrusted to them as gift to be shared. There is no better place to begin than sharing with the community that gathers around the Lord's Table. Consider what you are giving to your congregation and General Church and commit to an even greater contribution as circumstances allow.

Make a difference in your community – Your community can use your talents. Offering your talents to your faith community is one of the most effective ways to feel useful and connected to others, and it is potentially life-changing.

Consider living more simply – We cannot find fulfillment in possessions, nor do they add to our self-worth. Jesus blessed

the "poor in spirit" in his Sermon on the Mount; urged us to live with only what was necessary, that is how we find God.

Get healthy – Most people in America are accelerating their own decline into premature old age, owing to poor diet & lack of physical activity. Be a good steward of your body. Plan a complete overhaul of your diet and exercise habits.

Don't give up – People give up their New Year's resolutions because of perfectionism and unrealistic expectations. So take it slow, be kind to yourself and keep trying. You succeed through small, manageable changes over time.

Turn to the Lord – Ask the Lord for guidance, strength and perseverance in achieving your resolutions. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes: *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13)*. If God is the center of our New Year's resolutions, they have a better chance for success.