

SERMON NOTES Sunday 9th January 2022

sunnysidechurch

Theme: Swords and Souls

Main passage: **Luke 2: 22-40** Additional Readings: **Genesis 2: 19-25, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a**

Some of the main themes from the sermon

'And a sword will pierce your own soul too'

A chilling prophesy to give a new mother, and yet one which turned out to be true as Jesus' life developed. Though Mary's experience was unique, there is something universal in the costliness of love. It is not just in schmaltzy love songs that love hurts, it is truth at the heart of what it is to love.

In the beginning

It was not God's intention that loving relationships should prove so costly or difficult. Before the Fall, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve 'were naked and they knew no shame' Genesis 2:25. 'Naked' means more than not having clothes on, it's about being your true self and enabling the other person to be their true self. Adam and Eve's relationship with each other and with God were transparent, trusting and loving. All that was destroyed when the humans went their own way and put themselves at the centre of their universe.

In the end

We are promised that when Jesus returns, there will be 'no more death or mourning or crying or pain' Revelation 21:4 for the old order of things will have passed away.

In the middle

Getting to that new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1) was never going to be a painless journey and Simeon sees that as he holds the infant Christ in his arms. He sees that Jesus is God's salvation (v30) but also that he will 'cause the falling and rising of many and be a sign that will be spoken against' (v34). Jesus will be a cause of division because he calls people to follow him as he inaugurates God's kingdom.

Sword's piercing souls

For Mary, a mother's love was painful. However, the greatest pain was borne by her son and his Father in heaven. The cost of redeeming creation is way beyond our understanding. We know that it was a determined and sustained life of love that brought Jesus to the cross. We get just the merest glimpse of the agony of that love when we share in the costly love that sometimes feels that 'a sword

has pierced' our own souls. Equally we all too frequently act in ways that hurt other people and contribute to a sword piercing their souls.

Some questions for thought and discussion this week:

1. *Reflect on times when love has been costly for you. It may not be appropriate to share in very much detail with your house group. However, there may be more common ground that you think.*
2. *Simeon welcomes his death because he has 'seen the salvation' that God had prepared. We talk about bucket lists. Do you have a spiritual bucket list? What would make you ready to 'depart in peace'?*
3. *Imagine you are Joseph or Mary, hearing Simeon and Anna talk about your baby. What might be going through your mind as you 'marvel at what was said about him'?*
4. *Please look carefully at verses 34 and 35. In what ways did Jesus 'cause the falling and rising of many'? How was he a sign that was spoken against? And how did he cause the thoughts of many to be revealed when he walked on earth?*
5. *Do you think verses 34 and 35 accurately reflect the way Jesus impacts on people's lives today?*
6. *Are there any other issues that the sermon or the bible passages raise for you?*