

Your Word Has Been Fulfilled

Luke 2:29-32; 1 Samuel 1:26-28

Introduction

(Read **Luke 2:29-32**). These four verses from **Luke** are, or should be, familiar to us. This “Song of Simeon” is known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, which is Latin for “Now Dismiss”, the first two words of the song in Latin. What caught my eye about that this week was the phrase, *Your Word has been fulfilled*. **How** is God’s Word fulfilled? What does it **mean** that His Word is fulfilled? What does it mean to **us** that His Word is fulfilled?

How Is God’s Word Fulfilled?

God’s Word is His **promise**. To say that His Word has been fulfilled, means that He has **kept His promise**. The **Bible** is clear that God keeps all His promises: He kept His promise to Abraham (**Genesis 21:1-3**). When Israel made the golden calf, God’s promise prevented Him from destroying them and starting over with Moses (**Exodus 32:11-14**). The Old Testament reading, which parallels the Gospel, shows how God kept His promise to Hannah that she would have a son. We also saw in the Gospel lesson that God kept His promise to Simeon that before he dies, he will see the Lord’s **Anointed**, or **Christ**.

What Does It Mean that His Word Is Fulfilled?

Comfort and Peace

Knowing God keeps His promises gives us **comfort** and **peace**. No matter what is going on in the world around us, we can rest in the assurance that God will bring about whatever He said He will do. It may not be in our timing, but in His perfect timing. Isn’t it interesting that God, who lives **outside** of time has **perfect** timing, while we, who are **bound** by time, at times have **lousy** timing.

A Model for Us

God’s keeping His promise is a **model** for us. **God kept His word** and gave Hannah a son. When he was old enough to be weaned, probably at the age of three, **she brought him to the temple to *lend him to the Lord for as long as she lived***. While God is perfect and always keeps His word, we are fallen and often unreliable. How many times have you made a promise, fully intending on keeping it, but failed for one reason or another. Sometimes, it’s because *something more important* came up. Sometimes, we just *forget*. Sometimes, we *change our mind* and don’t do it. Promises include New Year’s resolutions, those promises we make to ourselves and break every year.

Salutary

Maybe you’ve heard it said, “Is that a threat or a promise?” God’s promises are always for our benefit, they are **salutary**. God’s promise of a Messiah or Christ was originally made to Adam and Eve (**Genesis 3:15**). It was renewed with David (**2 Samuel 7:12-16**). Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, references are made to this prophecy. This is what Israel clung to for their existence. It gave them hope. Now that Simeon sees it fulfilled, the old man is at peace, knowing his salvation is secure, and can die without fear. God’s promise to us is **always about our salvation**. Rest in His peace.

What Does It Mean to Us that His Word Is Fulfilled?

The ***Explanation of the Small Catechism*** cites these verses of the *Nunc Dimittis* when discussing the seventh petition of the ***Lord's Prayer***—*Deliver us from evil*. The question is: *What final deliverance from evil do we ask the Lord to bring us?* The answer: *We want our Father in heaven to keep us faithful to Him and when we die to take us from this sorrowful world to Himself in heaven*. The salvation we have is not just for this life, like the Jews were hoping for. Our salvation is eternal. At our death, or when Jesus returns, whichever happens first, we will leave this world of sorrow and be with Jesus and the Father in heaven forever. Because God kept His Word in sending the Messiah, we can trust His Word for our final salvation.

Means of Grace

That's why we use the *Nunc Dimittis* in the service of Communion. We have seen the Lord, as we have eaten His body and drunk His blood. He can now dismiss us from this service in peace, that is, in the peace of knowing our sins are forgiven and we will live with Him forever in heaven. No matter what, **His Word has been fulfilled!**

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
