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## Salvation is always available

It is a truth that is difficult to properly understand the absolute enormity of its real meaning: That Salvation is now constantly available to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

There is a painting in Sweden from 1699 and it is not clear who is the artist but it shows Simeon seeing Jesus the baby arriving at the temple and recognising Jesus as the Saviour of the world.



We can read about this event in Luke's gospel at chapter 2 beginning at verse 22:

*<sup>22</sup> When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."*

*<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

*<sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.*

*<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

*<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:*

*<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."*

At the end of this Simeon says that he can finally depart in peace knowing that Salvation has come for all who believe. It is known as the Nunc Dimittis.<sup>1</sup>

You may indeed feel that you have done nothing wrong so why, on earth, do you need forgiveness. It is, however, a basic truth that every-single-one of us makes mistakes in our lives. None of us are perfect at all.

<sup>1</sup> This happened about 30 years before the crucifixion itself

So it is that St Paul wrote, in the letter to the Romans at chapter 7 in verse 21, that he wanted to do good but kept on getting things wrong:

*<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right therewith me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

So, if even St Paul who is a really good person, and a Saint, keeps getting it wrong then who are we to suggest we are better than St Paul ? If even St Paul constantly needs the forgiveness given by Jesus Christ then so does every one of us. This means that all of us need to constantly repent of the wrong we do and receive the forgiveness that Jesus Christ freely gives to every one of us. What matters is the recognition that we are imperfect and realising the value of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

What is very, very difficult for any of us to fully comprehend is that it is our mistakes throughout our lives that nail our Lord Jesus Christ to the cross every day, and that it is Christ's death on the cross that gives us salvation, forgiveness, if we simply believe in Jesus Christ. It was that for which Simeon was giving thanks.

This Mural is by Ron DiCianni and was painted in 2008. The picture reminds us that every one of us makes mistakes and puts Jesus Christ on the cross and that we need his forgiveness.

It is truly amazing that we constantly receive forgiveness because of what Jesus Christ has done when we are all the ones constantly doing wrong.

One of the most famous phrases in the Bible is John 3: 16, i.e. St John's gospel, chapter 3, verse 16.

This says:

*<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*



"The Salvation Mural by Ron DiCianni, all rights reserved.

This single verse affirms to us all that Jesus Christ comes to us, not because God hates the world, but because God loves the world and that he has come to save us, he has come to bring us salvation that we can live life fully.

None of that means that we stop making mistakes, far from it, we continue to make mistakes and what matters is that we should constantly try not to. So like St Paul we are constantly wanting to do better. Our belief in Jesus Christ means that we constantly try to follow him, even though we regularly fail to do the right thing, and that we constantly need Jesus Christ's sacrifice that brings us forgiveness.

We begin Holy week on Palm Sunday when we celebrate the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem when the crowd were incredibly enthusiastic about the Saviour coming and yet the crowd did not understand what any of that actually meant.

Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Golden Gate in the north section of the old east wall. This was also called **the Gate of Mercy**, *Sha'ar Harakhmim*. This was of supreme significance and everyone present knew why. That gate was the one which, according to hundreds of years of tradition, would be entered by the Messiah, the Chosen One of God, come to exercise judgement. Once again – one might almost say, as ever – the incident is paradoxical: for the one who comes to judge will, in five days' time, himself be tried, found guilty on trumped-up charges, tortured and put to death.

Thus, this Jesus who enters by the Gate of Mercy himself receives no mercy. The point is that this suffering which God in Christ takes upon himself is what brings mercy to us.

As lay people we can sometimes see the real importance of what happened precisely because we are not distracted or confused by complex theology but can go straight to the heart of the matter as you can see in this song, called an Easter Hallelujah and sung by Cassandra Star & her sister Callahan. (*This appears in more than one place on sources like YouTube so I suggest you search*). The piece ends when the candle goes out.

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This item was inspired by an article by the Rev Peter Mullen published on the website [www.conservativewoman.co.uk](http://www.conservativewoman.co.uk). You can find the article at: <https://www.conservativewoman.co.uk/the-symphony-of-our-salvation/>