Sermon:

This is an odd Sunday. It is after last week’s special service and before The Day. If you are like me, cards sent, presents (mostly) bought, tree/decorations up, special foods made, yet still waiting!

In Study Groups we saw Micah noting Israel and Judah’s spiritual problems and how God would act; with Zechariah we saw how this begun to be fulfilled in his son John, and with Herod how this fulfilment would stir up opposition.

Today we look at Simeon who was told he would see the Messiah before he died.
How long had he waited?

With Jesus in his arms, Simeon speaks: (2.29-32)

[1] **Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace.**

Simeon achieved his ‘bucket list’ & so can die in peace. But note nature of that list is not self-centred.

What is on your list? Have we made life too complex, with too high expectations? Ditto Christmas?

[2] **With my own eyes I have seen your salvation.** God promises salvation, but what is it?

Often answered in terms of accepting Jesus into our hearts, or transformation of society.
Problems: the former can seem too subjective & individualistic; the latter too objective & difficult.

But note Simeon has a weak and vulnerable baby in his arms at the time.

Why is a baby salvation? God comes to us weak & needy, not powerful & self-sufficient.
Yet somehow this so often feels wrong.

[3] **A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles.**

Salvation not only about God coming in weakness but this reveals God’s will. But what is God’s will?

Is responding to God’s weakness seen in others what God wills? So we should do for others what Mary needed to do for Christ?

Why should that be salvation? Is it that we are meant to become less self-centred? And to see that weakness (crying, suffering, absorbing the pain of others, being there) is really strength?