

JESUS IS OUR SURE HOPE, WAIT FOR HIM

DECEMBER 17, 2023

WORSHIP

Come Thou Long Expected
Jesus, Prepare the Way of
the Lord, Hark the Herald
/ King of Heaven, Living
Hope, I Speak Jesus, King
of Kings

WELCOME

What are the things you
usually wait for during
Christmas season?

WORD

LUKE 2:25-38

(ALSO READ VERSES 21-24 FOR
CONTEXT)

²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's [j]Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, [k]to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² A LIGHT [i]OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."³³ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and [m]rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."³⁶ And there was a prophetess, [n]Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in [o] years and had lived with her husband seven years after her [p]marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very [q]moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Is there something or someone that you are waiting for not just for this Christmas but for a long time already? What does Christmas have to do with waiting? Let's examine two often-overlooked characters of the Christmas story --- Simeon and Anna and what they had to say about this baby born in Bethlehem 2,000 years and may **Romans 15:13** be real to you today!

Joseph and Mary obeyed God's Law given through Moses on the circumcision and sacrificial offering for their firstborn son, Jesus (**vv. 21-24**). Names are very important, and Mary and Joseph knew exactly what to name their Son, as the angel Gabriel has told them told them to name Him before He was born. The name "Jesus" means "YAHWEH saves", God saves! The reason why Christmas is so meaningful is because even in the name of Jesus, we see the heart of God ---God saves. Joseph and Mary fulfilled the Law, and even Jesus Himself said that He came to do so also, as everything written in God's Word will be fulfilled (**Matthew 5:17-18**). Jesus came just at the right time to fulfill God's promise to Israel, but also for all of us who need a Savior from our sins, to set us free from the consequence of breaking God's Law (**Galatians 4:4**). In Leviticus, it was instructed that Jewish parents were to offer a lamb at the Temple, but if you cannot afford it, you may offer a pair of turtledoves instead (**Luke 2:24**). Jesus' family could not afford a lamb; Jesus did not just become "poor" as He took on a human body for our sake, but also in the family He was born into (**2 Corinthians 8:9**). It's a difficult time in our world with a lot of people struggling and may think that Jesus only came for the rich. No, Jesus came for the poor, and the rich, for everyone! Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies about Him in the Old Testament and because He is our sure hope, let us:

1. Wait with HOPEFUL ANTICIPATION

Simeon's name means, "God hears" and is described as "righteous" (**v.25**), and just like Abraham, his righteousness is by faith in God and His promises. Today, if you believe in Jesus, that makes you righteous because through Christ your sins are forgiven. Simeon believed in the Old Testament, one of the few among the Jews who truly believed. Simeon was waiting for the "consolation" or Comforter of Israel. Israel was oppressed but they knew that Isaiah prophesied the Messiah who will come, and Simeon was waiting for Him (**v.26**). What does it mean to wait with "hopeful anticipation"? Remember that hope is the certainty and assurance of expectations based on faith in God's character and God's promises. What are you waiting for today and what is your attitude as you wait? Mary and Joseph obeyed the Law; Simeon was excited as he anticipated the coming of the Messiah. Do not be gloomy and sad as you wait because you know that God is doing something. We have God's promises for you and me in His Word that we can hold on to today as we wait in hopeful anticipation (**Isaiah 40:31**). Wait and listen to what God is asking you

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to do. Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit and that's how he knew who Jesus was, the Messiah (v. 27). The Temple at that time was visited by crowds of people just curious to see its grandeur but were not believers in God yet Simeon recognized Jesus (v. 28-35). Though Simeon and Anna were not prominent people, He kept His promises to them, and we can be encouraged to know that God will keep His promises to us too.

If you need to talk to God, go through Jesus only! God orchestrated our salvation through Him (v. 30-32). Simeon knew the prophecy (Isaiah 49:6) that Jesus is the Light not just for the Jews but for gentiles. Jesus is our sure hope because He is our Messiah. When Jesus came, people either believed in Him or not--there was a separation (v.34). As we follow Jesus, expect opposition and not only that, but Mary was also told that her own soul will be pierced (v.35). There will be trials and difficulties, therefore we are to:

2. Wait with JOYFUL PERSEVERANCE

James 1:2-4 tells us to consider it all joy when we have trials, it produces endurance that results in our maturity. When the Messiah came, "the deliverance the people desired was not the deliverance the people required" (Alistair Begg). The Jews were waiting for their Messiah to set them free from Roman oppression, but He did not come for that. While the people joyfully welcomed Him as Jesus entered Jerusalem, they demanded His crucifixion only a few days later. What the world needed is a Messiah to deliver us from sin. Job lost everything, but he knew that his Redeemer lives (Job 19:25-26). He was able to look to eternity, this is the only way we can have joyful perseverance. We also need to look back to what Jesus did for us on the cross when we feel that we can't go on (Hebrews 12:2). The best is yet to come for those of us who believe in Jesus!

3. Wait with GRATEFUL SERVICE

Anna was one of the few prophetesses mentioned in Scripture (v.36). Her name means "grace or beauty"; she was advanced in years and served in the Temple since she became a widow (v.37). You're never too old to serve the Lord! Anna continued to speak of the Messiah to all who were looking for redemption (v.38), let us share Christ to all who would listen especially as we celebrate Christmas. Jesus is the only Person who can fulfill the hunger we all have that the world can never fulfill. Simeon and Anna knew that, and they were able to wait with grateful service and we can do as well wherever we are!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Are you currently in a season of waiting? What are you waiting for and what has God been teaching you as you wait?

2. Setting It Right.

Would you say you are "ready to die" like Simeon was? Share why.

3. Living It Out.

In what areas can you still improve when it comes to waiting with joyful perseverance?

4. How can you be a light to the gentiles/unbelievers during this Christmas season?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for your family, loved ones and others you encounter to discover Jesus, our sure hope this Christmas season. Beyond material gifts, share about the real meaning of the holiday to as many you can reach as you let the Holy Spirit guide and empower you!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists' attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.
- Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- CCFers would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE LUKE 2:29-32

²⁹ "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."