

## “The Song Of Simeon”

December 18, 2022

Good to be with you this morning. I’m Jake, and we’re wrapping up our Advent series, “The songs of Christmas,” by looking at the last song in the birth narrative: the song of Simeon.

And before you turn there, I don’t know about you - but Christmas season at our house is always a bit of a frenzy. It kinda seems like we’re always going from one thing to the next - whether that’s some end of the year party for work, or a Christmas themed party with friends, or the endless events we take our kids to during this time of year - you’ve got Christmas lights at the zoo, Christmas lights at the Fairgrounds, Christmas lights at Saluda Shoals; not to mention the ever-growing list of Christmas movies that - I don’t know about you - but for me it’s like if I don’t watch Elf, the Santa Claus, Home Alone, and Jingle All the Way - it feels like I’m doing something wrong.

But then, after the holiday frenzy, then Christmas morning rolls around and it’s another frenzy of its own. Where me and my wife will usually stay up the night before assembling and wrapping up last minute presents, then waking up early before the kids do to get a head start on Christmas breakfast - so that by the time kids wake up around 7, we’re ready for them to tear open one gift and then another and then another...

Now even if you’re a Christmas person or not...and even if you’re a Christian here or not...we’re kinda surrounded by this frenzy and anticipation. There’s this spirit of expectation in the air.

**And that’s because all of this, in part, is to point us to something greater.**

**And it’s here in this last song sung by Simeon, where we get a clear picture of what all of this is pointing to..**

So if you have a Bible, we’ll be in **Luke 2:22-33**.

Now to catch us up to speed...Jesus has been born. And part of Jewish custom was for baby boys 40 days after their birth to be dedicated to the Lord. So Mary and Joseph are on their way to do that:

**22** And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23** (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) **24** and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

So basically what happens is parents would take their first born to the temple, offer sacrifices, and the priest would say something over the baby and the parents in front of the community. Honestly, it’s very similar to what we do hear once a year with parent commissioning - where families come up to the front with the baby and we say a word over them and pray over them. That’s what’s happening here with baby Jesus. Keep reading:

**25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting 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 Christ.

Ok pause for a sec. There's a lot of fun Bible nerdy things going on here. We're introduced to a man at the temple named Simeon.

- According to the text, it doesn't say he's a priest. He's just a regular guy sitting in his chair at church.
- And it says he was righteous - that word is used elsewhere to describe the faith of Noah and Abraham - who are pretty big deals.
- It says he was waiting for the "consolation" of Israel. Other translations say he was waiting for the "restoration of Israel." That word, consolation, is the Greek word "parakletos" which is used elsewhere, most famously, to describe the Holy Spirit.

And as we see in v.25, the Messiah, the Christ - he's going to bring restoration to God's people as He promised He would. He's going to bring justice down on evil and iniquity. God is going to send a conquering King who will free His people from His enemies. Which is a huge, huge promise as far back as the early pages of the Bible.

- That despite evil entering the human heart, God says in Genesis 3, a child will be born to crush the head of evil once and for all.
- And God's people clung to that hope even when they were in slavery by the Egyptians, even when they were exiled by the Assyrians, even when they were in captivity by the Babylonians, even when they were conquered by the Persians, or the Greeks, or Rome...
  - The people of God held to the promise that God would raise up a King who would usher in His Kingdom and do away with the evil and darkness once and for all.

And Simeon, it says, will not die until he sees this King finally born. What the Jews have waited for, for so long - after century upon century upon century - Simeon will be one of the first to finally see it begin to happen. He's told, "You will see the King who Israel has been waiting on for so, so long; He will be their comforter, their consolation, their restoration."

Now we aren't given details upon when he hears this message, but man, I can't help but imagine what that would have been like for him. To get this message straight from God Himself, and then sitting at church basically each and every weekend wondering, "Is this it?" "Uh-oh, I heard my neighbors just had a baby - is this it? Is this the one we've been looking for?" "Am I finally going to see it?"

Honestly, the best sort of illustration I can come up with was when we had our first kid - Caroline. We knew it was gonna happen, but we didn't know exactly when. And then in those final days we go to the OB, we're going on long walks because we heard that helps you go into labor, we're eating spicy foods. We're having date nights like every single night because we think, "Who knows, maybe this is our last time just the two of us."

And then it happened, Lucy got the first contractions. And I immediately loaded up the car and wanted to drive straight to the hospital because I thought, "The baby's gonna be here any second!" Which...I learned, that's not how that tends to work. I grew up watching movies and too much TV where as soon as the mother has the slightest contraction, then the baby is just minutes away. Nope, not the case. So, we're waiting in the hospital for what feels like 24 hours just sitting around, not a lot going on. (I remember at one point asking my wife, "Hey, I'm getting tired, you mind if I take a nap?" And she quickly said, "No. You'll take a nap when I get to take a nap." Fair. But then, after all that waiting, it finally happens....

And that's in some way what Simeon experienced here. He knows what's going to happen. He's waiting for it. On the edge of his seat. And then, on what I imagine was just a normal gathering with God's people one weekend, he hears the Bible taught, he sings some songs with his community, and then perhaps at the end, Mary and Joseph roll up with their baby in their arms. And for Simeon it's like, "That's it! It's here!"

Keep reading:

**27** And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, **28** he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, **29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; **30** for my eyes have seen your salvation **31** that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, **32** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

Alright, so check it - he sees baby Jesus. Stands up and just swoop - puts the baby in his arms and begins to bust out in poetry saying basically, “Everyone, you know that Messiah we’ve all been waiting for? This is it!”

- In v.30 - I’ve seen your salvation - my source of rescue and redemption from my captivity - this is it!
- In v.32 - God revealing Himself to the world - this is it!
- In v.32 - God showcasing His glory to His people once and for all - it's happening right now!

And then I love this last bit:

**33** And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

Because, obviously right? They’re probably thinking, “Hey, uh, can we have our baby back, please sir?” Like, I don’t know if that was a custom for people at church to just be grabbing babies and singing over them - but I’m just saying it probably wouldn’t fly here.

But, notice what he says in v.29:

**29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;

See, we’re not told how old Simeon is, but one of the first things he says is, “God thank you for showing me what you promised. I can die in peace now. This is the King you’re going to raise up to finally bring your kingdom in. I’m good now. I can go in peace.”

What was promised, what he’s been waiting for, has now come to fruition.

\*\*\*\*

And, what you may have noticed as we’ve been teaching through this Advent series is we’ve been hitting a lot of the same notes. These ideas of waiting, of hoping, of God delivering on His promises; it’s a bit repetitive, but that’s kinda the point of Advent. It’s not that complicated, but man is it so easy to forget this truth: that God keeps His promises. That God delivers on His promises. And it’s for that reason we’re all here this morning. That God sent Jesus to raise from the dead as He promised. The fact that God is building His church as He promised. That God is saving people through His Spirit as He promised. You and I are here as a testament to the fact that God keeps His promises.

But, none of that happens, unless Advent happens first. And, you can’t have all those beautiful truths of the Gospel message, without first having Advent. You couldn’t appreciate the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ without first marveling at the birth of Christ. That God, who is so holy and so powerful, would actually, willingly choose to take on flesh and come as a baby, crawling, unable to eat solid foods, learning how to walk - Wut? The early church especially made such a huge deal about this - they couldn’t wrap their minds around this idea. God the King becomes a helpless baby.

And yet - it’s because of Advent that we can have this hope: that God will deliver on everything He says He will do for us.

And, for Simeon it says that gave him peace. This heart-level contentment that even though Israel was still captive, that things were still bleak and terrible, that King Jesus was born and He was on the move to undo everything that evil had ever ruined.

**And like Simeon who was looking for Jesus for so long, that same sort of peace is offered to us. That same sort of hope is available to us now, but only if we're looking for Him.**

I talked earlier about my kids, and how chaotic the holiday season can be, and especially how crazy Christmas morning can feel. How they're just going from one box to the next, opening the next thing and the next thing and the next thing. Searching for the next gift.

And when you get older, you slowly begin to grow out of that and you take the back seat. You as an adult are not in your pajamas jumping up and down opening the next gift and the next gift (I don't think?!), but the truth is we still don't grow out of that posture of searching.

It's not Christmas presents we're searching for.

- Maybe it's a Christmas experience we're searching for that will bring us peace.
  - If we just do all these Christmas events and activities, maybe then I'll have some inner peace.
  - For me, I can easily find myself at times just getting caught up in the frenzy of Christmas stuff that I can sort of tune out as to what Christmas is really about.
- Maybe it's not something even Christmas-related...but all of us are, by nature, searching and looking for something to fill the void in our hearts so that we can experience the peace we need.
- Maybe we're searching for a season of life.
- Maybe we're searching for a type of relationship or a romantic partner.
- Maybe we're searching for the next product, or the next car, or the next house, or the next job, or the next city - hoping that maybe this time, this will be it.
- When you're single, you might think, "Maybe if I'm married, then I'll be happy. And then you get married, and it's like, well maybe if we get a dog. Then you get a dog, and it's like, maybe if I have a kid. Ok, maybe if I have another kid. LOL. Ok, maybe when they're out of diapers. Ok, maybe if they graduate. Maybe if I retire. Maybe then I'll finally find whatever it is I'm looking for."
- And, you realize after decades of chasing that you spent your life searching and chasing after the next thing ahead of you - never content with where you are in life.
- And, the cruel irony is, even if you get whatever it was you were wanting, it might make you content for a season, but it never truly satisfies....and it eventually leaves you wanting even more.

We've said this before, but this is why for people who are retired, depression rates are off the charts. This is why the midlife crisis happens - because we've been told our whole lives that you can be anything you want, that the world is full of possibilities, but then you get to a certain age in your 30s and 40s and the possibilities don't really happen anymore. You begin to realize you are finite, and some will, in desperation, try to let go of their commitments or search for the next thing to give their lives some meaning or peace.

This has been so accelerated now that the quarter life crisis - of desperation and searching as early as your 20s now - is becoming more and more a thing.

And perhaps no better time of year is that posture of searching most amplified than during the Christmas season. When we hear the songs, and watch the cheesy movies, and we try our best to match that up with our lives; and, there's this disconnect that our lives aren't like the popular Christmas songs you hear on the radio, and our lives aren't magically resolved like they are in the movies.

And, I think the hope we find in Simeon is that we see what it looks like when you search for the right thing. He sought after Jesus, and he found him. And as a result, he has peace. And that hope is available to us right now, but only if you are looking for him.

Jesus is our peace. Jesus is our hope. Jesus is what we're looking for, and he's right here if we open our eyes and look:

**Matthew 7:7**

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

**Psalms 37:4**

Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

I know those verses can be twisted out of context, especially in our “me-centered” culture - but, what these verses are getting at echo in a lot of ways what Simeon knew. That when you seek after God, when you delight in Him, and search after Him, you will find Him, and He will fill your soul with His presence and gladness. He will give you the desires of your heart because those desires are fixed solely for Him and Him alone. He will become your consolation, your comforter, the restoration your broken heart needs.

And because Jesus has come, he can be your peace during this Christmas season no matter what you're going through:

- Maybe you're let down because your season of life is not where you want it to be...the arrival of Jesus says that because he is our peace, you in your season of life are connected and comforted by the God of the Universe who loves you and delights to be with you no matter where life takes you.
- Maybe you're worried about not getting the life you wanted or dreamed of...the arrival of Jesus says that when you find him, that this life is but a shadow of the life to come, and it's way better than anything you could ever imagine.
- Maybe this Christmas season is an exceptionally difficult time for you for whatever reason -
  - Maybe things are so tense with your extended family that it's hard to celebrate when you feel like you're walking on eggshells.
  - Maybe traditions you spent with family don't feel the same because some of the family members are no longer with you. Maybe you lost someone close to you during this time of year.
    - The arrival of Jesus says He has come - He is a light in the darkness, He has brought you into His forever family, and through His life He is in the process of reversing Death itself.

That is our hope this Advent season. Jesus has come. Jesus has made a way. Jesus is what all of us are looking for. And, He is calling us even now to open our hearts and prepare Him room because just as He promised He would come into this world, so He is coming back.

**Pray.**

**Communion.**