

Simeon's Song Lk. 2:25-35

Introduction: Today we light the pink candle, it is called the "Shepherd's Candle" and symbolizes **joy**. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, indeed, everyone else too.

We can definitely use some joy during this crazy pandemic period when so many are going through tough and challenging moments, day-in and day-out! Say "Yes!" in the Chat, if you agree.

Now we can bring this message of joy to our families and friends by inviting them to join Cornerstone's online Christmas Candle light Service on Dec. 20th or 24th at 5:00pm, and stay for the After party. Maybe you can organize a watch party, bring candles, connect with other Cornerstone folks, or even meet some new friends. Check out all the info on our webpage! Type "Yes" in the Chat, if you plan to invite others to join this service.

But Christmas is a tough season for some who have experienced great loss, or other heart-wrenching traumas, and disappointments – Covid amplifies and

intensifies the grief, pain, and loss many people experience. If you are going through this challenging season, we encourage you to join our Blue Christmas Service on Dec. 17th; or maybe you could ask your grieving relatives and friends who can use some community support to join you to attend this service. Start praying for them and ask the Spirit work in their hearts even now and let the joy of the Lord to strengthen those who find this season difficult to navigate!! Tell me in the Chat that you'll pray for this to happen.

We are continuing our present sermon series, "Songs of Christmas", and so far we've covered Song of Mary and Song of Zachariah; today we will look at Song of Simeon, traditionally known as *Nunc Dimmitis*.

It's a 36 hrs. ordeal: I was tired with no sleep, my neck and hip were sore, my back strained, and I didn't have any food during the whole time.

But in the end, I was so excited, over the moon, delighted, and amazed by the precious gift of life, the arrival of our first born after 36 hrs. labour, the

tiny 6lbs. 14oz. baby I was holding in my hands.
Imagine – an agonizing 36 hrs. of waiting – agonizing
for Libby, waiting for me!

Now parents, were you excited when you first held
the new born baby in your hands? Tell me how you
felt in the Chat. And if you had experienced a longer
labour than 36 hrs. tell us in the Chat.

Talking about waiting, Simeon, probably an old man,
would definitely know something about waiting a
long time for what he desired all his life:

Lk. 2:25 At that time there was a man in Jerusalem
named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and
was **eagerly waiting** for the Messiah to come and
rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ²⁶ and
had revealed to him that **he would not die until he**
had seen the Lord's Messiah ... ²⁷ when Mary and
Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord
as the law required ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took
the child in his arms ... [NLT]

If we think waiting for 36hrs for a baby to be born,
Simeon waited for years ... his whole life!

If you were Simeon, tell me how you feel in the
Chat, while holding the tiny body of baby Jesus, the
promised messiah many Jews expecting to be the
one who would liberate God's people from their
oppressors and usher in God's kingdom in power?

Simeon couldn't contain his excitement and burst
into his short rendition of the Handel's Messiah:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in
peace, as you have promised.

³⁰ I have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared for all people.

³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
and he is the glory of your people Israel!" [NLT]

Simeon's passions and enthusiasm reflect what's
been preoccupying his mind, heart, and soul. The
arrival of the Christ child was what he's patiently
waiting for and now became his mission complete
moment.

See, what we are willing to wait for reveals the
value we place upon it and influences how we
conduct our lives.

So, what are you waiting for at the moment? A new vaccine? A new relationship? A conflict resolution? A new venture? A new gadget/toy? University acceptance letter? A new beginning? Money? Put your answer in the Chat.

We see how God was involved in Simeon's life, in his regular day-to-day activities as well as in different defining moments of his life:

²⁵ ... **The Holy Spirit was upon [Simeon]** ²⁶ **and had revealed to him** that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ **That day the Spirit led him to the Temple**. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord ... ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, **now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.**" [NLT]

The first lesson about God we learn from Simeon's song is this:

God is attentive to our unique circumstances.

The Sovereign Lord who authority over all creation is not a distant or remote deity; He gets up close

and personal; He interacts with each person as an unique individual.

For Simeon being there in the temple where Jews believe as the place of God's presence and holding the Christ child ["Immanuel"] in his hands is most assuring. God has fulfilled His words in the most personal and concrete manner, as He promised.

Simeon is so at ease with God's dealing that he can say he's ready to face death – in peace - a calmness and joy without fear but strength and confidence, even in the most adverse circumstances!

Peace and contentment is what everyone finds in the attentive presence of God.

Do you want to experience this kind of peace in the presence of God now? Say Yes in the Chat. Or you can request a special prayer now.

God knows what you're going through and where you are at in your situation – health challenge, financial need, relational conflict, job loss, etc. - He knows more about you, your needs, and what best for you than you know. God has a 10,000' high view

of your life and is aware of things such as whatever happening in the unseen realm you don't even have any clue.

But, of course, timing is everything; the best timing is God's timing, for he has made everything beautiful in His time.

If God's timing is not to our liking, it doesn't mean He doesn't care; and God's silence doesn't mean His absence. As our good Father in Heaven, He's working out His purpose in His wise ways and for our own good.

We see the depth of Simeon's faith-in-obedience:

Trusting without seeing first

Persevering in trying circumstances

Attuned to the Spirit's prompting

The opposite of these three faith-in-obedience expressions, i.e., living by sight, buckling under trying circumstances, inattentive to God's voice or promptings, show that our agenda overrides God's and have often derailed us from pursuing the

purposes and life goals that God has always intended.

Now type in the Chat the one that often trips you up. Is it living by sight? Buckling under trying circumstance? Inattentive to God's voice or promptings?

So the question isn't why or why not this or that happened but what He wants us to learn in each circumstance!

Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (NIV)

Like Simeon, we are called to live in "godly ignorance" – ignorance because we are finite, godly because we are called to follow what He's already instructed us - for God in His wisdom knows what we can and cannot handle; and we are created to trust in God's goodness, wisdom, and instructions.

The depth of our faith is impacted by our faithfulness in fulfilling our responsibilities, steward

what we have been given, and follow what's clearly revealed to us in his word and/or faith lessons we'd learned in our life journey.

Simeon's testimony of praise reveals God's saving purpose and will for all creation:

³⁰ I have seen **your salvation**, ³¹ which you have prepared for **all people**. ³² He is a **light** to reveal God to **the nations**, and he is the **glory** of your people Israel! [NLT]

Simeon's song echoes what's prophesied by Isaiah about the effect of the arrival of God's messiah:

Is. 60: "Arise, Jerusalem! **Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you.** ² Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but **the glory of the Lord** rises and appears over you. ³ **All nations will come to your light; mighty kings will come to see your radiance.**" [NLT]

The Christ child is not a figment of imagination, or a psychological crutch, or a religious idea, or a moral principle.

Neither is he just another ordinary baby – he's not just Simeon's salvation but the salvation of the whole world: He is ...

the eternal King whom God spoke about to when He promised David an everlasting kingdom,

the Lion of Judah,

the conquering King,

and the suffering Servant the prophets had prophesized.

He is the God-in-the-flesh-appearing before Simeon's eyes, the physical manifestation of God's act of kindness, love, and sacrifice.

By Simeon's declaring Jesus to be God's salvation for all, we learn the second lesson about God:

God goes all out to draw us back to Himself!

God wrapped flesh around himself and left the glory of heaven in the form of a human being in order to rescue us.

Over 1,500 yrs. ago, Augustine wrote these words:

“Man’s maker made man
that He, Ruler of the stars, might nurse at His
mother’s breast;
that the Bread might hunger, the Fountain
thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired on its
journey;
that Truth might be accused of false witnesses,
the Teacher be beaten with whips, the
Foundation be suspended on wood;
that Strength might grow weak; that the
Healer might be wounded;
that Life might die.”

Simeon may not know exactly how this baby would accomplish God’s mission; most Jews at the time couldn’t understand how the humble beginning (and the shameful end) of Jesus matches with their expectation of a mighty Warrior-Messiah-Deliverer; non-Jews would consider any powerful god or goddess becoming a human utter foolishness – a stumbling block to the Jews, foolishness to the Greek.

But Simeon, under the guidance of the Spirit, prophesizes about the impact of Jesus:

2: ³³ Jesus’ parents were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby’s mother, “**This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him.** ³⁵ **As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.** And a sword will pierce your very soul.” [NLT]

These prophetic words of Simeon are the call to action for the listeners then and us now: none can hide from Jesus and one cannot remain neutral toward Him because He brings to light our spiritual condition and where we stand before God. A decision is required once our heart condition is exposed.

Now is the time to make a decision.

1. Follow the Light; draw close to God.

For those who don’t know Jesus, let the light of Christ shine on your path so He will lead you back

to the heavenly Father who knows what's best for you.

Jesus equals salvation: "soteria" is not just about getting a ticket to heaven; it has a more expansive and holistic meaning and refers to being rescued from danger, keeping something in a safe place, restoring one's health from illness, healing from brokenness, deliverance from evil, overcoming forces of darkness, and defeating death – it encompasses the well-being of mind, body, soul, and spirit.

Type in the Chat the kind of "salvation" applies to you right now.

For those who consider yourselves Christ-followers, let me remind you that "Salvation" is not just a once time decision:

we were saved when our eyes were open and followed the Light and became a Christ-follower;

we need the light of Christ everyday – God's salvation - so that we would learn "how to

turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honouring life" [Tit. 2:11f., *The Message*];

we will be ultimately saved, after having "this new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, appears" [Tit. 2:13, *The Message*], ie., when all things are made right in the new heaven and new earth.

Again, it's good to let the Light of Christ shine in your hearts and pray this simple prayer: "Lord, reveal to me what has been keeping me from experiencing peace and joy. Lord, show me how I can be closer to you."

2. Learn the art of waiting on God.

As we have seen in Simeon's example: As a righteous and devout individual who is attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, he waited in active obedience – he walks with God in a hope-driven faithfulness to his life calling - until his mission is completed.

Waiting is a challenge to all of us, especially when we live in a one-click, instant –access, high-tech, light-speed culture!

Waiting is not passive and I love what Brad Watson says about waiting:

“To wait with openness and trust is an enormously radical attitude toward life ... It is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life. It is living with the conviction that God molds us in love, holds us in tenderness, and moves us away from the sources of our fear ... Waiting is an exercise when it’s something we do as an activity. We exercise all the discipline we can muster to conceive of our future hope ... waiting for God to birth something in our lives.” (Brad Watson, https://saturatetheworld.com/2020/11/04/advent-resources-for-2020/?mc_cid=ab3e2367c4&mc_eid=61608cc5cd).

Offer to God in prayer things that you want quick relief delivered and consider what new things God wants to birth in your life. Invite your friends or loved ones to join our online

weekly service in 2021 – we will start the new year with an exciting series, “Realign Your Life: Practices That Transform You.”

Conclusion: I like to close by reading from one of my morning devotional resources I use:

“We are part of a much larger story than that of family, country, or even this world. Our story spans from eternity past through all of history and onward through eternity future ... **we need our calendars to be infused with the story of Jesus and the timing of God** ... we actively move about our days and lives with confidence that the Spirit is moving ...” (J.D. Walt; emphasis ours)

“We need our calendars to be infused with the story of Jesus and the timing of God” – this captures one of the key themes of Simeon’s Song, indeed!

Lord, Jesus, may the song of praise uttered by Simeon become our song and lift our eyes of faith so we may see the beauty of your love, our minds be transformed by your truth, our hearts be shaped by your grace, and our wills be conformed to your will. Now hear our prayer, O Lord! Amen.