

Luke 2:25-35 – “A Wise Man in Wonder”

1. Simeon's Patience - Luke 2:25-26

2:25-26 - *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just 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.*

We don't know much about this man Simeon. Many believe he was very old by the way he was promised that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ – the Anointed One, the Promised One of God. We're not able to say with certainty that he was old. Tradition says that he was 113 years old. But you can't draw that conclusion from Scripture.

But here's what we do know about Simeon, he's a ***just and devout man***. Again, we don't know fully what he's done or the kind of life he's lived to be given this sort of description, but we certainly have some hints from our passage today. First of all, he's been a patient man. He's been ***waiting for the Consolation of Israel...***

Waiting... That's a hard thing to do isn't it?

- We live in a world where everything is instant. We don't like waiting. I gotta say one of the biggest challenges in my sanctification is being patient. I'm a pretty chill guy, but when it comes to getting from point A to point B, I want to know the quickest route and I want to get there before the ETA that Apple maps gives me. My wife on the other hand is often like, '*Oh just drive, we'll find our way.*' I don't like that all that much, that's a hard thing to hear. I interpret that as, we'll find our way after spending an extra hour trying to figure out where we are.
- But it's true, everyone is in a hurry (myself included). We're losing the art of being patient and being ok with waiting.
- Remember when you were a kid, Christmas couldn't come quick enough. And that night before Christmas, as you lay in your bed waiting for morning, that was a painful exercise. Some of you may still be there, that's ok.

But here's Simeon, waiting for something that he believes is to come. He's waiting for the ***Consolation of Israel***. Now that's kind of an odd descriptive of something to be waiting for. What is this Consolation of Israel?

- The word Consolation is the Greek word *paraklēsis*. It means to exhort, encourage, or comfort. That's the idea here in this passage, it speaks of the comforter that is to come. This was a popular title for the Messiah in Simeon's day.
- Notice the NKJV translators capitalized it, meaning they see this as referencing Jesus, the Messiah. Simeon was waiting for what God had promised throughout the Old Testament – that a Savior, the Promised Messiah, would come and redeem Israel and all who believed.
- **Isaiah 40:1–3**, *"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. ² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins." ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God."*
- **Isaiah 52:9**, *"Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem."*

These were promises given and associated with the coming Messiah. Simeon has been holding on, waiting for the fruition of what God has pronounced.

When we read that Simeon was **just and devout**, it's another way to say he's been living a faithful life. He's not been complaining, he's not getting complacent or giving up. He's been honoring the Lord by patiently waiting on Him and for Him.

- There's been nothing to give Simeon a lot of hope that this promise was soon to come. He's been living in a period of time where God has almost seemed distant. There's been no prophetic voice, no events recorded in this time that would make him think that God is really on the move ready to break through with this consolation. He's not waiting because he's seeing things happening that would cause him to think it's time. He's just believing what the word of God has said all along.
- And yet Simeon is living in such a time when he's going to be given an incredible privilege to behold and hold the Messiah.

You know it's not much unlike what we're experiencing today. We're living in a time where we don't see the world improving or becoming more Christian. Many can be left with an attitude of discouragement or disillusionment.

- Many are no longer looking up for their hope and waiting on the things that God has for them.

- But Simeon stands as a great example of one who was wise through the darkness and dismay. He waited patiently for the promise of God in a time where there seemed to be no response from heaven.

And as we wait on the Lord and hold on to the Promises that are still to come, we too find ourselves comforted by the Lord, experiencing the consolation of God.

Now this period of waiting does not need to be a period of waning. Simeon didn't become lethargic in this time of waiting. He continued a life of devotion. He's waiting on this coming of God's promise but he's being guided by and governed by the Spirit. Three times we see this relationship of Simeon to the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit was upon him, filling him. Simeon was remaining in proximity to God. Though God seemed distant in this time, Simeon remained in devotion and closeness to Him by the Spirit.
- And by doing so, Simeon had the Holy Spirit reveal truth to him. He was given encouragement and a wonderful promise. Simeon is reassured that he will not die before seeing the Lord's Christ. This is speaking of the Anointed One, the Messiah. The One God promised would come who would deliver people from their sins.
- And now through the Holy Spirit he is led right to where he will encounter this Promise, the Saviour, the Consolation of Israel.

2. Simeon's Praise - 2:27-32

2:27-32 - So he came by 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 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Simeon is now led to the temple by the Spirit, right at the time when Mary and Joseph are bringing Jesus. God always has His ways of carrying out His purposes.

Simeon may have had many questions about who the Christ would be, how would he recognize Him? Would he even think the Messiah would as a baby? Has he taken other babies in his arms thinking this could be the one??

But the Lord just leads Him by the Spirit and at the right time, Simeon runs into Jesus.

- Perhaps you're wondering how God is going to fulfill a work in your life, or carry out His purposes. Maybe you don't always sense the leading of the Holy Spirit and doubt anything can ever happen positively for you.
- But what we see here is that God is in control. He's leading and orchestrating all things. You may not always be the one He's steering and directing, but maybe He's directing people to you to minister in a way that will bring comfort and help to you.

Now what gets me in this story is that Simeon has been waiting for the Lord's Christ. The Comfort for the world. Remember, it's been a difficult time. The nation of Israel hasn't really heard from God in a prophetic way. Rome has been taking over. They've lost their political independence and now are living in some fear of King Herod. You're going to need a mighty big leader to come and take care of things! But Simeon sees... a baby!

And with this he worships and sings!?!

- How would you have responded? That's like God saying to you, *"I'm going to take care of all your needs. I know you need a car, so here, I got you a steering wheel."*
- How's that going to help!?

I wouldn't fault Simeon if he were to look at baby Jesus and say, *How is He going to help!?*

But he picked Jesus up and just sang!

And what does Simeon sing? That he can now go in peace because He has seen the Lord's salvation. How wonderful! This is why Jesus went through all this. It's why He came down to this world and allowed Himself to be subjected to some man picking Him up as a baby and singing over Him. Jesus came to do this to bring salvation.

- **Matthew 1:21**, *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

And now Simeon says he can **depart in peace**.

- Are we able to say that in our lives? Are we at peace today with God and others? If we were to depart today or if Jesus were to come back right now, could we say we're ready? That we're at peace?
- Jesus came to bring us into peace ultimately with our Heavenly Father, which is to also bring us into peace with one another. Have we beheld

Jesus today and understood what He has done for us and who He is to us? There's no greater peace anyone can know than to know you are forgiven, loved, accepted before the Father because of what Jesus did for you.

- Can we say, whatever might come my way today, I'm at peace!

May we like Simeon take time rejoicing and blessing God for His overwhelming goodness and grace in our lives. Take hold of Jesus and know the wonderful peace we have through Him.

- "Those that have welcomed Christ, may welcome death." ¹

Simeon doesn't question any of this, he just takes God at His word. Simeon says this is all **according to Your Word...**

- Sometimes we miss out on experiencing the peace of God because we fail to take God at His Word. He's given us wonderful promises, encouragement and hope through His word to sustain us in peace. But often times we question if it can actually be true for us?
- Simeon had a lot to question here. How can a little baby save me!? What good is He going to do? But Simeon sings and proclaims the goodness of God as He takes God at His word.
- May this Christmas season be an opportunity to see the reality of God's word coming to life and being true for you. Because everything we see about Christmas has been prepared for you!

Notice this, Simeon says: **which You have prepared before the face of all people.** In other words, this is not just something that was for the people in their day. This isn't just for Israel. This is for all people. This is a Divine gift!

God has prepared Jesus to be the Messiah; to be a light which would bring revelation to the entire world (**Gentiles**).

- **Matthew 4:15–16**, *"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: ¹⁶ The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."*

Now after seeing Simeon respond this way, Joseph and Mary are just kind of left in amazement. They're still processing all that's going on with their newborn

¹ Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Lk 2:25). Logos Research Systems.

child. Now to hear such exuberance from a man like Simeon just leaves quite a stir in their hearts.

3. Simeon's Prophecy - 2:33-35

2:33-35 - *And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

This is an incredible prophecy that Simeon speaks forth that I'm sure neither he nor Joseph and Mary knew the magnitude of its truth. I think it's fair to ask: *Mary, did you know that your baby boy, would save our sons and daughters?* Jesus truly came to bring light and salvation, but His coming would also bring division. Many would fall and rise because of Him. Those that received Him would rise to eternal life, those who denied and rejected Him would fall to the lowest depths. And there's only two positions to take. There's no neutral ground. And it was this way though Jesus' ministry. Even right to the end on the cross. One thief accepts Him, the other rejects Him.

a sword will pierce through your own soul also... Perhaps nobody experienced more anguish at the death of Jesus than did Mary. Not only did she see the Saviour of the world being unfairly accused and crucified, but this was her child that she had raised. You know how protective a parent can be of their child. And at the cross Mary was seeing Jesus suffering for all of humanity. Truly a sword pierced her own soul that day and many times prior.

The question is, have we allowed this sword to pierce our hearts too? You see, we can all go through the motions of saying we believe, or we love Jesus, but He sees and knows what's in our hearts. It's what we've been seeing in our recent look at the Sermon on the Mount. God looks at what's going on in our hearts. Have we truly surrendered our hearts to the Lord and accepted His reign in our lives? Jesus didn't come for us to have a nice annual celebration, He came for us to receive Him as our Lord and Saviour, the only One that forgives us of our sin and makes us new. He alone brings us into a righteous standing with God.

Have you received Him today? May your heart be full of Jesus this Christmas and every day of the year.