

**Joke:** A minister was making a wooden trellis to support a climbing vine. As he was pounding away, he noticed that a little boy was watching him. The youngster didn't say a word, so the preacher kept on working, thinking the lad would leave. But he didn't. Pleased at the thought that his work was being admired, the pastor finally said, "Well, son, trying to pick up some pointers on gardening?" "No," he replied. "I'm just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer."

## The day after Christmas 2021

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Here we are the day after Christmas

- The singing of Silent Night is over
- The time of placing gifts under the tree is over
- The last-minute shopping is over

I'm going to have one more, semi Christmas message today.

Luke and Luke alone provides us a picture of the event I want to share. Luke captures not only the exaltation of the Lord's birth in a stable but continues to follow the story as Joseph, in accordance to local custom and law, relocates Mary and the child to the city of David, Jerusalem. It is there in Jerusalem that Luke shows us the mysterious hand of God as it moves once again to fulfill Old Testament prophecy concerning the arrival of the messiah.

Allow me to introduce to you the man that the Bible calls Simeon. If there ever was a man who ended up waiting on God – it's Simeon.

Luke 2:25–33 (NIV) - <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to

do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup>“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup>For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup>The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

Simeon is a temple priest who Scripture called a righteous and devout man. He has been waiting on the favor of the Lord

Now what you need to understand is that for 400 years, the period between the concluding words of Malachi in the Old Testament, to the opening verses in the New Testament. God was silent. No prophets, speaking, nothing happening that was noticeable. I say that because things in the Kingdom of God are always happening even when we may not see it.

And the children of Israel suffered political unrest first from the Syrians and now to the Romans. Over the last 400 years the people of Simeon had seen leadership shift from Mathias Maccabee and his sons, to the Hasmonean Dynasty. And now they have watched an Edomite family by the name of Herod marry into the royal lineage and become kings themselves.

Yet in the midst of the political unrest, Simeon and others like him had patiently waited on the Lord to send his favor and true king to the people. Simeon had lived his entire life waiting on God to move just as he said he would.

Through the guerrilla fighting of the Maccabees, Simeon waited on God

Through the political maneuverings of Johnathan, Simeon waited on God

Through the manipulations of politically ambitious families, Simeon waited on God

Through the up and down economy of the Jews, Simeon waited on God

To a world dominated and controlled by Roman Caesars, Simeon waited on God

Sometimes church you have to wait on God through all that you are going through, in circumstances you just don't understand . And I know that waiting can be so much fun. NOT!

As we approach these last few days of 2021 somebody here is waiting on God to move and do just what he has promised to do in their lives.

And I want to encourage you today. . .

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) - <sup>20</sup>For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so, through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

This "just" and a "devout" man who was observing the laws and who revered God.

This Simeon who lived in the New Testament age but was still under the Old Testament paradigm. God was about to show His favor.

The Bible says two things about him. First, he was waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was waiting for the comfort, peace and solace that only God can bring.

Somebody here needs to understand that the world can bring you some pleasure – but there are some things that only God can bring you.

Hebrews 11:24–26 (NIV): By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Let me read that once more from the Passion Translation. . .

Hebrews 11:24–26 (TPT): Faith enabled Moses to choose God's will, for although he was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he refused to make that his identity, 25 choosing instead to suffer mistreatment with the people of God. Moses preferred faith's certainty above the momentary enjoyment of sin's pleasures. 26 He found his true wealth in suffering abuse for being anointed, more than in anything the world could offer him, for his eyes looked with wonder not on the immediate, but on the ultimate—faith's great reward!

Hear this church. . . ,

- The world can give you advice – but God can give you direction.
- The world can give you a high – but God can give you peace.
- The world can give you a few moments of happiness – God can give you joy unspeakable full of glory.

Simeon is waiting for God to send the relief. The one prophesied by the Prophets of old. He is waiting for God to send a King, a counselor, the truth, the way, the light.

He's waiting for the Old Testament prophecy to move from words into flesh.

He is from the Old Testament anointing of the Spirit, not the New Testament infilling.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God would fall or rest on a man or a woman. However, those of us in the New Testament era, we have opportunity to be filled with the Spirit;. He now lives and operates from the Inside of us.

Simeon has the Holy Spirit resting upon Him. But I'm glad that I have the Holy Spirit living inside me:

I don't shout because of what's on the outside, I shout because who's on the inside.

The Holy Spirit speaks to Simeon and says that he won't see death until you've seen the Lord's Christ.

Now, here are some things to consider. First off, we know from implication that Simeon must have been up in age. However, we don't really know when he first heard this word from the Spirit. But we do know there was some time spent in waiting to see the fulfillment of Israel, and for him to hear that he won't die until he sees Christ, that's good news to him, he was longing for this day.

So here it is after Christmas – eight days after the birth of Jesus in a manger, to be exact. Mary and Joseph carry Jesus to this priest named Simeon.

Maybe you never thought about this, but Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. But he's carried to Jerusalem. Bethlehem would today be considered "country" or "rural" areas while Jerusalem is "downtown".

So may I suggest that Jesus is not just for those in the country, He's for those in the city as well!

- He's not just for the rich; He's for the poor too.
- He's not just for the educated; He's for the uneducated too.
- He's not just for the ones in the know; He's for the marginalized.
- He's not just for the ones in big houses but He's also for the homeless.
- He's not just for the ones that think they have it all together, but for those who are broken as well.

So, they carry him in for the custom of the law – He is brought in for His circumcision.

But this day was unusual. As they bring the child to the Temple priest Simeon and put the child in his possession – Simeon blesses God.

The job of the priest at circumcision was to proclaim a blessing upon a child – but how can a priest proclaim a blessing upon someone who is already blessed? His job was to consecrate the child – but how can a priest consecrate someone like this? His only option was to praise and celebrate.

Church – when you’ve been waiting on God – when you possess the promise – you need to praise God and celebrate.

When you’ve been praying for a job and an application turns into employment – you need to celebrate with praises...

When you’ve been praying for your health and your doctor’s prognosis turns into God’s healing – you need to praise God....

When you’ve been hooked on drugs and messed up and Jesus comes in and sets you free – you can’t help, but to praise and worship.

Simeon realizes that what he’s been waiting for. . .he’s now holding.

Somebody needs to hear this today; favor means that you may have to wait for what you’ve been promised – but when you receive it – you need to praise God for it.

I can’t understand how some people can come to church after God gives them what He promised and they sit there and refuse to praise God, worship God, give Him all the glory and testify of his goodness. . .

Psalms 107:1–2 (NIV): Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

When you’ve been waiting and waiting and waiting and God comes through – and shows up, that’s the time to be praising God.

Let me go back to the inn keeper that we looked at during our Christmas series for a moment. And give you two thoughts about the inn-keepers response.

1. There was no room in the inn because the space was full.

And that would be true. A census was going on people were lining up for a place to stay, but here's another thought, how many of us make no space for the Savior of the world. We would rather put Him off in a manger out of site from others because we are too afraid that if we let Him move in our lives, what others might think. We fill our spaces with things less important. And I have said this before, but I will say it again. We will always make space for what or Who is important to us.

2. The innkeeper didn't recognize who this child to be born was.

I think sometimes we don't recognize God moving in our lives because He moved differently than we ever saw before.

A virgin birth was unusually. The whole thing was different. Angels. . .a bunch of angels telling lowly shepherds. That just doesn't happen everyday, but they praised God with no regard to what others might think.

Let me go back to Simeon. He says, Lord, let me die in peace. He says mine eyes have seen they salvation.

Even before Jesus saw the cross, Simeon saw that he was already the Savior.

Church, before Jesus went to the cross he was already the savior. Before he marched through the streets of Jerusalem, he was already the savior.

If Simeon can bless God with anticipation, we should be able to praise God knowing what He has already done.

- You should be able to praise God when you think about the cross that he carried. . .
- You should be able to shout when you think about the journey up the hill to Calvary. . .
- You should be able to jump for joy when you think about the nails in His hands. . .

And you should praise him when you stop to think about what he has done for you this year. And praise Him for the expectation of what is in store for this next year.

Some of you here today have been waiting on God to fulfill some promises that He gave you. I want you to know He has not forgotten them. Don't be weary in well doing.

Isaiah tells us they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

Galatians 6:9 (NIV): Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV): The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

I'm going to start next year with a few messages around this thought. You were created for significance. That's next week. I hope to see you here.

Prayer