

## Advent Songs

### Simeon's Song

*He Who Is Mighty*

*Scripture Reading & Candle: Carolyn Foster - PRAY*

#### **4MIN**

- Throughout Advent we've learned from Mary, Zechariah, and the Angels, but we are closing out our Advent series by learning from a less popular character in the Christmas story: Simeon
  - His story and his song have a lot to teach us about *waiting*
  - Not just about waiting but the connection between waiting and hoping
- "Waiting" – any form of that word is one of our culture's least favorite words
  - Waiting in traffic, waiting in line, waiting for someone to text you back
  - Call ahead to a restaurant and ask..."Do you have a wait?" – a more polite way of asking, "Will I have to *wait* to eat food when I get there?"
  - Kids: the worst kind of waiting of all is waiting for Christmas! Having to wait to open presents!
- As we will see with Simeon, there is a strong connection between what we are waiting for and what we are hoping in.
  - When you are waiting on something, it implies that there's something you're hoping in that will end the waiting.
  - Ex: text back – hoping in a good response from that person; presents – good gifts
- This means each of us has something we need to ask ourselves: What is it I am waiting for, hoping in?
  - What is it that I think when I get this or get rid of this, my life will be complete?
- Our answer to this question makes the difference between hopeful waiting and hopeless waiting
- *Luke 2:25-25 (Page 857)*
- Simeon's song: **Jesus came to bring hope to our waiting hearts.** – *Simeon's waiting and his hope*

## 8MIN

### SIMEON'S WAITING

- At this point in the story, Joseph and Mary have brought Jesus to the temple to follow certain OT commands, and these customs would put Jesus around 6-7 weeks old. And the Lord has orchestrated things in such a way to cause their path to cross with Simeon's path.

- Let's see what we learn about Simeon: **Luke 2:25**

- Simeon's name doesn't show up before this scene and never shows up after this scene, so what Luke gives us here is all we know about him.

- '*A man in Jerusalem*' – Jewish man

- '*righteous and devout*' – godly and faithful man, trusted God's Word, did his best to obey God's commands, and consistently showed up to the temple, the place of God's presence in that day

- Important phrase: '*waiting for the consolation of Israel*'

- There's our word! Waiting. But what exactly is Simeon waiting for? *The consolation of Israel*

- Simeon's day was not a bright, happy time to be an Israelite. There was great sadness and tears and pain. They lived under Roman rule in their own land, and no one had heard a word from the Lord for 400 years. There was disappointment and grief and sickness and conflict all around them.

- In the midst of all this, Simeon thought about OT promises like **Isaiah 40:1** – 'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.', and he waited for the Lord to bring that comfort/consolation.

- This was hard for Simeon. Waiting is hard for everyone. I'm sure he doubted at times, "Is God really going to do this? Are His promises really true? It doesn't look/feel like it sometimes."

- Simeon waited. We can feel the sense of waiting in a unique way during the Christmas season. The kinds of grief and pain that many of us carry is always there, but the Christmas season has a way of turning the volume up on it – almost like the expressions of happiness are louder so my expressions of loneliness or sadness or pain have to get louder.

- It may be because of a loved one that is no longer around, a conflict that hasn't been resolved, a recent job loss or diagnosis, an ongoing illness, the messiness of life in a broken world, or even anticipating difficulties that the coming year might bring – like Simeon, in the midst of these hardships, we wait.

- If you wonder what Simeon's experience was like, if you're a follower of Jesus today think about your experience of waiting while also knowing God's promise that Jesus will one day return to earth.

- Simeon was holding onto promises God had made centuries earlier – promises to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed through his offspring, promises to David that his heir would sit on the throne forever, promises to Isaiah that a servant would come and wipe away our sin.

- God's people today are holding onto promises God made centuries earlier – promises that one day, when Jesus comes again, He will wipe away every tear and take away all sickness and pain and sorrow...But here we are, surrounded by sickness and pain and sorrow. Waiting is hard.

- Here's where the description Simeon is so impactful: he was *'righteous and devout'*

- Simeon waited his whole life to see God's promises fulfilled, but he was righteous and devout – meaning every Sabbath, temple, sitting under the Word of God, God's promises were being stored up in his heart, week after week, waiting moment after waiting moment, his heart and mind were being filled with truth of God's character and God's promises. So that, in his moments of doubt and times of sorrow, he had a foundation to stand on, a well to draw from.

- This is what God is doing in you and me as we gather for worship week after week – storing up truth, growing the roots of our faith deep into God's promises, to lead us to trust, in all circumstances, that our hope is not in vain, that our waiting will be worth it.

- **Luke 2:26** – God is bringing hope to Simeon's waiting heart, *and we see He can do the same for us.*

## **8MIN**

### **SIMEON'S HOPE**

- What happens next should give us chills – week after week for his entire life...then one day, the exact same day this young couple from Bethlehem with their newborn baby also came to the temple, God led Simeon to go to the temple – **2:27**

- Joseph and Mary had their own reasons for coming to the temple that day, and Simeon had his own reasons for coming to the temple that day – but now the Lord causes their paths to cross

- After all the days of hearing, "Not yet. Keep waiting.", Simeon now hears the Lord telling him, "This is the day. This is the one. He has arrived!"

- This man, who has waited his whole life for this moment, sees the baby boy, walks over to Joseph and Mary, and, with his heart beating fast in his chest, asks, "Can I hold your baby?"

- Then, **Luke 2:28**, and praises God and sings **Luke 2:29-32**

- 29 – Lord, I can die now, knowing you have kept your word. You've done what you said you would do.

- 30 – (where his peace and contentment come from) my eyes have seen your salvation
- May seem obvious, but focus on who Simeon is talking about – *connect vs.26 and 30*
- God’s salvation is not an event or a circumstance but a person! Jesus is the One who saves!
- Not just about Who saves but also who He came to save: **Luke 2:31-32**
  - Simeon, remember – a Jewish man, is proclaiming that the Messiah isn’t just the Messiah for Israel. He didn’t come just to save the Jewish people. He is the global Messiah; He came to save people of every nation and language. He is the only Savior of the world!
  - Simeon’s song shouts to us: there is no one who doesn’t need the salvation of Jesus, and there is no one who can’t receive the salvation of Jesus.
- These are the truths God has been storing up in Simeon’s heart over the years, and these are the truths that rub hope into his waiting.
  - **Ryle: He speaks like one for whom the grave has lost its terrors, and the world its charms.**
  - Jesus has brought hope to his waiting heart – wait in this world, need hope outside this world
- Not the last thing Simeon says to Joseph and Mary – **Luke 2:33-34**
  - As Simeon hands Jesus back to Mary, he tells her that her son will be the dividing point of all people everywhere. There will be those who trust Him and follow Him, but there will also be those who reject Him, who are indifferent to Him.
- Says to Mary, **Luke 2:35** – she will endure great pain because of what lies ahead for her son; in a few short years, she will stand at the foot of a cross and watch her Son die to accomplish what Simeon has just said.
  - This means to bring us hope, he will suffer. Relieving our pain will come through His pain. Getting rid of our grief will come through His grief. Rescuing us from our sorrow will come through His sorrow.
  - He will lay down His life in order to bring hope to our waiting hearts.
- **Luke 2:25b** – in all this, Jesus is the great revealer of hearts – the coming of Jesus into this world is the even that reveals what we are truly waiting for, pulls back the curtain on what we are hoping in
  - Simeon spent his whole life waiting for the day when Jesus would arrive. The Bible says there’s another day coming when Jesus will return. On that day, there will be those who realize their hope was in the wrong place and there will be those who realize their hope was not in vain.
  - The difference is how you respond to Jesus.

- To those here this morning that don't have a relationship with Jesus (unsure, against all this), invite you to hear Simeon's story/song as an invitation to put your hope in Jesus and Jesus alone, the only hope that will never disappoint

- To those whose hope is in Christ but you're waiting, let Simeon's song remind you there is a Light in the midst of the darkness; there is joy in the midst of sorrow. It's calling each of us to trust that God never fails to keep His promises, to cling to Christ in whom all the promises of God are "Yes!"

- Because Simeon did not wait in vain, we will not wait in vain. All of our waiting moments will be met with hope.

## **2MIN**

- Jesus came to bring hope to our waiting hearts. Simeon's song reminds us that the truth of Christmas doesn't ignore our pain, but nor does it tell us to wallow in our pain...you can carry great sorrow at Christmas, and yet, through Jesus, God can give you the resilience to wait with hope.

- *Not celebrate by Ann Weems*: Not celebrate? Your burden is too great to bear? Your loneliness is intensified during this Christmas season? Your tears have no end? Not celebrate? You should lead the celebration! You should run through the streets to ring the bells and sing the loudest! You should fling the tinsel on the tree, and open your house to your neighbors, and call them in to dance! For it is you above all others who know the joy of Advent. It is unto you that a Savior is born this day: One who comes to lift your burden from your shoulders, One who comes to wipe the tears from your eyes. You are not alone, for He is born this day to you.

- Not meant to belittle our waiting but to remind us that we wait, but we wait as those who have seen the salvation of Jesus, we wait as those who know the Savior of the world has come, we wait as those who believe He is coming back – he won't leave us waiting.

- *Stand and respond in song*

*Joy to the World + Sending: Mark (Gather and Go)*

*CUT OUT:*

- the Holy Spirit, who prepared a body for the son of God, also prepared a people to wait for him.
- Simeon is confessing that Jesus the Messiah was not simply the Messiah for Israel. He was not simply the Savior of the Jewish people...the Savior of the ethnic and national people of Israel. He was the Savior of the world. He was a light to the Gentiles. His coming into this world has come before the face of all peoples. Simeon is reminding us that there is salvation in Jesus the Messiah alone. He is the one Savior for all nations.
- You see what Simeon is saying: that this Jesus will be the dividing point of His people and of all mankind. There will be those who love and trust Him, and they will share in all the glory of God; but those who do not trust Him, those who turn their backs on Him, those who are indifferent to Him, those who do not have faith in Him, He has been appointed for their fall.
- Piper: Thus when Simeon says that Christ is set for the rise and fall of many and for a slandered sign, that thoughts of many hearts may be revealed, we understand that what is being revealed is whether a person has a heart humble enough to trust Christ alone for salvation or whether the person is haughty and must be brought low.
- All our waiting moments as hard as they may be for healing for reconciliation for mental health for peace for joy for life or taken up in the one great waiting the expectation that governs them all the longing for Jesus's return