

Simeon - Waiting for the Lord

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 December 2018

Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read in the Gospel of Luke chapter 2. And as God would help us, I'd like to read again and concentrate on verses 25 to 32.

The Gospel of Luke chapter 2 verses 25 to 32. 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.

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.

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, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

[1 : 33] For my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people, Israel.

How did Simeon say what he said when he saw the child Jesus?

What made him say what he said? How was it that Simeon saw what apparently everyone else in the temple that day were looking at?

How did Simeon see what no one else seems to have seen when they were looking at the same child Jesus?

What's the explanation? What's the answer? Well, we have that in verse 25. He was righteous.

[2 : 50] He was devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Spirit was upon him.

That's instructive. That teaches us quite a lot, doesn't it? Simeon saw what he saw because, first of all, verse 25 tells us, he was devout.

Sorry. First of all, he was righteous. Now righteousness refers to the outward life. There are some people, you know, they're very spiritual.

But they're not righteous. I remember, if I remember correctly saying once to somebody, oh, a very spiritual person. I didn't know them well. But I thought what I knew, what is a spiritual person, that?

Oh, well, maybe. Pity he can't keep a job. A pity he can't live with his neighbors. A pity he falls out so often with his wife.

[3 : 59] Righteousness has to do with our outward life. Are we keeping it? Are we loving God outwardly?

Are we loving our neighbor outwardly? Simeon was righteous. But Simeon was also devout, our Bible tells us.

That is reference to his inward life. His outward life was not deceitful. His inward life toward God was consistent with his outward life.

You can have it the two ways. Inwardly, but not living it outwardly. And outwardly, but not living it inwardly. Simeon was both.

He had a godly frame of mind. He kept God's law outwardly as well. But verse 25 tells us, He waited for the consolation of Israel.

[5 : 06] To make a long story short, I suppose we could say that waiting, you see, is a grace. Waiting is faith. You remember the Savior taught us the parable of the sower and the seed.

And the basic message was this. Some people, they hear the gospel. Oh, they're so enthusiastic. But just wait. Just wait. How long does it last?

You can only wait if you have faith. And if you have faith, you'll be able to wait. Simeon, we don't know how old he was, but he was waiting for this day.

God promised him he would not leave earth until he would see God's Messiah in the flesh. And he was waiting patiently.

Waiting for God. Now, waiting is a sign of faith, a mark of faith. But waiting isn't doing nothing. What else can you do but wait if the time hasn't come?

[6 : 20] But in the Bible, when someone is said to be waiting, it means trusting and it means serving. The best example is we think of a waiter in a restaurant.

Someone waits on you. They serve you. They're trying to please you. Would you like some more water? Would you like something else? Have you got sufficient seasoning?

That's waiting. That's the way the Bible uses it. We're waiting for God. We're serving God. We're trying to please God.

Simeon saw what no one else saw. Because he was waiting on God. He was devout inwardly. He was righteous outwardly.

And the Holy Spirit was upon him. I don't need to tell you, I don't think, do I, that you can be a true Christian and yet out of step with this Spirit.

[7 : 25] But Simeon was not like that. Simeon was not like that. He was righteous. He was devout. He was waiting on God.

And the Holy Spirit was on him. And that's the secret. Why did Simeon see in the child Jesus what no one else could see?

That's the answer. That's the explanation. Well, as God would help me, I would like to, as we look at Simeon, first of all, I'd like to look at what Simeon saw.

Secondly, what Simeon heard. And thirdly, what Simeon said. First of all, what Simeon saw.

When he looked at the child, at the baby, eight days old, what did he see? He saw God. He saw a Savior.

[8 : 32] A Savior God. Do you need a Savior? Do you need to be saved? People object to having, to being told they need to be saved.

Most people, without the Holy Spirit, think they just need to sort themselves out. I don't know how many people have said that. When I sort myself out, my friend, you need to be saved by a third party.

And there's only one third party that can save you. And he was a baby. And Simeon saw in that eight day old baby, he saw a Savior.

He saw salvation. When he saw God, he saw salvation. He saw hope. He realized he could not save himself.

He realized he had to be saved. Have you come to that point? Have you come to that point? You need to be saved by someone else.

[9 : 49] And that someone else can only be God's Son. Whom we remember came into the world at this time of year. Simon saw God because he was waiting for God.

He was waiting on God. As we said already, trying to please God. Realizing he was made by God, for God.

And he was seeking to please God. God. He wanted more of God. Do you want more of God?

Or have you quite enough once a week? Have you got enough of God? Do you want more? You know, someone said to me, humorously, you know, grace is like money.

The more you get, the more you want. Do you want more of God? Do you want more of Christ? Or are you quite satisfied with once or twice a week?

[11 : 04] Do you need him every day? I remember meeting a man once on a bus and I was so encouraged. He said, you know this, I need him every hour. And I don't think he was a new Christian.

I think he was quite a mature Christian. I need him every hour. Do you need him every hour? You're like Simeon. He needed more. The more you get, the more you want.

Simeon saw the Savior. He saw God when others missed it because he loved God. I don't think you'll see more of God if you don't love him.

Do you love him? You know about him. You know he's the supreme being. You know how vastly superior to everything he is.

But do you love him? Do you love him? How can you tell do you love him? Well, do you love his people? Do you love his house?

[12 : 14] Do you love his word? Jesus is the word enfleshed. The word made flesh. Do you love his day?

Do you love his day? Do you love his promises? Do you love his promises? Do you know his promises?

Do you know his promises? Do you know what he's promised? We'll come to that later I'm sure. Simeon saw what he saw because he loved God and he waited for him and he was prepared to wait for him.

He wanted more of God. But can you imagine the sceptics of the day? The local rag press?

Can you not imagine some sceptics coming up to Simeon and saying, how do you know that's the Messiah? Come on! How many other eight day babies have you seen in here?

[13 : 21] How do you know he's the Messiah? Can you hear them saying that? Time enough to believe he's the Messiah when we hear him preaching? Time enough to believe he's the Messiah when we see him perform miracles?

Can you hear them? These things don't change. These sceptics have been doing it since the beginning of time. It's not because we're super bright or super intelligent today that we've got so much scepticism about.

The secular society has not increased because they're brilliant. They're not actually. They're defying truth. Isn't it salutary later on when the baby grew when the baby grew isn't it salutary?

When there was the clear evidence of his miracles when he preached and people knew that he spoke with authority and not as the scribes?

Isn't it interesting the response when evidence was provided that he was different, that he was from heaven, that he was a messiah? What was the response?

[14 : 39] They turned from him. Isn't it amazing? I've forgotten what verse it is in the Bible. He raised them from the dead and the next verse you read is what?

If you saw somebody raise someone from the dead you would say to yourself well that will convert anyone. Will it? Did it? We read from that day onward.

From that day onward the day he rose people from the dead. From that day onward they decided this man must die. It's in the Gospels.

I've forgotten the actual verse but read it for yourselves. it's not shortage of evidence that's a problem. It's hardness of heart.

The more evidence you provide the harder the heart gets if you don't love God. You need to love God and you need to love Christ.

[15 : 40] God in the flesh. There's such a vast difference between God in heaven and you and I on earth. We need something in between to identify with and my homemade way of putting it is Christ is the understandable version of God.

Do you want to know what God is like? Have a long look at Jesus. Have a long look at Christ. He's the understandable version of God.

God is so vastly different, so vastly other than us. We need something between God and us to identify with and it's Christ.

It's Jesus and there's records of him. Study them, read them, get to know them. And this Simeon, what faith he had, what faith he had, because they say, you know, the darkest period in history was just before Christ came into the world.

We rightly say our age is getting pretty seriously corrupt. We're becoming extremely evil as a nation.

[17 : 08] But it was nothing compared to what things were like in Simeon's day. Before the dawn, the darkest part of the night.

Simeon saw Christ, recognized the Savior, recognized the Messiah, when he was seen alongside apostate Israel.

Apostate Israel. He saw alongside corrupt priests. It was the darkest period. You know, you get depressed about the state of the church today, but read your Bible.

It's not new. It shouldn't be, of course not, but it's not new. It's as old as the Bible. What were the priests in Samuel's day like?

What were the priests like? You remember what Christ, he said, I have to cleanse the temple before we go any farther in my ministry. We have to cleanse the temple. But it doesn't last long.

[18 : 16] We're so corrupt. Simeon saw an apostate Israel. Is there anything so worrying to real Christians that when you see people in the church defecting, it challenges your faith.

Simeon saw it. Ah, but he also saw a Savior. He also saw Jesus alongside what was going on. He saw a desecrated temple.

Simeon saw plenty that could have put him off religion. And you and I can see plenty around us that would put us off religion.

can you see God? Can you see a Savior? Can you see Christ? That's the key. It's not what you disapprove of.

It's not what you don't like. It's not what you don't believe. It's what you do believe. That's what's important. Can you see Jesus? Can you see Christ?

- [19 : 22] And when you see Christ, tell me, tell me, when you see Christ, can you see salvation? I'm amazed the number of people that can say, the number of people that agree.
- They agree they're sinners. They agree they can't save themselves. And they agree there's no other Savior but Jesus.
- But for some reason they can't bring the two things together. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
- The greatest qualification for salvation is you're a sinner. One of your own theologians, Rabbi Duncan, he got depressed from time to time apparently.
- And he said, on one occasion, I think he said it to one of his students in class. I'm not sure about that. But he said, you know, he was very down this day.
- [20 : 31] And he said, you know this, my only hope is my sin. My only hope is my sin. Can you identify with that?
- You're a sinner. And Christ saves sinners. sinners. You've got the qualifications for salvation if you're a sinner. But can you see it?
- And are you prepared to admit it? You're a sinner. Christ came into the world to save sinners. sinners. But when we ask the bottom line, what made Simeon say what he said when he saw Christ?
- And the answer is because of what Simeon had heard. So our second heading, what Simeon heard. He heard God.
- the word Simeon actually means to hear. An accurate translation would be hearkening.
- [21 : 44] Simeon hearkened. He hearkened to God. He heard God. I tell the children a story about a boy whose mother took him to the doctor.
- And she said to the doctor, here's little Fred. He says he's got something wrong with his ears. He doesn't hear me sometimes. He can't hear me. So please will you examine his ears?
- So he said yes. He says I've got some special equipment for that. And he gave him a long long test. And then eventually he came out and brought him back to his mother.
- And he said to his mother, you know little Fred, there's nothing wrong with his ears. it's not that he's not hearing. It's that he's not listening.
- Have you got the difference? Do you hear God or do you listen to God? Are you listening to God?
- [22 : 49] Simeon, his name really means listening, hearkening, or better still, obeying. We can hear and not listen.
- Are we listening to God? Simeon listened to God. There's all the difference in the world between hearing and listening.
- Abraham, the father of the faithful. How is his faith described and defined in the Bible?
- Well, like Abraham, Simeon knew by faith. And the Bible puts it wonderfully about Abraham. God said, God simply said something to Abraham and Abraham believed what God said.
- And that was Simeon. God said something to Simeon and Simeon believed God. God said he wouldn't leave this earth until he saw the child.
- [24 : 03] And that's what gave him faith. He believed what God had said. Simeon never saw a miracle, never heard him preach, never heard a sermon from him.
- God just said something and Simeon believed. But you know this, that's the same with you.

That's the same with me. Are we believing what God has said? The Bible is a version of the Bible I love.

Faith comes by hearing. Faith comes by hearing. And hearing by the word of God. The word hearing could be translated report.

Faith comes by a report. Or let's flesh it out. Faith comes by hearing a report.

[25 : 11] Do you have faith in Jesus? Jesus? Now tell me, can you hear a report about Jesus? Here's a report about Jesus.

This man welcomes sinners. sinners. Are you a sinner? Do you know, do you believe Jesus welcomes sinners?

Do you believe that? God just said something to Abraham. God just said something to Simeon.

and they believed what God said. Do you believe what God has said? Do you believe when God says he whoever hears my word.

Are you hearing his word? Are you listening to his word? Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

[26 : 22] Now that's quite hard to believe. He isn't saying you will obtain eternal life. John 5 24 says if you're hearing his word and believing you possess right now eternal life because you believe it.

And I tell you to understand that, to realize that, to grasp that, that's life changing. And that's what you need. That's what we all need. He does not come into judgment but he has passed from death to life.

You believe what God has said and you've already passed from death to life. John 5 24 It's life changing.

If you grasp that, your life will change. And why not now? Why not tonight? Take God at his word. Here's another report.

Faith comes by hearing a report. Here's another report of Jesus. In fact, everyone, anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[27 : 42] Do you believe it? everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Do you believe it? It's life changing. It's destiny changing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.

God saw salvation because he listened to the promises of God and you listen to the promises of God.

what Simeon saw, what Simeon heard, and now what Simeon said, Lord, now, now, now, now, now, you're letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

According to your word. I wonder how many times did Simeon go into the temple and was disappointed the baby wasn't there.

[29 : 12] I wonder how often he did it. I wonder what he said that morning when he got up and said, well, I suppose I better go along and have another look. I don't know.

I don't know. But he waited on God and knew one day it will come now and the time has come now that your servant depart in peace.

I've seen salvation. I've seen your son. You've kept your word. I'm ready to go, Lord. I'm ready to go.

Simeon said, basically, I don't need to see the child grow till he's twelve and teach and teach the teachers in the temple, the elders in the temple.

I don't need to wait to see him walk on water. I don't need to see him feed five thousand with half a dozen rolls equivalent. a glimpse.

[30 : 15] I don't even need to see him cure diseases or raise the dead. I don't even need to see the resurrection or the ascension. A glimpse, a glimpse did it for Simeon.

And a glimpse of Christ will do it for you. a glimpse of Christ is life changing. Simeon also said this child is not just for the favored few but he's for all peoples.

I think that's wonderful. Verses 31 and 32, what else is Simeon saying but repeating in fact what we have in verse 10. The angel said, here's the angel, the announcement and the angel said to them, fear not for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that will be for all the people.

All the people. Now listen, never ever ever let anyone say to you, Christ is not for me.

Never let anyone say to you, Christ is not for you. Christ is for all people. That's what the angels said when he was born.

[31 : 55] For all people. Are you a human being? Are you a human being? I don't see any animals in here. Are you a human being?

Christ came for you. But you must trust him. You must believe him. You must take him at his word simply because he said it.

For no other reason, it may not make sense, but because he said it. It's real and it's true. But we must not close without a solemn warning.

Simeon said something else. This child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel.

What's he saying there? He's saying this child, this child we get so excited about at this time of year. He's the turning point in a person's life.

[33 : 03] The fall and the rising. He's a watershed. On the one case, he's a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Isn't that right? How many grossly misunderstand the gospel? How many tragically distort the gospel? You can go past King Herod.

Isn't it interesting King Herod? Why did King Herod kill all the children two years old and under?

Wasn't that the most awful thing to do? What made him do it? Do you know what made him do it? He believed Jesus was a king.

what a terrible reaction. Killing. How many children under two because he was frightened of the king?

[34 : 04] Are you frightened of Jesus? Are you frightened of Christ? You have to be like Simeon. You have to love him, embrace him, run to him.

you have to adore him. What Simeon is saying here in conclusion, this child marks failure or recovery.

Failure or recovery. Christ in other words is the ultimate litmus test. He's a catalyst. Your response to him is the criterion and it all boils down to this.

what do you think of the child Jesus? What do you think of him being born of a virgin?

What do you think of him being turned away by five star hotels and getting into the cow shed at the back? What do you think of his deathbed?

[35 : 12] No clean sheets? No soft Danlo pillow mattress? A cruel rugged cross. But do you believe it was for us he hung and suffered there?

Do you believe that? It's life changing. Believe what God has said. Whoever and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

May God the Holy Spirit make his word effectual to every one of us. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Lang sea love life from to sea