

**Text: Luke 2:25-35**

**Title: “ADVENTure Worship” Pt.1**

Open your Bibles to Luke 2:25. We’re on an ADVENTure during this season. Advent is the name given to the church’s celebration of the arrival or the coming of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Here in Luke 2 we’re introduced to two obscure believers who, when they witnessed the advent of Jesus, worshipped and treasured Him. Before I pick up reading let me set the stage. Jesus is just a few weeks old at this point. Mary and Joseph were righteous people who faithfully observed the Law of Moses which required that their first-born son be brought to the Temple to present to the Lord (similar to what we observed this morning in parent/child dedication). But as Mary, Joseph and Jesus were in the Temple, they ran into a very special man.

**Luke 2:25 - 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 upon him.**

So we’re introduced to Simeon. All we know about him is found in these eleven verses. He comes into the picture for a brief moment, then he’s gone and we never see or hear from him again. We’re not told that he was a priest; he’s just a regular Jewish man. It’s very possible that he is an older man, perhaps nearing the end of his life. If that’s the case, it’s a reminder to us that we need the wisdom of older people in our lives. You see, what happens with aging is that we have a perspective about things that we might not possess when we’re younger. There are things that we think are important when we’re young, but as time goes by we realize that there are other things more important. Older people give us this perspective. Simeon perhaps had come to the end of his life and realized that there was really only one thing that mattered for him ... to see God’s Messiah.

Simeon lived a God-centered life. And when you live a God-centered life it will lead you to Jesus and to the delights that only He can bring. God is pleased to reveal His Son to those who seek Him. And when you experience Jesus in this way your soul is flooded with joy in Jesus that this world can never produce. If we’re stuff-centered or sports-centered or self-centered, but not God-centered, we will never taste the sweetness of Jesus. And if you never taste the sweetness of Jesus you will never know that He is all-satisfying.

Notice...

## **1. THE WALK OF A GOD-CENTERED PERSON**

**Luke 2:25 - 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 upon him.**

There are some words or phrases in v.25 that describe this man’s walk ... his everyday life.

When it says Simeon was “righteous” it means he was right before others. He was upright in all of his dealings with other people. When it says he was “devout” it means he was devoted to God. He feared and revered God in all aspects of his life. This word would signal to us that Simeon was disciplined as a man of prayer and of the Word of God. His rightness with others flowed from his rightness with God.

It is always the case that the people who are righteous and devout are also the most receptive to the new thing that God is doing. That's what we learn about Simeon when it says he was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." This describes for us his expectant faith.

To understand this we need to know a little about what people like Simeon were facing at the time that Jesus was born. The Jews were living as slaves in their own land, which was dominated by the Romans. On top of that, their national spiritual life as the people of God had deteriorated so much that it was really nothing more than a stale religion. But there was a remnant of people like Simeon who knew from Scripture that God was not through with His people. They were convinced that Israel needed God back at the center of their lives. They needed revival and a spiritual awakening and they believed that God had promised in His Word that one day that would come through the sending of the Messiah.

Simeon's expectant faith caused his heart to long for God. In dark times we long for something that this world can never satisfy. If you are going through a dark time, perhaps God is preparing you to see Him like you've never seen Him before. God just might be gently frustrating you with your life that is not centered on Christ. God is filling you with longings that can never be satisfied by any pleasure or possession or person in this world. If you will let that longing drive you to Jesus you will find yourself satisfied in ways you could never imagine.

When fears crept in and worries encircled him, Simeon remembered the promises of God to comfort and deliver His people. That's expectant faith.

But there's something else about Simeon's walk with God. It says "the Holy Spirit was upon him." This describes his spiritual fullness. In fact, the wording indicates that this was something continuous for Simeon. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. In fact, the next verses show us how receptive Simeon was to the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 2:26 - It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

**Luke 2:27 - 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,**

Notice how spiritually sensitive Simeon is. The Holy Spirit had revealed something to Simeon. From the sacred Scriptures Simeon learned that the Messiah would come to deliver and redeem. And the Holy Spirit had spoken *personally* to Simeon that he would not die before it happened. That requires some special intimacy with God by His Spirit. Then it says that the Holy Spirit moved him to go into the Temple at a specific time. So Simeon was filled with and led by the Spirit.

**ILLUSTRATION** – One week as I was preparing to preach I had an unsettledness about the message I had planned to preach. As I prepared throughout the week I kept struggling with knowing which way the Lord was leading. On the day that I needed to make the decision one of our administrative assistants came up and told me that she had been praying and reading the Scriptures that morning and God put me on her heart. She felt the Lord saying to her that she needed to tell me

that I should stay the course and preach what God had put on my heart. She had no idea what it meant, but she's an obedient servant of the Lord. When she got to the church and told me what the Lord had told her, I said, "How did you know what I was struggling with?" She said, "I didn't, but God knew."

When you walk with God like Simeon walked with God, the Spirit will lead you every step of the way. Next it says...

**Luke 2:28 - Simeon took him (Jesus) in his arms and praised God...**

So there is the walk of the God-centered person but also...

## **2. THE WORSHIP OF A GOD-CENTERED PERSON.**

Simeon's life lights up with worship when he embraces Jesus. What lights up your life? Is it getting a raise, taking a vacation, getting a new car or new clothes, being invited to an important party, having a delicious meal. There's nothing wrong with those experiences, in and of themselves. Unfortunately we know that those earthly delights come and go. In the darkest hours of your life, where is your hope, what is your anchor? For Simeon it was God.

**Luke 2:28 - Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:**

**PHOTO ILLUSTRATION** – Hanging upstairs in the hallway of our music ministry is a painting by Ron DiCianni called "Simeon's Moment." It captures this moment when Simeon embraced the baby Jesus. There is the old Jewish man draped in his customary robe, his arms and wrinkled hands, embracing Jesus, who is bundled in a simple blanket. The baby's dark hair is buried in the chest of the old man. But Simeon's face tells the whole story. Just look at the delight on his face! It's turned upward towards heaven. His eyes are closed and brimming with tears that trickle down his cheeks into his gray beard. Look at his mouth. His mouth is open as if he is gasping in sheer delight or crying out in praise to God. If you look carefully you can see in the background a map of the world reflecting Simeon's understanding of the mission of God's Messiah to save the world from their sins. That's "Simeon's Moment."

Does the presence and nearness of God do that for you? If it does the result will be worship. And the Scripture here echoes the worship of Simeon. He praised (or blessed) God. The word means "to speak well of..." This is Simeon's song:

**Luke 2:29 - "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.**

When Simeon prays, "as you have promised" it is literally "according to your word." This goes back to v.26 when he was told by God that he would not die before he had seen the coming of the Messiah. He was clinging to a word from God.

Because Simeon was God-centered his whole life was lashed to the promises of the Word of God. This was part of the devout life of Simeon. He was acquainted with the Scriptures that the Messiah

would come and all that He would come to be to people who hoped in Him. Note: Your worship will grow stronger as your knowledge of the Word of God grows stronger.

**Read Luke 2:30-32.**

So Simeon sees the vast dimensions of the redemption of Jesus ... the wideness in His love and he praises God for it.

**Luke 2:33 - The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.**

Imagine how Mary and Joseph must have felt when this old man (a stranger) walks up to them and says, "Oh my, I've been waiting for this moment. I've been expecting this. God revealed to me that He would send the Messiah in my lifetime. I knew it must be getting close. Mary and Joseph you are holding in your arms a very special Child. May I hold him?"

Just think about it. If Simeon had not been sensitive to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit to go into the temple he would have missed it all. But as it is Simeon can say...

**Luke 2:29b - "Sovereign Lord ... now dismiss your servant in peace.**

As a servant of the Lord Simeon had waited patiently, standing at attention, if you will, and waiting for the Messiah. Now Simeon says, "Lord, now you can dismiss me. I have all I want in Jesus. I'm satisfied. My bucket list is complete. I have all I need. I've seen Jesus." Child of God, at the top of your bucket list ... of things you want to experience before you kick the bucket ... has to be to experience the fullness of God in your life. Without that, nothing else on your bucket list matters because it can never satisfy. Simeon said, "Now I am at peace. I have all I need."

People whose walk in life is God-centered see Jesus and their lives explode with worship. But then Simeon continues and we see...

**3. THE WITNESS OF A GOD-CENTERED PERSON.**

You see when we are walking with God like Simeon was walking with God there will be two outstanding results ... our worship and our witness. God used Simeon that day to be a witness to Mary, Joseph and others who were there to hear.

**Luke 2:34 - Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,**

Simeon understood the mission of Jesus. Many will reject Jesus and fall. Others will receive Jesus and rise. The fact is, for Jesus to be the Lord's Christ, for Jesus to bring the consolation of Israel, for Jesus to be the light for the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel, He will have to suffer.

Jesus would be "a sign spoken against." That is, Jesus would endure great opposition from those He came to deliver. He would be insulted, abused, mocked and hated ... and crucified.

**Luke 2:35 - so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”**

The most popular Christmas song these days is Mark Lowry’s “Mary Did You Know.” The song asks, “Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?” Well, yes, according to Luke 2:35 she did know ... and she knew it would cost Him His life to do that.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Perhaps you have been following the brutality of the group known as ISIS or the Islamic State. They have been systematically persecuting Christians in Iraq. An Anglican pastor named Andrew White has come to be known as the Vicar of Baghdad. He recently reported that there were four Iraqi Christian children (all under the age of 15) who were all beheaded by the Islamic State, because they refused to betray Jesus. When the ISIS militants gave them one last chance to say the Islamic words of conversion, they told the ISIS fighters that they will always love and follow Jesus. And they paid with their lives.

Where does this love for Jesus come from that would fortify you to stand in the face of executioners and say, “I love Jesus”? We will never stand up for, speak up for or suffer for a Savior who isn’t real to us ... who isn’t the treasure of our lives.

**PARENT/CHILD DEDICATION**