

Title: “Christmas: God Blesses those who Wait Patiently”

Text: Luke 2:25-35

Date: Dec 20, 2020 at FBCW

INTRO. We all know what it feels like to wait...and to continue to wait.

- Parents in the carline at school.
- Students waiting for the bus...or children waiting for Christmas morning.
- Waiting at the gate to board the airplane.
- How about waiting on the doctor to enter the room.
- Waiting on your tax return to hit your bank account.
- Waiting for better weather to go outside.
- Waiting in hospice for your loved one to slip into eternity.
- I think all of us are waiting for the year 2020 to end...

We all know what it feels like to wait...and some of us have waited for a baby.

- Including Joseph and Mary.
- But also a lesser known hero in the Bible: a godly, older man named Simeon that we will learn about today.

But first, know that the Bible provides us with a theology of waiting.

- God is a God of patience.
- God is not in a hurry.
- We personally feel pressure...as if we will run out of time. But God is *over* time.

2 Peter 3:8, *But do not forget this one thing, beloved: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*

Do you hear what I’m saying? “Waiting” – yes, waiting – is taught/affirmed all across the Bible.

David tells us to wait →

Psalm 27:14, *Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*

Psalm 40:1, *I waited patiently for the LORD; He turned to me and heard my cry.*

Psalm 5:3, *In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you and watch (wait) expectantly.*

Isaiah tells us to wait →

Isaiah 40:30-31, *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary.*

Revelation closes with a picture of waiting →

Rev 22:17, *Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come.*

Rev 22:20, *He who testifies about these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!”*

The songs of the church are filled with cries to patiently wait →

*Perfect submission, all is at rest...I in my Savior am happy and blessed
Watching and waiting, looking above...Filled with his goodness, lost in His love*

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long (2x)

Second, the message of the Old Testament was clear: God foreshadowed that a Savior would come.

- The people of God were promised that a King was coming.
- But it was according to God’s timing...not man’s timing.

Pattern of the OT: the ebb and flow of highs and lows – but there was always a spark of hope – When Israel was at her lowest: the prophets would speak and remind them...God has not forgotten you! Keep waiting!

We might say it like this: every story of the OT is foreshadowing, “Messiah is coming...He’s coming!”

Gen 3:15, *I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.*

Gen 12:2, *I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*

Messiah will be a deliverer like Moses.

He will be a mighty judge like Samson.

He will be a great king like David.

He will be a great prophet like Elijah.

Isaiah 9:6-7, *For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and hover his kingdom to establish it and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

The final voice of the Old Testament →

Malachi 4:1-2, For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them, says the Lord of Armies, not leaving them root or branches. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall.

So the Old Testament basically goes like this:

- Man has a problem called sin.
- God has a solution called salvation.
- God's answer is on the way...but when will he come?

Today's story: a holy man named Simeon – he lived his entire life looking for the Messiah. God showed him through special revelation that he would not die until he literally saw the Messiah. This is Simeon's testimony:

First, who was Simeon? Simeon was a man who spent his whole life waiting on Jesus' birth.

His character (v 25).

- Righteous. It means "holiness" – it means that the holy standard of God became the personal standard of Simeon.
- Devout. It means devoted, faithful. When others waned, quit, or gave up their faith – Simeon kept on believing the Lord's promise.

His location: he stayed in Jerusalem. He stayed close to the holy city of God.

His vision (v 26). He looked forward to Israel's Messiah.

He was anointed (vv 25-27). Three times the text speaks of Simeon's intimacy with the Spirit. It means close, personal friendship. The Spirit was on him. Simeon was guided by the Spirit.

To summarize, this is what we could say:

- He lived in the city.
- He had godly character.
- He had a vision of the future.
- He was marked by the presence of God.

What about me?

- Where do I live, work, attend school, socialize?
- Do I have character in these places?
- Do I see them as places God's Spirit was to transform?
- Am I marked by God's presence in these places? Do I change my world? Does my world change me?

Second, what major event defined Simeon's testimony? Again, Simeon was guided by the Spirit. He entered the Temple at the same time that Joseph and Mary brought in the infant Jesus – it was customary to bring in the firstborn son for:

- About 40 days after the child's birth, he was brought to be dedicated to the Lord.

Simeon knew (v 27):

- He would not die until he'd seen Jesus.
- He was there on the right day...in the right place...in sight of the right family.

The original language is very powerful: it's the picture of Simeon moving ever closer to the moment he'd waited for his entire life (vv 27-32):

- He saw the baby Jesus.
- He beheld/touched the baby Jesus.
- He worshiped the baby Jesus.

Big Idea. When Simeon saw the Lord Jesus, he knew his life mission was fulfilled.

- **Likewise**, the Holy Spirit wants to guide you to the right place, and the right moment – for you to know and worship Jesus!
- **FACT**: The Spirit is trying to get your attention today: you are not ready to die until you have personally met Jesus as Savior!
 - Touched him...known him...worshiped him!

Application.

Like Simeon, What are you waiting for today?

- As you wait, are you waiting: in the Word? Prayer? Spirit? Among the people of God?

Or flip it, perhaps God is waiting on you, today?

The Savior is waiting to enter your heart...why don't you let Him come in? There's nothing in this world to keep you apart...what is your answer to Him?

Like Simeon, maybe God is establishing your character/patience while you wait?

Like Simeon, maybe God is waiting to use your testimony to help someone else? This is what Simeon did for Mary and Joseph (vv 33-35). He shared his wisdom with them.

CONCL. The real meaning of Christmas → What you believe about Jesus determines everything! → Jesus is the cause of your salvation (rise) or your condemnation (fall).

Then let us all with one accord, sing praises to our Heavenly Lord.

That hath made heaven and earth of naught, And with His blood mankind hath bought.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel – Born is the King of Israel!