

**Luke 2: 21-31; “Simeon Finding the Consolation”, Sermon # 8 in the series –  
“The Prophecies of Christ’s Birth”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

I would like us to think about this man Simeon on this Christmas Day. I want us to think about his being the one man who represented all spiritual Israel at Christ’s birth. In certain wonderful and lastingly meaningful ways, he represented all faithful believers in Old Testament times who looked forward to the coming of Christ. His conduct and his words on this special day, when Christ was brought into the temple by His parents, teach us much about how to live by faith; we who live in New Testament times. For when Simeon went into the temple that day, He found the Consolation of Israel. In seeing the Baby Jesus he saw the Lord’s Christ, and he held Him in his arms.

There are 3 truths given to us here which will instruct our faith and give us great hope for the future. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – That Simeon had been waiting for this Consolation. 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want you to see that he was led by the Holy Spirit to the place where he would find this Consolation. 3<sup>rd</sup> – When he took this Consolation up in his arms, he knew that he would have peace in departing. Let’s think together and learn together about Simeon’s strong faith in the Consolation of Israel.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Simeon had to wait for this Consolation.**

Verses 21 and 22 say – “And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” “Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.” Verse 25 says – “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.” I think that it is hard for us to imagine just how long people in Old Testament times had to wait for their Promised Messiah. In regard to the history of Mankind as a whole it had been 4000 years since the initial promise of Christ the Seed was given to Adam and Eve, after their fall in the garden at the beginning of the world. The Seed was Christ.

Now that the Lord Jesus had been born, we find in this text that He was being brought by Joseph and His mother into the temple, to be presented to the Lord. They had circumcised Him on the eighth day, and they named Him Jesus, even as the angel had said. And then Mary had waited to come to the temple was because Mary had to complete the 40 days of her purification according to the law of Moses. She and Joseph wanted to present Jesus to the Lord in a formal dedication of Him, as it was written in the law of Moses – Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. There was this ceremonial commandment of the law in Exodus 13: 12, that after God had redeemed Israel from their bondage in Egypt, He would have every firstborn male child set apart to the Lord.

This was a law that Jesus fell under. And so Joseph and Mary would formally devote him to the Lord. They would consecrate Him to His living His life completely for God, and that He would fulfill the purposed work of redemption; the work which the Lord had sent Him to accomplish; to redeem His people from the bondage of their sins. We should understand that the only way that “every male who opened the womb could be called holy to the Lord”, as it says in the law, was because the Lord Jesus was willing to undertake the fulfillment of that verse in the ultimate sense. He was willing to undertake the great work of perfectly obeying God’s law. He was willing to suffer in the place of sinners.

And so, according to the law, Mary offered either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons which was the offering that the woman who could not afford a lamb of the first year, would offer. This shows us that Joseph and Mary were poor people, not rich. But this was also by the will of God,

in line with the mission of Christ, who although He was rich, He became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might become rich. Mary, thus being cleansed in this ceremonial way, she could now enter the temple. It was at this very time that Simeon came to the temple also. He had been waiting for the Consolation of Israel. Consolation is the comfort that is found when you have lost something, and then, sometime later, you find to your great joy, that someone or some thing has come to you, or is given to you, so that in some sense, it makes up for what you have lost.

This Consolation that Simeon was waiting for was a Person. And that Person was the Lord's Christ, who has become the greatest Consolation known to man. All of mankind was ruined by the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. But Christ would be sent by the Father to be the Savior and make up this great loss. By His righteousness and by His sufferings, He would make up for all the loss of Adam's original righteousness. He would bear our griefs and our sorrows; the great sense of sorrow and loss that came, not only to Adam and Eve, but to our whole race. When a person trusts in Christ, all of their sins are forgiven and joy comes to the person who repents and believes the gospel. They find consolation; eternal comfort in Christ.

Simeon had been waiting all of his life to be able to find this Consolation. He was a just and devout man. He did know the Lord, but he wanted to be able to physically see, with his own eyes, the Lord's Christ. Indeed, it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that He would not die until he did see Him. When it says that he was a just man, it means that he was man who feared God and was turning away from evil.

He had probably often thought about Psalm 130. "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!" "Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" "But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word, I do hope." "My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – Yes, more than those who watch for the morning." This is how Simeon had been, for most of his life; watching and waiting for the One who would redeem Israel.

He no doubt prayed often about this and spoke to others who themselves were waiting for the Consolation. He would tell them: "O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption." "And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities." When Simeon is called "just" here, it means that he was a righteous man. In other words he was righteous with the righteousness which comes by having faith in God and his having faith that all of His promises would be fulfilled. He remembered the promises to Abraham. He remembered the covenant of circumcision that God had made with Abraham.

That in regard to his own people the Jews, God had said to Abraham, his first forefather, in Genesis 17: 7-11 – "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you." "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." "And God said to Abraham; as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations."

"This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you." "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant." So circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. This sign was something which each Jewish

man had performed on his flesh when he was 8 days old. It was the outward physical sign performed on the flesh, so that the whole race of the Jews would be distinguished from the other people of the world, as being God's people. God commanded this so that they would be understood as being God's special people through all the generations until Christ would come.

Those who were descended from Abraham would be set apart to God's purpose; that is, that they would be His people and He would be their God. They would be given God's holy law, and yet not one of them except one Person among them would be able to fulfill God's holy law on their behalf. And that one Person would be Jesus Christ our Lord, the Promised Seed. Simeon knew this because He was waiting for the Consolation of Israel. He knew that the Lord's Christ would be born of a virgin according to Isaiah 7: 14. He knew that He would be Immanuel, God with us.

But he also knew that as a Man, He would first have to be born as Child. And as a Jewish Child Jesus would need to be circumcised too, in order to fulfill the ceremonial law. Simeon knew that after He was circumcised, that His parents would no doubt bring Him into the temple, and that it would be there that His parents would dedicate Him to the work of the Lord, the redemption of His people. This was this day that He was waiting for, and the Lord would not let him miss it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – I want you to see that Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit to the place where he would find this Consolation.**

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just 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.” “So he came by the Spirit into the temple.” It truly was extraordinary that Simeon knew the exact time that Joseph and Mary came into the temple. The Holy Spirit was upon him, it says here, He came by the Spirit into the temple at that very time because the Spirit was guiding him. This was a very marvelous thing.

What I want to show you from this is that even though you do not have a revelatory gift of prophecy like Simeon, that if you do know the Lord, that the Lord is most certainly leading and guiding you in relation to all of the truth of the Bible so that you will find in Christ your greatest consolation as well. Simeon knew that the Lord's Christ would be the One would fulfill both the ceremonial and the moral law of God. Isaiah 42: 21 – “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake; He will exalt (magnify) the law and make it honorable.”

Simeon, I believe, understood this promise in reference to Christ, the Messiah, who exalted the law in all of His thoughts, words, and actions; magnifying every aspect of it by His righteousness. He would purchase redemption for all of God's elect people among physical Israel and even among all the Gentile nations of the world, in all generations. For he had read in Isaiah 42: 1 – “Behold, My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights!” “I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.”

He also knew, by the Spirit's revealing it to him, that it was Jesus who would also purchase all the spiritual blessings of salvation for all of the Gentile people that God would bring into covenant with Himself. Through His life, death, and resurrection He would break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. For He had read Isaiah 42: 6 – “I, the Lord have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.”

So Simeon actually foresaw these great things by the spirit of prophecy that was given to him. He saw it and understood this great truth before many of his fellow countrymen did; and even the truth that Christ would bring the circumcision of the heart. Colossians 2: 11 – “In Him you were also

circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.” Since Christ would fulfill the law, every believer in Him would have their heart circumcised so that their heart would be tender towards God and other people. And what was sinful would be hated and put away.

And so it was this was true consolation to this devout man Simeon, and it ought to be to everyone here today as well. What great things take place in the heart of a believer by the power of grace when Christ is your consolation. In Philippians chapter 4, verses 1-4, it says – “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.”

All of these good things come through finding your consolation in Christ. You will probably recall that in John chapter 14, verse 15, Jesus said: “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” Did you notice that Jesus said that He would give “another” Helper. The word Helper can also be translated “Comforter”, and is translated that way in the King James Version of the Bible. The word in the Greek is Παρακλητος, which can be translated by the words Helper or Comforter. He is the Holy Spirit who sent has been sent by the Father and the Son. And He applies all the blessings of salvation which Christ has purchased to all of His people.

John Calvin says – “He calls the Spirit another *Comforter*, on account of the difference between the blessings which we obtain from both. The peculiar office of Christ was, to appease the wrath of God by atoning for the sins of the world, to redeem men from death, to procure righteousness and life; and the peculiar office of the Spirit is, to make us partakers not only of Christ himself, but of all his blessings. And yet there would be no impropriety in inferring from this passage a distinction of Persons; for there must be some peculiarity in which the Spirit differs from the Son so as to be *another* than the Son.”

This my brethren brings us real consolation from the each Person of the Triune God. It is the blessed of truths to know that this is why Christ came. Simeon saw this, is with us helping us in every way through and by His Spirit.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – When Simeon took this Babe of Consolation up in his arms, he knew that he would have peace in departing.**

Verse 28 says – “Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said: ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples...’” Ah, what must it have been to have taken up the Savior of the world into his arms, and to have fully realized that God does all things well? Well, He does! This man Simeon was given one of the greatest privileges ever imparted to any person, to be able to do this! Mary was able to carry the Lord Jesus in her womb, and Simeon was able to take Him up in His arms. What blessings! To know that upon this Child’s life and actions, rested the salvation of all the people who have ever lived, or will live.

But you and I have one of the greatest of privileges as well. And that is to have Christ dwelling in our heart by faith, and to realize that all the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen” in Him, to the glory of God. If you have Christ, you have grace and peace. And you can die in peace, knowing that in relation to your salvation, and your going to be with Him forever, that He will do all things well. Will You not take Him up in the arms of Your heart, by faith today? Will you not praise God that all of the blessings of your salvation are His to give to you; His to bestow for He is the Lord of glory.

