

## **Scripture Reading:**

**Luke 2: “21 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. 22 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 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."**

**25 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. 26 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. 27 So he came by 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, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." ”**

# *The Fulfillment of Simeon's Prayer*

**This morning we celebrate Epiphany Sunday, which simply means manifestation: As I mentioned last week, we will look at the prayer of Simeon this morning, consider the coming of the Wise Men next week, the reaction of Herod and the world to the birth of Jesus as our nation remembers the infamous Roe v. Wade decision and then Lord willing we are back into our study of Luke and Acts.**

**Considering the prayer of Simeon is very appropriate for this Lord's Day as worship services begin for Christ Covenant Church. It is relevant to the Saints here in Sacramento as we take on the responsibility of our first domestic mission work and help the Saints in Menlo Park establish a strong local church as Reformation Covenant Church did for us just over three years ago. It relevant for the Saints in Menlo Park as they begin their new work and seek the Lord's wisdom and guidance to establish a church that honors the Lord and advances His Kingdom.**

**As you know, Simeon is one of my favorite characters in the Christmas accounts and I believe that he certainly does not receive the attention that he should! Here at Church of the King we have used his simple prayer as the closing hymn as we are commissioned and sent forth to serve our living and reigning Savior each week along with the Gloria Patri.**

**Once again I want us to focus on the occasion of this prayer and the content of this prayer as we seek to serve the Lord of Glory in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**Luke provides some important details about the early life of Jesus who John proclaims is the Word made flesh.**

- **With His circumcision He is placed in the membership of God's covenant people**
- **With the temple purification rites for He and His Mother Mary we see the reality of the fall and utter corruption of mankind.**

**With these simple acts, Jesus is shown to be the promised Messiah that would be the seed of Abraham and we see the need for Him to be the suffering Savior, the Lamb that will take away the sin of the world.**

**It is at this point we are introduced to Simeon, who is “just & devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.”**

- **One who is waiting for the promised Messiah!**
- **A faithful Saint who the Holy Spirit had comforted with a special promise and guided to the Temple on this very day.**

**When he sees the baby Jesus Luke tells us that he, “took Him up in his arms and blessed God.” What we see in Simeon’s actions are the same things we will see in his prayer:**

- **He had hope**
- **He had contentment**
- **He had vision**

**These are the lessons that Simeon can teach us and our church in the hustle & bustle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century... Things that the world searches for in vain, expending vast sums of time & riches trying to find them.**

- **Simeon had hope because he lived as a just and devout member of God’s Covenant people believing the promises that God had made down through history**
- **Simeon was content to be “waiting” for the “Consolation of Israel.”**
- **Simeon had great vision, believing that God would show him the Messiah and that this Messiah would be the light of the whole world**

**Simeon then prays a simple prayer that has been repeated and sung by the Saints for almost two thousand years: Holding that tiny 40 day old baby in his arms, Simeon prays, “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, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel”**

**Here we see Simeon praying with the same hope, contentment and vision we saw in his actions: Simeon sees his hope fulfilled as he is allowed to hold the baby Jesus, knowing that He is the promised Messiah.**

**His hope was in the promise of God, as it must be with us: This is why we baptize our covenant Children, finding our hope in God’s promise!**

**Simeon is content with what God allows him to see, God has promised to conquer the nations through His Church: And He will, even if we cannot understand how all the details will be worked out!**

- **We are to be content with where God has placed us, based on the hope that we have in His promises!**

**Finally, Simeon reflects his vision when he prays, “Your Salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles.” Here is one ‘just and devout’ Jew who held no station that we know of, holding an infant son of a poor family that could not even afford the sacrificial lamb, believing that this infant was the light which God had promised to the whole world.**

**I have placed a number of Scriptures in the order of worship this week as your homework! This theme of Jesus being the Light of the World runs deep and must be understood, by us as it was by Simeon.**

- **So, Simeon is a Saint who had great hope, a Saint who was content with his station in life and a Saint who was a man of vision**

**That is the example he should be to us as individuals and as a Church going into this New Year launching a new Church plant: With anything less we are just “playing church” and will be a blind as the religious leaders of that day who missed Jesus when He was in their very midst at the Temple. As with Simeon, our hope is in the promises of God: His sure Word, which is why we must be very serious about that New Year’s resolve to be men & woman, boys & girls of the Word.**

**We must be a people that are content with where God has placed us:**

**Content as individuals...**

**Not too smart, not too dumb,**

**Not too short, not too tall,**

**Blessed to be in God’s Covenant, Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one of His children: Having the hope of seeing Jesus, not as a new born child, but as the Lord of Glory at the Father’s right hand!**

**Content as families:**

**Not too big, not too small,**

**Not too rich, not too poor,**

**Believing that God's great promise of salvation is unto us and our children**

**Believing that God's promise of life as a result of obedience to our parents is a REAL promise**

**Content as a Church:**

**Not too big, not too small**

**Not too fancy, not too plain**

**Believing we are the Body of Christ and that EACH & EVERY member has an important role to play.**

**As we learn to be content in the hope that God has given us, we will be a people of great vision: Believing that God will bring light to the Gentiles and take the Gospel to all the nations! *[mention O'Rourke quote]***

- **God will save the world, we just need to remember to wash the dishes: And to be content while we are doing them!**

**This is why we must consider the important commands about contentment that are given to us by both Paul & Peter:**

**Paul tells the Philippians in chapter four verse six: "6 Be anxious for NOTHING, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

**OK kids, here is where we need your help: What things are we to be anxious for?**

**And Peter gives the same instruction in his first epistle where we read in chapter five verse five: "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting ALL your care upon Him, for He cares for you."**

**Once again kids, which “cares” do we have to take care of?**

**BUT how do we live the “just and devout” life that Simeon gives us an example of? How can we be a people filled with real hope, content with where God has placed us and consumed with God’s vision of His Kingdom filling the whole earth?**

- **Proverbs says that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord...**
- **Jesus said, “the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”**
- **And Paul told the Saints at Corinth: 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many... 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”**

**If our church plant in Menlo Park is to succeed; if Church of the King is to go on to grow and if Reformation Covenant Church is to remain a strong Biblical Church: Then we must heed these instructions, as individuals and as a church...**

- **We must be a people who rightly fear God**
- **We must be a people who rightly worship God**
- **We must be a people who rightly function as the Body of Christ**

**It is toward this end that Paul prays for the Saints in Ephesus which certainly provides a good model of how WE should pray for each other:**

**“15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,**

***[Notice: Hope-contentment-vision?]***

according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

- This is how we must pray for each other, to the end that our Savior Jesus Christ might be manifested as the light of the world!

In our text, Simeon gives us one more important lesson as he turns to Mary to give her words of comfort and warning:

- A lesson that is not often welcome in the modern seeker friendly church

We must remember that the very purification rites that brought mother and child to the Temple were a reminder of the fallen state of mankind... I'm OK – Your OK is NOT Biblical!

As with all the sacrificial rituals of the Old Testament is demonstrates the need for the Messiah to be a suffering Savior. Simeon knew that Jesus was God's Messiah... The suffering Messiah! I am sure that Simeon had the words of Psalm 22 in mind when he said to Mary: “a sword will pierce through your own soul also” warning her of the agony she as the mother of Jesus would suffer at the foot of His cross.

Yes, Jesus would be rejected of men, and through Him “the thoughts of many hearts” would be revealed, separating the sheep and the goats, like the two thieves that would die at His side: One going to paradise and the other to eternal damnation. John says of Jesus, the Word, that “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men,” and then proclaims that “11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

- **That is the Gospel: Jesus – the Light that will lighten the Gentiles and that is who and what we are here to proclaim!**

**The Gospel must be the center of all that we do here at Church of the King AND all that is done in our new mission work in Menlo Park!**

**Allow me to close with some wisdom from Proverbs chapter four that we all should have read together on Friday of this week. King Solomon is instructing his son about the ways of righteousness so he can be ‘just and devout’ like Simeon. He uses the familiar theme of light contrasting it with darkness in verse eighteen:**

**“The path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. 19 The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble. 20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; 22 For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. 23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. 26 Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. 27 Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.”**

**Do you want to be “just & devout” – Knowing the hope, contentment and vision of someone like Simeon?**

**Then commit anew to study these Books of Wisdom!**

**Be ready to “hear and do” the Words of Jesus!**

- **Wise counsel for a New Year**
- **Wise counsel for a New Church!**
- **Wise counsel for anyone who wants to be a part of the fulfillment of Simeon’s prayer!**