

Giving to God Like Simeon: A Life of Walking in the Spirit

Luke 2:22-35

This Christmas season we are looking at five lives that God portrays as giving to Christ at His birth. Each is a beautiful portrait of giving to Him what they had. Each of these lives have been immortalized by God for what they did.

As we opened to the Book of Luke, we found that each of them gave far more than a single gift, they each show:

A Life Focused on Giving to God

Think of that. Five individuals did something that *only God really saw*, and what only a few others barely witnessed as they watched. But what those five did has become a part of what will last forever and ever.

This morning each of us are also offered the opportunity each day to do things only God really sees, and what few if any others get to witness, but when we give ourselves in acts of obedient offerings to God, we become a part of something that will last forever and ever.

1. **Giving to God Like Mary: A Life of Consecration** (Luke 1:26-55)
2. **Giving to God Like the Shepherds: A Life Wrapped with Humility** (Luke 2:8-20)
3. **Giving to God Like Simeon: A Life of Walking in the Spirit** (Luke 2:22-35)

Meet Simeon

Simeon is introduced to us by God in Luke 2:22-35, and if it wasn't for that introduction, he would be like untold billions of others throughout human history that were only know by those closest to them during their lives; and who died without leaving a trace.

Even God hadn't added him to the Biblical record, and even if we had never read about Simeon, what he was will last forever. Simeon was an Old Testament saint, who lived in hope waiting for the coming Christ by faith; and died in faith ready to go when ever God's time came. Ready to go, what a way we all should live.

Simeon sends a message from his life that extends far from the Christmas scenes, reaching all the way to the very end of each of our lives. Simeon was a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led servant; and his life is a model for each of us.

God surrounded the Birth of His Son with some of the most instructive passages in the Bible. The story of Christmas is an inspired collection of pictures captured in His Word.

Each one of the details we know of Christ's Birth are intimate scenes experienced by only a few, and for just a moment; but enjoyed by all of God's children ever since.

As we turn to Luke 2:22-35 we can all observe the scene surrounding Christ's birth from a new perspective, as a nearly six-week-old Jesus was on His way in the arms of His parents to be dedicated in Jerusalem's Temple. Joseph and Mary would undoubtedly been walking up the entrance called the Southern Steps. I love to teach this passage standing in the midst of a group of Holy Land pilgrims with Bibles opened. It is one of those moments when you can feel the very place the event happened in God's Word!

This is an example of:

Intimate Moments Full of Life Truths

Around Christ's parents would have been the tens of thousands of pilgrims who each day streamed in and out of that astounding structure. The Temple Mount was a 40-acre platform that could easily contain a quarter-of-a-million people standing on feast days. Herod enlarged the platform Solomon had built and surrounded it with one of the greatest colonnades of the ancient world. Among this forest of gleaming white 60' carved limestone pillars, moved the rivers of worshippers who filled the Temple each day in Jerusalem.

Luke captures the moment when just two of these thousands of worshippers met in a Divine appointment. The transcript of their meeting has been preserved through the inspiration of God, and comes to us as part of God's record of Christ's birth. Please stand, as we witness again this event in Luke 2:22-35.

Luke 2:22-35 (NKJV) 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.”

Pray

Think for a moment what we have here. These fourteen verses are a biographical snapshot that God wrote down for us using Luke as His human agent. So, each detail we read was chosen by God to frame our understanding of what God saw in Simeon’s life.

One of the greatest parts of studying God's Word is discovering what God has placed before us, by looking at the context into which the passage was placed, the specific words that God chose to be used, the historical setting into which God used His servants , and the actual details that are given.

God Profiles Simeon’s Life

So in those 14 verses we just read, what is the BIGGEST message we can see? Usually that message revolves around some insight about the person or character of God as it relates to us as humans. One of the greatest revelations of God in the Bible comes through God’s Names.

Look back over these verses with me, what names of God are in this passage? A quick survey shows five names, with a total of twelve occurrences. This would be the start of what we would call the theology (or study of God) in this passage. How God reveals Himself, and what He reveals about Himself. That is always an amazing form of Bible study: seeing the Names of God and what those Names reveal.

So what do these 14 verses teach us? First we see the name Lord six times (v. 22, 23, 24, 26, 29); and then the name Holy Spirit three times (v. 25, 26, 27); and then one time for

each of the following names: Christ (v. 26), Child Jesus (v. 27), and God (v. 28).

What stands out is not the six times “Lord” appears, because this is the prime name for God in the NKJV Bible used almost eight thousand times; or the name “God” which appears 4600 times, or Jesus (966x), or Christ (571x).

What stands out is that Third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit of God, whose name is far less common (“The Spirit“ appears 279x; “Holy Spirit” appears 96x; and “Spirit of God “ appears 29x).

The Holy Spirit is Emphasized in Simeon’s Life

Just for comparison, we find three percent of all the times that the name “Holy Spirit” appears in the entire Bible in this passage. That would be equivalent percentage wise for the name “Lord” to show up 267x in the same number of verses. So what that signals is that this is a major passage that reveals the work of the Holy Spirit of God among us as believers.

Simeon’s life, chronicled ONLY here in all of God's Word, models what it means to **make choices to walk in the power of God’s Spirit**. Note the concentration of terms familiar to us on this side of the Cross in the age of Christ's Church, but very uncommon in these end of the Old Testament times Simeon lived in.

Three clear statements of the Spirit of God’s work in his life:

- v. 25b ***the Holy Spirit was upon him.***
- v. 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.***
- v. 27 ***So he came by the Spirit***

Walking in the Spirit insured for Simeon—a life that mattered, a life that counted, and that pleased Jesus. Walking in the Spirit gives us a life that pleases God, and a life that is “on duty” as God’s servant, at any moment. But God does not force Himself upon us. The words most associated with the Holy Spirit’s filling of our lives are all choices. Think of those words used for the life of the Spirit:

abide, walk, wait, seek first, present yourself, clothe yourself, yield yourself, surrender, consecrate, follow, Spirit-led, and be filled with the Spirit.

Those are words of choices made, and of a conscious pathway of choosing to open one’s life to God’s rule.

Now as we walk back through the text, look at these elements we can glean from the life of Simeon. We could call these elements to insure that you live each day of your life as fully as possible for Jesus. I call these:

The Pillars of a Godly Walk

Life as God intended it to be for every believer is pictured by this simple, humble, obscure saint. What we see as we listen is a description of the three ways that the Spirit of God wants to work in us. Those three are that God wants us to live a Spirit-filled life, and find a Spirit-illuminated life, and follow a Spirit-led life.

Luke was guided by the Holy Spirit to get not only the events of Christ's dedication in the Temple, he also gets the very words that were spoken. But with those words describing Simeon's encounter with Christ, we also get what may be the clearest and most powerful look at what each of us can have from God. As we study these truths, ask yourself, "Am I offering myself to the Lord, to live this kind of life He wants me to live, as a gift to Christ this Christmas?"

First, like Simeon live the **Spirit-Filled Life God offers:**

Luke 2:25 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.**

Simeon surrendered to the control of another. That is what a servant is. The One he surrendered to, was God. God controls surrendered people by filling them with His Spirit. Simeon lived the Spirit-filled life that God offers.

- How much do you really know about the Holy Spirit?
- Are you aware of His Presence in your heart and life each day?
- Do you rely upon Him to lead and guide you?

Next, like Simeon find the **Spirit-Illuminated Life God offers:**

Luke 2:26 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.

Simeon knew what God wanted him to do in life. He was confident that the Lord had a plan and he rested by faith in God will for his life. Simeon sought to follow God's plan. He said not my way but yours. Simeon found the Spirit-illuminated life God offers.

- Have you ever invited the Spirit of God to illumine your mind by bowing and asking Him to “open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things” in Your Word (Ps. 119:18)? That is what the Spirit-illumined life is all about. Asking God to open His Word, which is His Will, which is His plan for our lives. That is the work of the Spirit God offers to each of us.
- Do you have that calm assurance that you are following the plan of God? Remember what Simeon had grown up hearing? As a faithful Jew he would have often heard the Psalms and one of the most well know Psalms was David’s 16th Psalm that is a promise from God to “show us the path of life”. God wants to illumine, guide, and direct His path for us, all we have to do is want to listen to His voice.
- Have you allowed the Lord to illumine His Word and open your eyes to see what He has planned for your life? The greatest joy in life comes from knowing and doing God’s will for your life.

Thirdly, like Simeon follow in the **Spirit-Led Life** God offers:

Luke 2:27 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,

Simeon knew that God wanted to show him the path, so he just set out to follow the Lord day-by-day. He knew the secret of Psalm 16:11 that God wants to guide us; and when we stay in step with Him we overflow with joy; and when we surrender to His authority we have endless delights. Simeon rested in the security of the Spirit-led life that God offers.

- Jesus said that the essence of being His disciple was to “follow” Him. He also said that His sheep hear His voice, and follow Him. The Spirit led life is a life of hearing and following God through His Word, by the Holy Spirit’s power.
- Do you walk through life being consciously led by the Spirit? Being led by the Spirit is one of the evidences of salvation (Rom. 8:14), and we should be very conscious of His guiding work in our lives.

That is what we see right here in Luke 2:

Simeon Chose to Walk in the Spirit

A Spirit filled life that gets Christ's well done, and that pleases God is a CHOICE. It is a chosen path. What pathway are you choosing to live?

Simeon had made a choice to follow the Spirit's leading. Walking in the Spirit made him look at God's plans for his future with brightness and hope.

The secret of Simeon's walk was in those many little choices made by faith, to live in hope.

Spirit-filled hope led him to love the Lord more and more; and such love always pours out in worship and expectation for God. Thus we can see from these verses that worship and praise were natural for Simeon because God was at the center of his life.

Now we get to the heart of Simeon's spiritual walk. Simeon is an advertisement to. Listen what walking in the Spirit can do, it made Simeon full of joy, peace, and hope:

Luke 2:28-35 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." NKJV

Hope, peace, and joy are found in Christ, and poured out in our lives by His Spirit. This Christmas, join me in declaring that our hope is in Christ alone.

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;

For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.¹

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