

Luke 2:22-24 // See Jesus, and Speak

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[0 : 00] Our reading this morning is taken from the book of Luke chapter 2 verses 22 to 40 which can be found on page 1028 of the church bibles.

! Luke chapter 2 beginning at verse 22. When the time came for the purification rites required by the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

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 on him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.

[1 : 14] When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. A light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 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 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage and then was a widow until she was 84.

She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

[2 : 42] When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong.

He was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was on him. And this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God indeed.

Thanks, Rachel and Silas. Good morning. Great to be with you. And yeah, great to have the kids in. My name's Tim and yeah, real privilege to be opening up God's word for us. Let's pray as we come to the words of Scripture.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you speak to us and you do so through your words.

It means we don't have to guess who you are. We don't have to walk around this world trying to work out for ourselves who you are because you've told us.

[3 : 41] And so we pray that as we look at Luke 2 this morning that you would speak to us fresh, help us to love Jesus more because of what we see about him this morning.

Amen. Well, it is wonderful to have our kids in with us. It is an all-age service this morning and so that is a wonderful treat. And as I look around at all the kids of different ages in this room, I'm reminded of when my, well now, second daughter Olivia was born.

I remember catching her as she came out. I remember holding her in my hands. And as I held her that night, I remember feeling all sorts of different things.

I felt joy at the thrill of meeting this new life. I felt thankfulness to God for bringing us a healthy baby.

I felt the excitement of having found out that we were going to have, that we've had another girl. I felt pride towards Lauren, who'd been so remarkably strong. I felt a sense of responsibility.

[4 : 54] And I felt a sense of responsibility as I held this baby in my hands because this little life was now mine to love and nurture and teach and model to and discipline and encourage.

And to mold her as her parent into a young woman who looks at the world, interacts with the world in a wise way, a healthy way, and above all, a godly way.

When did you last hold a child in your arms? You may or may not have children of your own, but there is something special about holding a young child.

I say that, the caveat to that is if you're a 20-year-old male, you're still just working out which way up to hold the thing. I get it. I've been there. But for most of us, there's something special about holding a young child in our arms and feeling their smallness, feeling their fragility, feeling their dependence on you.

And you have to be gentle with them because you know how fragile they are. If you're a child yourself, then you might know when you play with another child who is younger than you, or if you're a teenager and you've got younger siblings or younger cousins, you know how precious they are because you have to be gentle with them.

[6 : 22] You can't be as rough with smaller children as you are with friends your own age. Well, in our passage for today, Simeon holds the child Jesus in his arms.

That's a staggering thought, isn't it? Jesus was once that small. Jesus was once that frail.

Once that dependent. He's not in the manger at this moment. It's a little bit on from that. But he is a very young child. And, boys and girls, there's going to be a few times during this talk where you're going to help me do some counting.

Okay? You're going to help me do some counting. So, if we look at the screens and we get, this is our passage for today in my Bible, right? And we're going to count how many times in our passage Luke, who wrote this story, draws our attention to the child Jesus.

Okay? So, we ready? As each one comes up, we're going to count. Next slide, please, Wesker.

Can we count with me? Okay, we're going to try that again. The first number is one.

[7 : 38] All right? So, everyone say, ready? One, two, three. One, two, three, four, five.

There we go. Five times in our passage Luke wants us to think about the child Jesus. Now, by the time we get to verse 43 after our passage, he's described as the boy Jesus.

It's a different word, different stage in his development. What does Luke want us to know about the child Jesus in this moment of his life?

He wants us to know three things. He wants us to know. Next slide, please, Wesker. This child is a child that God has plans for.

A child God wants the world to see. And a child that wise people speak about. So, first up, a child that God has plans for.

[8 : 41] Look at verse 22 in your Bibles, if you've got them there. When the time came for the purification rites required by the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him, that is, the child Jesus, to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

Now, back in chapter 1 of Luke's Gospel, which you might be familiar with, if you've come through this in our Christmas times. The angel visits Mary and tells Mary about the child that she's going to give birth to.

And she was told that the Lord will give birth to him, so that the Lord will give him the throne of his father, David. And so now, Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. In order to be faithful parents, but in order to be good stewards of the gift that God has given them. Because they sort of know that this is a special child.

This is God's child in a way that not every child is. Now, it's easy for us to take for granted that the child Jesus was raised by godly parents.

[9 : 57] But this is a very selfless, God-fearing thing for Mary and Joseph to do. And it's a beautiful thing for them to do. They know that this child has not just been born to them, but to the world.

They know that Israel has been waiting and longing for their Messiah to come for centuries. And Israel has been promised, because Mary has been promised, that this child is he.

Now, Mary is not divine. She's not worthy of being worshipped. In her song in chapter 1, she calls God her saviour. That suggests that she knows that she is a sinner. But Mary and Joseph are wonderful examples in our passage of trusting God with their lives, of trusting God with their family

and their child.

Because this child is a child that God has plans for. And they want to work with God on that.

Second thing that Luke, who wrote this, wants us to see about this child Jesus, is that this is a child God wants the world to see.

Have a look at verse 25. Now, there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel.

[11:28] And the Holy Spirit was on him. Now, as we hear a little bit more about Simeon, we're going to count again. This time, we're going to count how many times in this little section, these few verses, do we hear about Simeon being directed by the Holy Spirit?

Okay? Ready to do some counting again? One, two, three.

There we go. In just a few verses, three mentions that Simeon is being directed by the Holy Spirit. Now, that tells us something about Simeon. But it also tells us that what he says about Jesus in these verses is really worth paying attention to.

Because God is revealing to the world through Simeon who this child is and what is going to happen with him. And so, there's this beautiful little Trinitarian moment where the Spirit is directing Simeon, who is holding the child Jesus, and Simeon is praying to his Father in Heaven.

It's beautiful. And in that moment, Father, Son and Spirit working together, this is what Simeon says, verse 28.

[12:50] Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For, why can he be dismissed in peace?

Why is peace now going to be true in the world? For, my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

Now, boys and girls, throughout the Bible, sight, being able to see with our eyes, is often used as a way of talking about being wise.

So, imagine it's your first day of P1, your first day rocking up to school, and you're wearing a blindfold. You walk, you hope you're not going to bump into anything, you need someone to show you where the school gate is, you need someone to show you where your classroom is, you don't know what your teacher looks like, you don't know anything, because you've got a blindfold on.

Are you going to be able to be wise at school? No. You're going to need someone who can see to help you, to show you the way, to show you how to be.

[14:17] But Simeon can see. It's not just that he can see the people around him, but he's got eyes to see what God is showing him.

He says to God, my eyes have seen your salvation, because he's seen the child in his arms, and he has the wisdom to know, that this child, is a promised child, the Messiah.

He says that Jesus in his arms, this salvation has been prepared in the sight of all nations. That means this isn't just salvation for Israel, for God's people, for Jewish people, but the nations can see him too, and the nations will be able to be saved through Jesus.

Now, that's good news for the specific person that Luke is writing to, because he tells this story to someone called Theophilus. And Theophilus needs to hear this, because he wasn't from Israel.

He wasn't Jewish. And Luke wants him to know that he can be saved through Jesus. And Luke wants you, sitting here in Glasgow, to know that you can be saved through Jesus.

[15:44] But it all depends on how you see Jesus. This child is destined to cause the falling, and rising, of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

You see, this child, Jesus, is going to be like a barometer, for people's hearts. For some people's hearts, at their very core, they will believe that this child is the king.

That this child, is worthy of being loved, and even worshipped. And those people will rise with him, and be a part of his rule, and his reign.

For other people's hearts, at the very core of who they are, they will not believe this child is their king.

They will not love him. They will not worship him. And those people will fall, as Jesus rises. You see, Jesus coming into the world, is good news for all, but he doesn't guarantee, a good outcome for all.

[17:12] You have to submit to him, as king. And recognize, his reign. So, I wonder, as you sit here, in this funny little season, between Christmas and New Year, where, no one's quite doing anything, but as you sit here, in 2025, how's your vision, with the child Jesus?

As you anticipate, Simeon being there, on that first, time that Jesus is in Jerusalem, where he will, one day come back to this world, and reign.

Do you see, the Messiah? Do you see your king? Well, Simeon does, as he holds him in his arms. And to help us with our final point, Anna does, as well. Because this is a child, that wise people, speak about. Verse 36, there was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was very old. She had lived with her husband, seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow, until she was 84. She never left the temple, but worshipped, night and day, fasting and praying.

[18:37] Now again, Anna is a model of wisdom, here for us. She has used her many years well. Because, she's used her mouth well, all the way through her life.

Let's count one more time, how often in the passage, are Anna's words, emphasised? Or the fact that she is someone, who uses her mouth, specifically for God, emphasised?

Ready to count? One, two, three, four. Okay, so she's a prophet, she worshipped, she prayed, she spoke.

This is what Anna does, she uses her mouth well. And she is a picture, of how people are brought together, by this child. She is from Asher, which is in the northern kingdom, which had been separated, from Judah.

She was a widow, and she was all alone, and yet, here she is, speaking, about the child Jesus. As an aside, I had the great privilege, of growing up, with four, Christian grandparents.

[19:50] My, my grandpa, passed away, when I was relatively young, but the three, who I knew well, were all wonderful examples, of Christian maturity. It actually wasn't until, I was about 17 or 18, that it occurred to me, that not every old person, is beautiful.

Because some people, grow up and are bitter, or cynical about the world, or hardened, or other things. My experience growing up, was that old people, were just beautiful, and lovely, because that's what my grandparents, were like.

They were people, who used their mouths well, as they spoke with me. So use your ears well, use your mouth well, speak about Jesus, so that if by God's grace, you're still alive at 84, then you are like Anna, and a great gift, to those around you.

Because when Anna, sees the child Jesus, she recognises Him, so she's got eyes to see, like Simeon does. And she not just, it's not only that she, belongs to God's kingdom, but she sets about, growing it.

Look at verse 38, coming up to them, that's Mary and Joseph, at that very moment, she gave thanks to God, and spoke about the child, to all who were looking forward, to the redemption of Jerusalem.

[21:15] Do you know who the first, human evangelist is, in Luke's gospel? An 84 year old woman.

Isn't that beautiful? It's a great model for us. This is what wise people do, when they see Jesus.

They speak about Him. They thank God for Him, and they speak about Him.

And she does that, because she doesn't just see, the child Jesus. She sees who He is, and who He will be. She sees the life and mission, that lies ahead of Him.

For this child will grow up, that's what verse 40 tells us. The child grew, and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God, was on Him.

And as He grew up, Mary, went from primarily, nursing mother, to worshipper. Simeon, went from anticipating the Messiah, to dying in peace, knowing, that Jesus had come.

[22:31] And Anna went from fasting, and praying in the temple, to announcing, to Jerusalem, that their redemption, was at hand. So no matter how old you are, this morning, whether you're still a child, that can be picked up, and held in your parents' arms, or you are 84 years old, draw near, to Jesus.

Let Him warm your heart, that you may, rise with Him, in His rule, and His reign.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for, Jesus, and we thank You for that picture, of Simeon, holding Him in His arms.

We thank You for the reminder, of Jesus' humility, fragility, and dependence.

For we know, how dependent we are on Him. And we pray, as we sing now, to worship Jesus, that You would, be working in our hearts, to love Him, at our very core, for we see Him as He is.
[24 : 00] We pray this in His name. Amen.