

What Are You Waiting For?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 December 2018

Preacher: James Lapping

[0 : 00] A reading today is from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2, and you'll find it on page 1028, 1028 in the Church Bible.

Luke, Chapter 2, beginning at verse 22. Luke, Chapter 2, when Jesus is presented in the temple.

Amen. Listen for the word of the Lord. 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's 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's 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.

[1 : 22] 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.

And 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've promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, salvation which you've 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. And 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.

Thanks be to God. Great. Thank you, Malcolm. Well, if you've joined after the start of service, let me add a big welcome to you.

[3 : 04] This morning we're doing an all-age kid service, which normally means if you're a kid, if you're slightly smaller, and you'd like to come up to the front and listen up closer, that's fine.

So I'll invite you up now. And if it all gets a bit too much, there's a quiet room at the back, a nursing room where you can sit. And if you'd like to bring up an adult to help you at the front, that's fine as well.

Let me pray for us as we start. So, Father, we thank you for this lesson from Simeon. And we thank you that the waiting is over and that we can rejoice in your Son.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder what you have been waiting for. Sometimes we wait to kick a penalty. Maybe you have to wait in the line to go to the loo.

Maybe you have to wait in line for lunch. Maybe you get very excited about Christmas. Waiting for Christmas presents.

- [4 : 06] What do you wait for? Why don't you turn to your neighbor if you're growing up and ask him, what is it that they're waiting for? Great.
- So, what are we waiting for? Shout it out. What are we waiting? Some at the back, maybe. What are you guys waiting for? I think someone cheekily said waiting for the end of the talk, which I thought was a bit naughty.
- Anyone? Summer holiday. Magic, yeah. Yeah. What are you waiting for, James? Did you have your hand up? No, I was forgetting my mom to forget.
- What are you guys waiting for? What are you waiting for? Christmas again. What? Only 360 days to go. What are you waiting for? My birthday.
- When's your birthday? November the 14th. Well, there's going to be a lot of waiting around up the front here. Cool, great.
- [5 : 07] And today we're going to learn about a man who did a lot of waiting in his life. A man called Simeon, who we heard about. And he was waiting for years and years and years.
- Waiting, waiting, waiting. In fact, why was he waiting? Well, God had promised that he would not die until he got to enjoy what he had been waiting for.
- God had promised that one day all his waiting would be over. So waiting, that's what we think about. Simeon was waiting. And what we notice is Simeon was a good guy.
- That's what those words, devout and righteous, mean. He trusted God. And so I'm going to read here a little bit. Slightly different, maybe slightly easier words for the kids.
- He was a good, God-fearing man. And he was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him. And he assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah.
- [6 : 15] What was he waiting for? He was waiting for Israel to be saved. God had promised that he would get to see the one that would save Israel.
- And can you imagine what it would have been like for Simeon? That God had made him a promise that one day he would finally get to see the rescuer, the great king, the final real-life superhero.
- But when? Imagine it. Every day he would have been waiting. Everyone he would have met, he would have gone, Are you the one? Are you the one? Are you the one I've been waiting for?
- And then, one day, on a particular day, we're told that he was led by the Spirit.
- And Simeon went into the temple. So, Well, he got a message from God.
- [7 : 21] Bing! And what did the message say? To Simeon, go to the temple from God. The excitement Simeon must have felt, this must be it.
- I can't. He couldn't be anything else. It was finally time. The waiting was over. And he ran to the temple. And look who were there.
- Mary and Joseph. And what did he do? He found the baby and he took the baby in his arms. He took the baby Jesus in his arms.
- Holding him. He said, Now, Lord, you have kept your promise. And you may let your servant go in peace. The relief. God had kept his promise.
- Simeon was happy to die. Everything he had ever wanted from life had been given. The waiting was over. And he was holding the promised one.
- [8 : 18] You would say this is perhaps the most wonderful moment in history. This squirming, wriggly baby was God's Christmas present to us all. And so what happens?

What do you do when you get excited about something? You burst into song. You sing a song, don't you? So Simeon starts singing a song of delight. And in this song, he gives us three reasons why this baby is worth waiting for.

And the first one that we see is that this baby is Jesus. It's God's salvation for us all. Listen to what Simeon said, what he sung.

With my own eyes, I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples. And Simeon held the baby and he looked down.

And he looked down at God's salvation. And well, the word salvation, that's a bit of an old-fashioned Bible word. And it really means just to rescue.

[9 : 16] Just to rescue. And this is what God had promised Simeon. A rescue. And we know what a rescue normally looks like, don't we? So you can imagine there's a big fire.

And what happens? Bebop, bebop, bebop. Who comes to the rescue? The fireman. Yes, that's right. Or imagine, imagine you're out at sea and whoops, you fall out to your boat.

And who comes to the rescue? I don't know what alarm a tugboat makes, but imagine a RNLI boat comes up, maybe we are, we are, we are. And they come and they rescue you.

Or maybe you're climbing in the mountains. You're off with Michael on a walk. And you get caught. And you need to be rescued. And a helicopter comes down. And it rescues it.

And the thing about rescues is that in every kind of rescue, a person has got into danger that they cannot get themselves out of it.

[10 : 14] We don't normally look to babies to rescue us. In fact, if I were you, I would never turn to a baby to rescue me out of great danger. But this baby, this baby Jesus was different.

This baby had been sent to carry out a rescue that had been planned since the beginning of time.

You see, Simeon had been waiting for a savior for his own people. Simeon knew that this baby was for all people. That this baby would save all people.

Because all people needed this rescue. It's hard to imagine that we need a rescue. That we have got ourselves into trouble. We might not think that we've got ourselves into trouble.

But God knows. We just don't know that we need it. We like to do things our own way. We say no to God. We say, shove off God.

[11 : 17] I'm in charge. No to your rule. And because of that, we're in great danger. We need a rescue. And what we can see is when we think about God, it's not just that we ignore God, but that we hurt other people.

And that we cannot get back to be with God as we should be. And God was so worried that he sent his own son to rescue us.

So I wonder if you remember, one of the big news stories of the year was a young lady, a young girl. What did she do? She went sailing all by herself in a big race, single-handedly, trying to race around the world.

Well, off she sat, beautiful sunshine day. And then what happened? Tragedy struck. Her boat got capsized. Remember Susie Goodall?

She was in great trouble, stuck in the middle of the ocean, miles and miles away from land. Who would like to be like that ever? Would that be nice?

[12 : 23] No, that wouldn't be great. And what happened? A great big container ship had to come and rescue her. What did it do? It rescued her while she was helpless and hopeless, unable to rescue herself.

And it brought her safely back to Great Britain to be with her family and friends. You see, Jesus has got salvation for us all.

He is the rescue we all need. And that rescue has arrived. No more waiting. And the second reason why this baby Jesus was worth waiting for is that Jesus reveals God to us.

See what he says there? A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel. You see, this baby Jesus is the light that will show us and reveal God to his own people Israel and to everyone else all over the world.

Everyone. All the Gentiles. That's you and me. People like you and me. We're far, far away from Israel, aren't we? How many miles are we? Thousands of miles. And yet Jesus came to show us God in Glasgow this morning.

[13 : 41] That's amazing. And you know how light works. You walk into a dark room. You feel around. You can't see anything. What do you do? You twitch on the light. And suddenly you can see things.

And that's what Jesus does for us. He shows us what we cannot see without him. He shows us God. And he helps us to understand what God is like.

And how did Jesus do that? Well, Jesus revealed God to us in all the things that he taught us from his Bible. Remember how he taught us in stories all the days of his life.

And then he showed us God in doing all those miraculous miracles. Don't you remember? How he fed, gave lunch to everyone on the hillside, 5,000 people. How he turned water into wine.

How he ruined Lazarus' funeral. He did all those wonderful miracles. And then remember, he showed us God in how he lived every day. Super kind.

[14 : 42] Super friendly. Always considerate. Always respectful. Always caring for others. Sometimes he got angry with people. Yes. But he always did it.

Obedying God. Listening to God. Why? Because he revealed God. Because he is God. And then he showed us.

He showed us God most perfectly, in the most excellent way, by dying on the cross. And remember, he was buried. And he is resurrected again.

And he showed us God in doing that. In coming to life again, he showed us God. And that it is finished. His life, death, and rising again.

Jesus reveals God to us all. And so, think back a couple of days. Think back five days exactly. Can you remember what happened five days ago?

[15 : 38] Who can remember? Yes. Yes. Did you? Was there a big tree and something under the tree? Yes. What was under the tree?

Presents. Presents. Yes. And what's the problem with a present? Presents. Well, you go to a present. You look at the present. And you shake it. And you sniff it. And you're wondering, what's in there?

Smells like my brother's old socks. Or something like that. And you don't know what's inside the present. But, and that's a little bit like God.

We know that God's there. But we don't know what he is like. And to find out what God is like. To find out who he's there. We need Jesus. You see, Jesus is the one that opens the present for us.

And shows us the wonder of God. With Jesus, we can understand the truth. He is the only one. And that's why Jesus is waiting for.

[16 : 41] Worth waiting for. Because without him, we cannot know how things really are. The truth, the wonder, and the future. And so let's listen to him. Let's learn about him.

Let's try and love Jesus better in 2019. What's the alternative? Well, it's to get a present. And say, ah, that looks like a lovely present.

I'm just going to leave it there. I'm not going to bother with that present. I'm going to leave it there every year, every year, every year. That's not what we should do. We should go to Jesus.

And open the present. And see what God is like. So that we might know Jesus. And it's not a surprise that after all, Simeon had said, Mary and Joseph were amazed that their son was God's salvation.

And that he would reveal God to them. That wasn't what they were expecting. But Simeon had one more thing to say to us. And this is our third point that we're going to see there, is that Jesus reveals our secret, most inward thoughts.

[17 : 47] And so we read there, The child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be like a sign from God, which many people will speak against, and so reveal their secret thoughts.

Whoa. Whoa. That sounds a bit dark and ominous, doesn't it? It doesn't sound very Christmassy. But Simeon wanted to tell Mary and Joseph what to expect.

That Jesus, yes, he was the Savior of the world. But that wouldn't mean that there'd always be endless cheering and happiness. You see, wherever Jesus went, the crowds followed him.

They were amazed. They wanted to be with him. They came and they trusted him. But what else do we know? That others didn't want to know Jesus.

Others hated him. Others plotted against him. Others schemed. And they had him arrested. And they even killed him.

[18 : 49] And how they treated Jesus showed their secret thoughts on the inside, what they thought. And whether they trusted Jesus or whether they hated Jesus, showed whether they wanted to be rescued or wanted to stay far, far away from God.

So Simeon knew that for Jesus, some would be a great rescue. And he'd be the way to enjoy life as God made us to be forever and ever and ever.

But Simeon also knew that for others, Jesus coming would be bad, bad news. How they treated Jesus would have consequences. And it is still the case today.

So what are you waiting for? There's the present. It's under the tree. It's waiting to be unwrapped. And most of us are fit to burst as we wait for Christmas. We're already waiting for Christmas.

And the biggest wait is over in that God has already sent his greatest son to us, Jesus. Let me pray for us as we close.

[19 : 57] Father, we thank you that you have sent your son. We thank you that the waiting is over. Please help us to live for him in 2019.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.