

**Luke 2:29-32** <sup>29</sup> "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

## Intro

In our Advent series we are going to talk about three songs of praise, but we also see three different types of people behind those songs, and we see three very different types of faith that lead to those songs.

Mary young and energetic and so astounded at what she hears that she can't really believe it is true. Zacharias old and cynical has faith but doesn't really believe any of it can possibly come to him. And Simeon, Simeon who sees Jesus and says now I can die in peace. Simeon has faith . . . faith that is ready to die.

## Ready to die – because he had seen the Lord's salvation

It is a difficult thing to be ready to die. It's hard enough just to accept that death is inevitable, but to be ready, and not just ready but actually looking forward to death with joy. Here Simeon shows some really strong faith.

Simeon's great faith comes from seeing "God's salvation." But he is not only talking about the child that he holds there in his hands. The Child is certainly the culmination of God's preparation. But Simeon's faith was already there, it was already well established, because before he ever saw Christ, he still saw the Lord's salvation. He saw how the Lord prepared for that coming over all the years since Adam, He saw the Lord's salvation in His own life and times.

It is this, the preparation that was done in the sight of all the nations. The child was not known to the nations, the child was not seen by any but a few. But the preparation that was clear to any who cared to look. The mighty works of God, in creation, in the flood, when he destroyed Pharaoh and his army, when he brought his people through the wilderness, etc . All the things that God did, in the sight of all people, so that no one should have any doubt. The Lord is God. And what he says about that life which is to come is going to be true. Simeon has seen all these things and knows where he is going.

How can we have a faith that is ready to die? Faith is not a blind trust in a random name that our fathers taught us as a kid, as so many people think it is. No. What God has done He has not done it in secret; rather He has done it in the sight of all the people. We can look back and see how God has done mighty works. We can see how he has fulfilled his promises . We can know that the Lord is God. We can know He will fulfill his promise.

I doubt that any of us will be totally comfortable with the idea of dying when it confronts us. There is too much sin in every one of us, the knowledge of who we really are and the consequent fear of the wrath and punishment from God that we deserve is too deep within us for us to truly face death without fear. But on that day or any day when death confronts us, I hope you can remember what it was that Simeon held, the salvation which God prepared for Simeon and for you. The Savior who would die on the cross. Remember who it was who Simeon held and step through death to see that same salvation for yourself.

Ready to Serve – because salvation is a light to all the nations

The term Lord is not the normal, kurios, but is instead the more personal despota. Kurios is almost synonymous with God in the scripture. Kurios is a term of respect for those who rule over you, for the governor and the king, someone who rules but at a distance. Despota is the personal master, the one you see every day, the one you serve personally

So you see this close connection that Simeon has with the Lord. He isn't someone far off, separated, but someone close. This shows a life of constant prayer, and of constant service

It's hard to be ready to die. It is harder to be ready to serve with your whole life

This country is built on the idea that no one should ever have to serve another, that we are all free to pursue our own interests and our own goals. And yet the Bible says "serve the Lord with gladness." It is anathema to our culture.

But Simeon is more than willing to do this. He delights to do this because, "He is a light to all the nations."

That phrase reflects the fact that in the Word of God, Simeon finds truth, but more than that he finds purposes. He finds something good. He is helping to build something that will last. Simeon understands the truth that it doesn't matter how small the deed is

We just had this election, and some thought that Hillary was president worth fighting for, and others thought Trump was the man, and others thought nothing good will come of this election, there is no one worth fighting for. And many people gave so much of their time in service to the candidate of their choice. They were willing to do this because they thought they were helping to make the world a better place. In the end they will all be disappointed. And they will have to do it again in four years.

But to us none of that really matters, we have a better candidate. A candidate who will never disappoint. Who will rule for ever in peace and justice. This is a kingdom that Simeon believes is worth serving. It is a ruler who is worth giving our time and energy to.

Ready to wait – because that salvation is the glory of God's people

I hate playing scrabble with my parents, one reason is certainly because I'm not good at word games, but far more I hate it because I can't stand waiting for my dad to take his turn. It is excruciating beyond anything

It is difficult to be ready to die, it is more difficult to serve, but most difficult is it to wait.

Simeon's faith goes beyond death, and beyond serving the Lord, Simeon had a faith that was also willing to wait. He waited his whole life for this one thing, to be able to hold the baby Jesus, to be able to see with his own eyes. The really great thing is he wasn't

disappointed. He waited his whole life and he gets there and he says, “now my life is complete, now I can leave in peace.”

So much of our life, so much of our faith, so much of our service to God is just waiting. And it can be excruciating, but it is worth it because as Paul says, “the glory that is to come cannot compare to the suffering we now endure.” As Simeon says here, this one is the “Glory of your people Israel.

God’s people find meaning and glory and purpose in life, in Christ. This is what we work for, this is the one who gives meaning to our life. Simeon didn’t find meaning in power or having the nicest house, or having the most beautiful things. He didn’t find meaning in the things of this life. His life was fulfilled but waiting on the Lord.

So Simeon was willing to wait and he rejoiced in serving, and now was more than ready, was looking forward to death. We pray that we also may be filled with this type of faith.

***The peace of God that surpasses all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***