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Sermon Notes

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## **Simeon's Patience Rewarded**

**Luke 2:21-35**

### **Introduction: An Impatient People**

There can scarcely have been a more dramatic night watch than what took place on the night of October 11<sup>th</sup> and the early morning of October 12, 1492... as the three little Spanish caravels the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* churned westward about to usher in a new age of human history. Three days earlier, Columbus's crew had been close to mutiny... but Columbus had seen evidence of approaching land in the birds and in floating logs and branches with flowers on it, and in a piece of wood worked by some kind of tool.

Anticipation was absolutely intense and at fever pitch as each sailor peered into the night sky searching the dark horizon for evidence of land. They all knew that the reward for the sighting of the island was 10,000 Spanish gold pieces and a silk doublet... and they wanted both the glory for the sighting and the financial reward.

Suddenly, at 2:00 a.m., October 12, 1492... Rodrigo de Triana, lookout on *Pinta's* forecastle, saw something like a white sand cliff gleaming in the moonlight on the western horizon, then another, and a dark line connecting them. "*Tierra! Tierra!*" he shouts... "Land!" "Land!" and he is right... it is the eastern coastline of the Island the natives called Guanahani, but which Christopher Columbus renamed after Our Lord and Savior

The faithful, anticipation... the peering at the approaching horizon day after day, hour after hour is something like what Simeon did as He waited for the coming of the Messiah.

He had been promised that he would not die before he'd seen the Lord's Christ... and with incredible faithfulness and anticipation he waited, like the lookout on the forecastle of the *Nina* searching for land.

All of Redemptive History united in one thing: WAITING FOR THE CHRIST

From Adam until the Birth of Christ: Looking forward to Christ's First Coming

From Christ until the end of History: Looking forward to Christ's Second Coming

Simeon an example of patience... waiting for the Lord's Promises to come true

Geldenhuys: "The thought underlying Simeon's praise is of a slave who is instructed by his master to keep watch through the long, dark night on a high place to wait for the rising of a special star and then to announce it. After wearisome hours of waiting he sees at last the star rising in all its brightness. He announces it and is then

discharged from keeping watch any longer. Simeon had been instructed to await the rising of the ‘Sun of Righteousness,’ (Malachi 4:2), the Star of the House of Jacob. At last, now that the Child is in his arms, he has beheld the redemption of God incarnate in Christ Jesus. So he knows God now lets him depart in peace and discharges him from the task of further watching.”

## I. The Presentation at the Temple (2:21-24)

*vs. 21-24 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. <sup>22</sup> When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup> 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."*

### A. Christ Born Under the Law

#### 1. Jesus Christ “born under the law”

*Galatians 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

“Law of Moses” mentioned FOUR TIMES in this brief passage

Luke making clear the point that Christ was fully obedient to the Law of God

#### 2. Essential for our salvation: Christ fulfills the Law

- a. Christ obeyed every small and great precept of the Law
- b. Christ lived every moment of His life obeying the Law of Moses
- c. He achieved a perfect righteousness

And the first step was CIRCUMCISION

### B. Circumcision: The Sign of the Covenant

1. The Commandment given to Abraham
2. The Timing: on the eight day
3. The Naming

*Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*

### C. The Consecration of the Firstborn

### 1. Purification

**vs. 22** *When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed*

Notice it is “their” purification... the mother needs to be purified from the flow of blood; the baby shares in that ritual defilement under the Law of Moses

According to Leviticus 12, Mary had to wait 33 days to be purified from her bleeding before she could go to the temple

### 2. Presentation

Jesus was consecrated to the service of God... from the time of the Exodus

The firstborn of the Hebrews were liable to be slaughtered as well, for they were sinners too

But God ordained the Passover sacrifice to save the lives of the Jewish firstborn

He also stated that, from then on, the firstborn were HIS... consecrated to Him and to His glory

**Exodus 13:1-2** *The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal."*

### 3. Sacrifice

So also a sacrifice had to be offered for the son and for his mother

**Exodus 13:13** *Redeem with a lamb every ... firstborn among your sons.*

#### D. The Poverty and Faith of Joseph and Mary

1. Joseph and Mary could not afford the lamb... they were too poor; so they used a second pigeon rather than the lamb, as the Law permitted
2. However, they had a strong faith and love for the Lord
3. Their obedience to the Law was essential to Christ's life at this helpless stage of His development

**Luke 2:39** *When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.*

#### II. The Patience of Simeon (2:25-26)

**vs. 25-27** *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 upon him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to*

*him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.* <sup>27</sup> *Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.*

#### A. Special Prophecies as the Lord Wills

Simeon had been told something special: He would not die before he had seen the Messiah

Amazing: After thousands of years of waiting, the promise made to Eve was going to be fulfilled. The seed of the woman was going to crush the serpent's head, and Simeon would see the serpent slayer with his own eyes. After two thousand years of waiting, the promise to Abraham was about to be fulfilled. God would provide the lamb for the lamb for the sin offering, and Simeon would see the Lamb of God with his own eyes. After one thousand years of waiting, the promise to David was about to be fulfilled. The Son of David would arise and rule on David's throne forever. And Simeon would see the King with his own eyes.

NOW... how many years Simeon had waited since the Lord revealed that special information to him, the text doesn't say. But after years of his own waiting, the thrilling day had finally arrived. The Spirit told him to get up and move into the temple...

**"Simeon... the moment is here. The time you've been waiting for all these years; this is the special day at last! Now get up and move!!"**

#### B. Simeon's Character

1. Righteous: fully obedient to the Law of Moses; not sinless or perfect, but obedient
2. Devout: heart of piety toward the Holy One of Israel; reverent, quiet and sober-minded; serious about the things of God; not frivolous or light-hearted.
3. Patient: waiting for years for the consolation of Israel; had seen the Romans dominate his homeland for years, but had not given up waiting for the Messiah
4. Faith-filled: never stopped trusting the promises of God to Abraham, nor the specific promise made to him personally
5. Spirit-led: when the Spirit told him to get up and go, he obeyed; sensitive to the quiet voice of God

God always has His remnant... and despite the generally low spiritual condition of Israel at this time, Simeon and Anna were still godly people there at the temple, waiting for God's promises to come true

#### C. The "Consolation of Israel"

1. Beautiful phrase refers to the coming of the Messiah
  - a. Israel was groaning under the crushing yoke of Roman oppression
  - b. even worse, Israel was groaning under the far greater bondage of sin

c. they were desperate for consolation from God

2. Prophecies in Israel of consolation and comfort

***Isaiah 40:1-2 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.***

3. "Consolation" = same word used of Holy Spirit, the "Comforter"

The coming of Christ is the greatest consolation and comfort the Lord has ever given to a world heart-broken with the ravages of sin

### III. The Prophecy Fulfilled (2:27-32)

***vs. 27-32 When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."***

#### A. Providential Timing Between Obedient People

Two different godly ways the Lord leads His obedient people... they are never contradictory, but perfectly meshed

He leads by **Scripture** and He leads by the prompting of the **Holy Spirit**

The two come together in this intersection of paths between the Holy Family and Simeon

1. Simeon led by the Holy Spirit
2. Joseph and Mary led by the Scripture
3. Their paths intersect

#### B. God Alone Reveals Christ... and He Does It as He Wills

***vs. 28 Simeon took him in his arms...***

1. What did Simeon see as he took the baby in his arms
2. Just a baby, nothing in his appearance that told him He was Savior of the World

3. Simeon saw, however, with the eyes of faith not of flesh
4. If you had been there, you would have simply seen an old man holding a baby
5. Basic principle: God reveals Christ, and your natural eyesight could never have saved your soul

***Luke 2:26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.***

C. Elements of Simeon's Praise

PRAYER PRAISE PROPHECY all wrapped up into one

***"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."***

1. Deep reverence for God's sovereign rule

"Sovereign Lord"... the God who rules all of human history; the emperor far above Caesar Augustus

***Acts 4:24 "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them."***

2. Vindication of faith: Promise fulfilled

***"as you have promised"***

- a. YES LORD!!! You kept your promise to me **personally**
- b. AND YES, LORD!!! You kept your promise to us **nationally**

***2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.***

3. Life purpose fulfilled

***"you now dismiss your servant in peace"***

Simeon has fulfilled his life's mission

- a. we have no idea how old Simeon was
- b. from this statement, however, many think he was an old man
- c. now at last he can die... his life purpose is fulfilled

**Buzz Aldrin's** post-lunar depression... on July 20, 1969, Buzz Aldrin followed Neil Armstrong and became the second man to walk on the surface of the moon... but he related how ill-prepared for what hit him after this ultimate mountaintop, pinnacle experience:

4. Seeing God's salvation by faith

*vs. 30-31 For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people,*

Everyone who is saved is saved by faith alone, apart from works

So it was for Simeon... he saw what others could not see; they all saw a baby, Simeon saw a Savior

But this salvation was prepared in full view of all the world... and all will hear and be astonished

D. Christ the "Light of Revelation to the Gentiles"

1. Jews would later desire to STONE Paul for saying this

2. Simeon delighted in it

3. Christ was the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and of Isaiah's vision

*Isaiah 49:6 "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

4. Light of Revelation = because Gentiles walk in spiritual darkness

*Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

DARKNESS = spiritual blindness from not seeing God, not knowing His ways, not obeying His laws... disobedience hardens our hearts, and our blindness increases more and more...

*Ephesians 4:17-19 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

Jesus came to be the LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES... to teach us how to live to the glory of the Lord

*John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

E. Christ the "Glory of His People Israel"

1. Christ was the greatest Jew who ever lived... the pinnacle of Israel
2. Never was Israel more glorious than in the life of Jesus Christ

Historians speak of "The Glory of Rome"... they point to the achievements under Caesar Augustus or Marcus Aurelius

They speak of "The Glory of the British Empire" when it reached its zenith under Queen Victoria

### The Glory of Israel is Christ

#### IV. The Power of Christ's Life (2:33-35)

**vs. 33-35** *The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.* <sup>34</sup> *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,* <sup>35</sup> *so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

##### A. Power Revealed by Prophecy

1. Simeon uttered a prophecy about Jesus on the spot
2. Christ's life lived in direct fulfillment of countless prophecies

##### ***"This child is destined..."***

Greek word = "set", "appointed", "positioned", "destined"... like the laying of a foundation stone in a specific location for a specific purpose... **PURPOSEFULLY ESTABLISHED BY GOD**

Christ's life was a powerfully purposeful life, and that purpose was established ahead of time by prophecy

##### B. Power to Cause Wonder

**vs. 33** *The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him*

1. Jesus had the power to astonish
  2. That power occurred again and again... with His miracles and astonishing statements
- He astonished His neighbors in Nazareth by saying in the synagogue that He had fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy
  - He astonished His enemies by His answer to a pointed question over Roman taxation
  - He astonished crowds when He healed a man born blind
  - He astonished His disciples when He stilled a raging storm with a word

- He astonished Pontius Pilate when He refused to make a single answer to charges, and then again when He died after only three hours on the cross
- He astonished His disciples by rising from the dead and showing Himself to them

But the first people on earth that Jesus astonished were His parents!

### C. Power to Cause the Falling of Many in Israel

1. Jesus means to be a fork in the road... He means to rock your world
2. The status quo is the devils... the status quo leads people to hell
3. Jesus changed the world... and He would cause seismic reshaping of history
4. BUT not in the way King Herod feared... he who slaughtered all the infants in Bethlehem to stomp out Christ's threat
5. And not in the way Pontius Pilate feared... when he asked him pointedly "So you are a king?"

***John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."***

6. No... the falling and rising meant more than just the rise and fall of emperors, though it did mean that
7. On a global, geopolitical scale, the coming of Christ would mean the falling and rising of many in Israel and around the world simply in Christ's sovereign rule... His Kingdom which would crush all other Kingdoms at the end and be established on earth

***Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."***

8. On a personal scale, however, the falling of many in Israel (and around the world) would mean eternal ruin for them on Judgment Day

***Matthew 25:41-46 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' <sup>44</sup> "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' <sup>45</sup> "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' <sup>46</sup> "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."***

No earthly falling of Kings or Pharisees or Sadducees from positions of influence compares with the eternal falling into the Lake of Fire that this infant Jesus will effect as Judge of all the Earth

#### D. Power to Cause the Rising of Many in Israel

1. Correspondingly, Jesus will be the cause of many RISING in Israel
2. The weak, the poor, the spiritual beggars will find significance in Him
3. Those sick with sin and sick of sin will find their rising in Him
4. Those oppressed by Rome and more those oppressed by sin and death will be lifted up by Christ
5. In His ministry He will elevate the poor, forgotten, weak and sick and RAISE THEM UP
6. Even better, though, is the ultimate raising...RESURRECTION UNTO ETERNAL LIFE

The same Greek word is used: *anastasis* usually translated "resurrection"

***John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.***

***John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."***

This is the immense power of this infant Christ... the power of ETERNAL FALLING and ETERNAL RISING of many in Israel, and to the ends of the earth

#### E. Power as a Sign Spoken Against

1. Therefore, Christ is a sign... a sign from God
2. His miracles were a sign of God's power and presence
3. His sinless life was a sign of God's purity and His perfect standards of righteousness
4. BUT He was a sign SPOKEN AGAINST... despised and rejected, hated and opposed

***Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.***

***John 1:10-11 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.***

***Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."***

#### F. Power to Reveal the Human Heart

1. Therefore, said Simeon, Jesus will reveal the thoughts of hearts
2. People can hide their wickedness from each other... put on their cloak of respectability
3. But Jesus stripped all of that off and humbled the human race
4. He exposed the scribes and Pharisees as the hypocrites they were
5. He exposed Herod the Great as the great tyrant and murderer that he really was
6. He exposed Pontius Pilate as the vacillating coward under the Jewish thumb that he really was
7. He exposed all of us to be sinners... but the poor and needy, who were willing to cry to Him, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, a sinner!!" he exposed their faith and desperate need and covered it in His forgiveness and righteousness

Jesus reveals hearts still, even today!!!

#### V. The Pain of Christ's Life (2:33-35)

***vs. 35 And a sword will pierce your own soul too."***

##### A. Pain for Mary: A Sword for Her Soul

1. This prophecy contains pain for everyone
2. Simeon gave Mary a somber warning which must have haunted her mind all her days
3. What was the sword that pierced her soul? Simply, the rejection and crucifixion of her perfect boy
4. What agony must Mary have felt, not understanding fully why all this had to happen this way
5. When He was constantly causing controversy... when they threw Him out of the synagogue in Nazareth after revealing His messiahship, a sword must have pierced her soul
6. When His own brothers refused to believe in Him, a sword must have pierced her soul

7. When He claimed “Before Abraham was born, I AM!” and mobs picked up stones to stone Him, a sword must have pierced her again
8. How much more when He was finally arrested, condemned, flogged to within an inch of His life, scorned, hated, reviled, screamed at... and then nailed to a Roman cross, His blood pouring down for the sins of the world

O MY GOD, what is this? I remember when He was just tender, when I held my little perfect Son in my arms... when I watched Him grow up, when I noticed how He never sinned, always said the right thing, always obeyed me... when He learned His Bible lessons at my feet, but His comments and questions made me feel like it was I who was at His feet, when He shaped wood with my husband, Joseph... and now this. Now here He is saying to me, “Woman, behold your Son!”

“My God my God... why have you forsaken Him?!”

A sword went right through Mary’s soul... but she had to have it done. He was saving her, but to save her He had to hurt her deeply

#### B. Pain for Us: The Revelation of our Hearts

1. So it is with all of us
2. No one gets saved without Christ piercing our souls
3. The thoughts of many hearts will be exposed... revealed
4. No one gets saved without Christ hurting us deeply and showing us how wretched we are
5. The sword for your soul is this: without Jesus you will die in your sins and suffer eternally in hell, and you’ll deserve it
6. The sword for your soul is also this: you need this much salvation because your sin was this deep and deadly

#### C. Pain for Christ: His Rejection, Their Condemnation

1. Pain for Christ in that He would be despised and rejected by His own people
2. He wept over Jerusalem and was devastated by their rejection of God’s ways
3. He must have been especially tortured by this:

***John 18:40 They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.***

4. But all of this cost Christ infinite pain... condemnation under the wrath of God Almighty for the sins of the world

5. Jesus was pierced for our transgressions... literally spikes pierced his hands and feet and a spear pierced His side
6. But worse, His souls was tormented by the just penalty of God's infinite wrath

## VI. Application: Waiting Patiently for Christ

1. Just like Simeon: Wait on the Lord...

Wait on the Lord in your life...STAY AT YOUR POST UNTIL RELIEVED

Marriage, stay faithful... if there are troubles, work them out

Prayer... keep lifting those same requests up to the Lord for lost husbands and wives, lost sons and daughters, lost parents and friends

Witnessing... don't give up, but keep on being as faithful in evangelism as Simeon was in his waiting time

Second Coming... look forward to the Day of God and speed its coming

2. Grow in Patience... attack impatience with prayer and Bible verses

***James 5:7-8 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.***

Harvest time only comes after waiting on the Lord

Don't be a hasty people... wanting return on investment today

Invest in scripture memorization, witnessing, putting sin to death, raising your children in the fear and nurture of the Lord, discipling a young Christian, DO ALL THIS with an eye to the BIG PICTURE, the distant future, knowing that the returns will not come immediately

The devil wants you to be impatient, and thus abort your harvest before the time

So, the next time you're standing in line at the bank and all the tellers are occupied with customers who are trying to solve all their banking problems in one trip... or the next time you sit in traffic unable to move... or the next time you are expecting something important in the mail and find that it still hasn't come... or the next time some little daily trial causes impatience to rise in you, realize how vital it is to learn the submissiveness of waiting on the Lord

Like Simeon, learn to stay at your post and wait for the Lord to accomplish what He's promised