

Text: Luke 2:22-35

Title: Testify to God's Salvation

Main Idea: To see Jesus is to see God's Salvation (light, revelation, and glory)

Introduction:

One of the first dates for Tess and I was visiting the Grand Canyon. I had recently moved here to Gilbert and Tess was living in South Carolina. We had known each other for about 4 years, but I had just recently started pursuing her intentionally to get to know her more. We talked hours on the phone and I somehow convinced her to come visit for a long weekend. We drove up to the Grand Canyon and Tess had never been there, so I wanted to make it a big deal. If you have been up there before you know you can enter the Park and drive to the visitors center and not see the Canyon. We got out of the car and started walking toward the edge of the canyon. I stopped her and had her close her eyes because I didn't want her to see it prematurely. I wanted it to be a dramatic first view. I also wanted to hold her hand so this was a great excuse to lead her to the edge and see if she would trust me! I joked with her all the way to the edge and then had her open her eyes and take in the vast beauty of the Grand Canyon. Her facial expression was genuine amazement and awe. It was a good initial authentic reaction to a reality that is hard to simply describe with words or paint with a picture.

I have chosen Luke 2 as our text this morning and am very excited to share with you a portion of the incarnation story that sometimes gets overlooked. As way of reminder or maybe new information, Luke is a physician and really his role in writing this book, a historian. He is commissioned to write a historical account of the life of Jesus Christ for a man named Theophilus. In doing so he writes very intentionally and critically. We see this even in the first two chapters as he includes some eyewitness reporting and almost provides for us the reader some very significant interviews of people who first encountered this Christ-child. If you simply start at the beginning of Luke you come across Zechariah, Elisabeth, Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, and Simeon/Anna. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, (wise men from Matthew's account) gets all the publicity when it comes to the nativity and such. However, there is much we can learn from the others that witnessed and testified to the validity of the incarnation soon after the birth of baby Jesus. Just as I began with the story of Tessa's authentic response and reaction to the grandeur of viewing the Grand Canyon, we will likewise get a look into the genuine authentic reaction of one named Simeon who had been longing to see the Messiah, Jesus Christ born as a baby just 40 days earlier.

Last week Pastor Clay taught us from Matthew's account of the Incarnation (Mat 1:18-23)- He posed 2 questions for us - Who is the Child Jesus? And Why did He Come? - A quick recap on some of Matthew's divine answers to these questions were...

He is ...Virgin born, Man and King who will be Savior
He came because...to give forgiveness and fellowship

Today- I would like to continue in a way the sermon from last week, but since Christmas was just 2 days ago, I would like you to consider the answer to the questions WHAT. **What should your response be** to the answers from last week of who the Christ child is and Why did he come?

Luke's account of the incarnation differs from Matthews in several ways. Luke does not include the narrative of the wise men. Matthew however does not include the account of Simeon and Anna testifying to the reality and greatness of the long-awaited Messiah the Lords Christ. Luke in his account focuses on the historical eyewitness accounts. Those that he references as credible testimonies for his historical document to Theophilus who he was writing for. We will look specifically at the response and testimony of one man named Simeon.

Read Luke 2:22-35

Context of the Testimony (22-24)

- Bethlehem to Jerusalem for 3 separate ceremonies
- Mary and Joseph - upstanding observant Jews -bringing son to be purified and presented to the Lord; poor sacrificing turtledoves (1/10 the price)
- Frequent mention of the law- Jesus grew up in a family who paid close attention to the laws of Judaism - this is important because of Jesus' later conflict with the Jewish religious leadership. His conflict was not due to lack of knowledge or experience with the Jewish laws.
- Purification of the woman 40 days after (Lev 12:2-4,6)
 - purification involved burnt sacrifice and sin offering of Mary (Lev 12:6)- symbol to point to sinfulness and need of forgiveness
 - indication of lowly poor state of Mary and Joseph (Lev 12 :8, Lk 1:48) (rich gifts from the wise men had not come- Mat 2:11)
- Presentation of firstborn to God (Ex 13:2,12, Num 18:15-16)- indication of ransom fee- Exodus story...

- Dedication of firstborn to the Lord's Service (1 Sam 1-2)

Character of the Testimony- Simeon (25-28)

- Important unknown- nothing known of him outside this passage - we are not told his vocation, but we are told of his character
- "Whereas the shepherds represented the average person on the streets, Simeon represents the testimony of a wise elder who has walked with God"- NIVAC
- Luke emphasizes the role he plays- (APPLICATION) - I love this. We can get caught up in being someone or leaving a legacy or making a mark on this world. God uses the weak and insignificant of the world to do his great work. We should definitely strive to do our best and use our gifts for the glory of God, BUT it is not about our fame or us. Simeon- righteous and devout man...waiting..
 - Righteous -(dikaios) justified before God and devout (eukabes)- sanctified - cautious, careful to obey God - this was the character of Simeon
- Waiting for the consolation of Israel - this is his theology! Described in v26 as seeing the Lords Christ- not a reference to political deliverance but rather spiritual salvation brought by the Savior (Lk 19:10-see and to save the lost)
 - Is 40:1-3- "consolation" or comfort from the comforter
 - Looking expectantly for the coming of the Messiah (Is 25:8-9-8 *He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.*
9 It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." - Isaiah 25:8-9
 - Simeon had a literal interpretation of the OT -
 - Main OT prophecies indicate future Messianic blessings of comfort, peace and joy
 - Is 7:14
 - 9:1-71
 - 11:1-10
 - 40:1-11
 - etc
 - Jerusalem's redemption (2:38); coming of God's Kingdom (23:51); master return(12:36); resurrection of just and unjust (acts 24:15)
 - Anna- 2:38- waiting
 - Joseph of Arimathea- Lk 23:51
 - Saints in touch with God's Word and Heart often await expectantly the completion of God's promises-
 - APPLICATION- Are you waiting for the coming of Christ? 2 Peter 3:11-18
- "and the HS was upon him"-25b-
 - Prophetic word given to him directly by God via HS, see v 26 - not general word (logos) but a personal propositional statement (rhea) directly given to him by means of the HS
 - Authenticating power of HS (26)
 - Guidance of the HS (27 & 4:1) -literally "In the Spirit, he came into the temple"
- Should not see death until he sees the "anointed of the Lord" or the "Lord's Christ"
 - see Ps 2:2; 45:7; 110:1
 - Is 61:1-1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;*
 - Lk 4:18- Jesus reads Isaiah and says fulfilled
- In the temple court not sanctuary (hieron vs naos)

Content of the Testimony - [Poem] (28-32) Latin- Nunc Dimittis 4/5 praise hymns in response to incarnation - Simeon- righteous and devout Jewish man, delivered short 3 couplet poem (28-32)— the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32) used as a canticle in Christian liturgy

"took him in his arms" - the irony of the fact that Simeon did what Jesus would do later on
"Blessed God"- 28 - focus on God, not Mary and Joseph or himself..

I would like to pause here in the Simeon's testimony in praise song to God and point out truths about God that should dramatically impact our daily life.

"(Sovereign) Lord (Master), now you are letting your servant (bondslave) depart in peace, according to your word; (Luke 2:29)

- **TRUTH #1- God is sovereign over all, so you can trust Him.**
 - "NOW- emphatic position in the Grk - in his timing
 - "Sovereign Lord(Grk-despota)- Acts 4:24-"Sovereign Lord, uwho made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant
 - "Released" to die- shows Simeons' view of God's sovereignty and control over life and death, number of days
 - Timing of his life and death are in God's hands and...
- **TRUTH #2- God's promises never fail, so you can depend on Him.**
 - reminder of our position (bondservants)
 - "let me die" - prophecy/promise from 2:26 fulfilled
 - "according to your Word"- Simeon knew the promises of God and believed God kept his promises.
- **TRUTH #3 -God is peace and satisfaction, so you can be CONTENT**
 - (found in Christ alone - Phil 1: 21-26)
 - or Phil 3:7-10

Contentment... is the soul's enjoyment of that peace that passes all understanding.-Arthur W. Pink

- ILLUSTRATION: Simeons attitude stands in contrast to our cultural norm- We see the attitude of our culture displayed even in the New Years Goals people make- 1. Improve personal finance 2. Stop smoking 3. lose weight 4. get more exercise - the absence of knowing and pursuing a deeper relationship with God and others. Contentment found in knowing the source of life itself and seeing beyond death.

for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, (Luke 2:30-31)

- **TRUTH #4- God's provides salvation, so you can be rescued.**
 - Simeon explains further why he was not allowed to die- he was waiting for the salvation of Israel...which is Christ (Is 60:1-3; Jn 1:3-9)
 - He speaks of Christ as the consolation- comfort (2:25) -clear allusion to Is 40:5
 - see 1:69 - horn of salvation referring to Messiah; this idea of Jesus the Savior, bringing salvation is a huge theme of Luke's (Lk 1:47;2:11;Acts 5:31;13:23) term Savior only appears once in other gospels (Jn 4:42) -futher "salvation is found 10x in Luke-Acts, but only once in other gospels (Jn 4:22); further the verb "to save" is found 17x in Luke and 13x in Acts, more than any other gospel- this salvation is primarily concerned with the individuals life (Lk 9:24-must recognize you are lost before you can be saved-(19:10) - includes faith (7:50) and involves forgiveness of sins (1:77)
 - Gal 4:4- God sent forth his son born of a woman, born under the law, to REDEEM those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons
 - He speaks of Christ as what he will do...he is a means to the end (salvation for Israel), but also the means and the end at the same time
 - "Lords salvation" intersting wording again emphasizing the sovereign plan of God throughout all time and circumstances
 - "see (orao) used a lot in these verses- Simeon gets to see God's promise in Jesus, but so does the whole world- Jesus is on full display for all the world to see- even this morning as Scripture speaks to us- you have the opportunity to see Jesus. How do you respond?
 - Grk- peoples- referring both to Jews and Gentiles (is 52:10)(lk 3:6)

a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:32)

- **TRUTH #5- God's light and glory is revealed in Jesus, so we should proclaim Him to the Nations**
 - Til this point not much is different in the hymn of praise of Simeon in contrast to Mary, Elisabeth, Zechariah, shepherds...but here he gives more in regards to the extent of God's redemptive plan
 - "light" used in apposition to "salvation" (Is 49:6)- light as a metaphor to Jesus (Jn 1:4-5,9; 8:12;9:5)
 - glory, light, revelation- all causative in Grk (Is 60:1;19;58:8)
 - this "salvation" is described (this child)
 - "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" -apocalypsis- unveil or disclose something - a spotlight on himself
 - ""a light for glory to your people Israel" - Jesus was God's personal effort at radiating forth his own perfection in the sight of his own people in a very purposeful and unprecedented way (Is 46:13-Israel is my glory)
 - This verse goes a step further than the angelic song in 2:14 and clearest indication of the universal dimension of Jesus redemptive work

TRUTH #1- God is sovereign over all, so you can trust Him.

TRUTH #2- God's promises never fail, so you can depend on Him.

TRUTH #3 -God is peace and satisfaction, so you can be CONTENT (found in Christ alone - Phil 1: 21-26)

TRUTH #4- God's provides salvation, so you can be rescued.

TRUTH #5- God's light and glory is revealed in Jesus, so we should proclaim Him to the Nations

Response to the Testimony: Mary and Joseph Response- respond in humble amazement and wonder (2:33)

- Simeon said Jesus was a gift from God
- Simeon recognized Jesus as the Messiah
- Simeon said Jesus would be a light to the entire world

Continuation of the Testimony: Paradoxical Response of the world (34-35)

- Everything is not roses in Israel
- Some would fall because of him (Is 8:14,15 and 28:13-16—Lk 20:17-18;Rom 9:33; 1 Pt 2:6-8)
- Others would rise (Mal 4:2)
- No neutral response- accept or reject
- God is not on trial by us, but rather we are tried by God
- Ends on a negative note (parenthetical in verse 35 of the pain the opposition of Jesus will cause Mary)
 - Following Jesus does not offer a life of ease, but rather opposition, hostility, rejection, ridicule, and division - YET Jesus triumphs!
 - Truth in Action- Acts 4:24-31- Peter, John and believers pray for boldness

Truths from this story

- God's providence- he brought Simeon to this exact spot in the temple at just the right time to fulfill his promise. He orchestrates all things perfectly for his Good pleasure and our good.
- It's not really about Simeon. Nothing more is known about him other than these few verses, but God used him in a very neat way. He wasn't a priest or prophet that we know of...yet he knew the Word of God and was led by the Spirit of God.
- Faithfulness. Obedience. Worship. Devotion. Surrender. Praise. Constancy.
- God uses many to testify to the validity of His greatness and purposes (male female, teenagers and senior citizens, simple and wise)
- Contentment found in Christ- Simeon ready to die once he saw the Savior. His focus was not on the things of this world, but rather on the spiritual realities found in Christ

CONCLUSION

MAIN IDEA- TO SEE JESUS IS TO SEE GOD'S SALVATION (HIS LIGHT AND REVELATION), so we must be faithful in testifying.