

# 40 Days of Gratitude

SESSION 5: 12/25/2022

## SIMEON'S SONG

LUKE 2:25-32

### MAIN POINT

Simeon saw Jesus and recognized the Savior, so he blessed God and said, “my eyes have seen Your salvation, that you have prepared.” We can sing the same song when we recognize and receive Jesus as our Savior.

### INTRODUCTION

**How many days have you used the journal? What are some of the reflections you have written? Is this daily remembrance of gratitude making a difference? How do we better cultivate an attitude of gratitude?**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is something you waited a long time to do, such as leave home, get married, have a baby, or get your dream job?**

**What was your greatest expectation for that event?**

**Did the event live up to your expectation?**

Sometimes events in life greatly exceed our expectations, and other times they fail to live up to the hype in our mind. Simeon had lived in anticipation of God's promised Messiah. Recognizing Jesus as the One through whom salvation would be made available to all people, Simeon offered praise to God. Following his example, we should recognize and receive the salvation God offers in Jesus, and we should make praise to God for His salvation a prominent element of our lives.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:25-26.

**How would you describe Simeon, based on these verses?**

Simeon was “righteous”; that is, he kept God's laws and the laws of his society, behaving well toward others. He also was “devout,” carefully fulfilling prescribed religious duties. The combination of the words ‘righteous’ and ‘devout’ stresses that he thoughtfully lived out his relationship with God.

## **What was Simeon waiting for? What do you think “the consolation of Israel” means?**

Simeon was “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” This referred to the hope Israel had in regard to God’s plan for the nation. More specifically, it referred to the Messiah’s role in that plan. Simeon lived with the anticipation that God’s promised Deliverer could come at any time.

### **Simeon lived in expectation of the Messiah’s coming. If we lived expectantly for Christ’s return, what would change in how we live our lives?**

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:27–28.

#### **How did Simeon recognize Jesus?**

#### **What is the relationship between Simeon’s righteousness and devotion and his being able to recognize who Jesus was?**

#### **How can we become more in tune with God’s plan so that we recognize God’s work?**

What we learn from Simeon is that an intimate, personal relationship with God enables us to recognize God’s work and respond to His leading. Simeon was walking in a right relationship with God. He was anticipating the Messiah’s coming, which indicates he took God’s promises seriously. In addition, he was “moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 27). Finally, Simeon was worshiping God in the temple. God used Simeon’s worship time to communicate Jesus’ identity and mission.

#### **When we come to church to worship God, do we come with the anticipation that God will reveal Himself to us? Why or why not?**

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:29–32.

#### **What did Simeon predict about the mission of Jesus?**

#### **What does it mean that Jesus is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles”?**

The word translated ‘Gentiles’ in verse 32 is from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning ‘nations.’ It’s the same word Jesus used in the Great Commission, “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). The coming of Jesus was more than a fulfillment of Israel’s messianic hopes. Jesus is the light revealing and providing God’s way of salvation for all people. Though Israel has always had a special place in God’s plan, God’s plan of redemption includes both Jews and Gentiles. (See Isa. 40:5; 42:6; 49:6; 52:9-10.).

#### **How might knowing that Jesus’ plan of redemption is for all people challenge us to invest in the mission of making Christ known to all people?**

#### **How are we doing in fulfilling the responsibility to announce to all people the availability of God’s salvation in Jesus? How can we do it better?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Encountering Jesus was a turning point in Simeon's life. Today, whenever people meet Jesus, they experience a decisive turning point. They must accept Him or reject Him. Either way, they must decide.

**In what ways has a past encounter with Jesus been a turning point in your life?**

**How could a personal encounter with Jesus change your life today?**

**Simeon praised God for His salvation in Jesus. In what ways does your life demonstrate praise to God for His salvation?**

**How can you help others recognize the Savior this week?**

## PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer, praising God for the salvation He has provided in Jesus. Ask Him to help group members to keep their focus on Jesus and to become more aware of opportunities to share with others the message of salvation through Him.

## COMMENTARY

LUKE 2:25-32

2:25. Among the many people in Jerusalem at the time Joseph and Mary took Jesus there was an exceptional, extraordinary man. Luke described Simeon in glowing terms. Simeon was "righteous"; that is, he kept God's laws and the laws of his society, behaving well toward others. He also was "devout," carefully fulfilling prescribed religious duties. Simeon was pious in the deepest and best sense of the word. The combination of the words 'righteous' and 'devout' stresses that he was conscientious in living out His relationship with God. In addition, Simeon was looking forward to Israel's consolation, the Messiah's coming.

The rabbis used the words "Israel's consolation" to refer to the fulfillment of the Jews' messianic hope. The Jews expected Messiah to liberate them from Roman control. "Israel's consolation" carries the idea of the messianic age's beginning. Because the Jews believed a time of great suffering would precede Messiah's coming, they expected Him to bring comfort by delivering them from oppression. Predominantly, the Jews expected a military/political Messiah in David's mold who would throw off the bonds of Roman control and return the nation to power and prominence. Jesus, however, was the Messiah who came to deliver people from their sins.

Significantly, the Holy Spirit was on Simeon. This marked Simeon as someone special and qualified him as a credible witness concerning Jesus' messiahship. The truth for believers consideration today is that an intimate, personal relationship with God enables them to respond to God's leading. Simeon represented genuine, godly piety among God's people, the highest quality of Old Testament faith. Zechariah, Elizabeth (1:5-6), Joseph, (Matt. 1:19), and Mary also were remarkable examples of godly faith. God

worked through people of highest spiritual quality to provide and nurture the Savior and to attest to His messiahship.

2:26. In some manner, the Holy Spirit had revealed to him [Simeon] that he would live to see the Lord's Messiah. God honored Simeon's fervent anticipation of seeing with his own eyes the long-awaited Deliverer. Some interpreters view the promise that Simeon would not see death before the fulfillment of his hope as evidence he was elderly, but he may or may not have been old. Whatever Simeon's age, he held fast to God's promise to see God's Anointed One. Simeon fervently believed Israel's covenant God would make good on that promise. God would send His Deliverer.

2:27. The Spirit prompted Simeon to enter the temple complex. For the third time in three verses, Luke stressed the Holy Spirit's activity in this incident in Jesus' life. Behind the scenes, God was orchestrating His unfolding redemptive purpose. The words "the temple complex" probably referred to the court of the women, an outer court of the temple beyond which women could not go. Jesus' parents brought Him there to fulfill the law's requirements. Of course, Joseph was Jesus' adoptive and legal father. Luke referred to Mary and him as they appeared in their parental roles. As was customary under the law, they consecrated their Son to God (see Ex. 13:2,12,15; Num. 3:13; 18:15-16; Deut. 21:15-17).

2:28. Under the Spirit's leading, Simeon approached Joseph and Mary and reached out to receive the child and hold Him in "his arms". Two often overlooked and surprising factors were involved in this exchange. First, Joseph and Mary obviously were poor. (See Luke 2:24 and Lev. 12:8.) Yet Simeon recognized the baby they held as the Messiah he was expecting. Second, they allowed a stranger to hold their child. Remarkably, they evidently did not hesitate. Luke continued to express God's directing events surrounding Jesus' entrance into the world.

As Simeon held the infant Jesus, he praised God. Literally, he "blessed God." Our word eulogy comes from the Greek word. Customarily, the Jews' prayers of thanksgiving began with praising God and acknowledging His glory. As Simeon held Jesus, he prayed. His prayer is in the form of a beautiful hymn comparable to the finest Old Testament psalms.

2:29. Simeon acknowledged God as his Master. We get our word despot from the Greek term. While we usually attach negative feelings to this term, the Greek word simply expressed absolute ownership, power, and authority. Simeon was God's slave, His bond slave, totally under God's control. Now that Simeon was holding the Messiah, God was in the process of dismissing His slave from his responsibility to watch and wait. The word 'dismiss' has the sense of granting freedom to a slave. Likely, the statement "you can dismiss Your slave in peace" was Simeon's way of asking to be allowed to die. Some interpreters view his words as additional evidence he was elderly (Luke 2:26). At any rate, Simeon could die without regrets, fully satisfied. God had acted according to His word, and that was enough for Simeon.

2:30-31. Simeon could die with a sense of fulfillment because he saw God's salvation. Jesus embodied God's promised salvation. To see Jesus was/is to see salvation. The child Simeon held in his arms grew to be the man through whom God made redemption available. God provided this salvation for all peoples, not merely for the Jews. The word prepared has the idea of salvation being meant for everyone. In one of his Suffering Servant songs, Isaiah the prophet said, "The LORD has displayed His holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10).

2:32. Simeon clarified the inclusiveness of the redemption God made available in Jesus. Jesus is a “light for revelation to the Gentiles” (nations). In Jesus, the light of God’s love and grace penetrates the Gentiles’ spiritual darkness. God extends to everyone the good news Christ reveals and is. The glory of God’s people Israel is that through Israel God provided the Deliverer for Israel and for the Gentiles. Israel was instrumental in advancing God’s redemptive purpose, but the Jews also needed the redemption available in God’s Son. Paul wrote, “The gospel ... is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek [non-Jew]” (Rom. 1:16). The glory of producing the Savior belonged to Israel; the need for salvation applied to Israel and to all other people.