

# BELPRES CHURCH

## Sermon Title: Simeon's Song

John Kim

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**Scripture: Luke 2:22-35**

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### **Jesus Presented in the Temple**

22 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 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24 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."

25 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. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."

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

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**Transcript:**

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Well, good morning, BelPres. It's great to be together online. I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas day with family and friends. My name is John Kim, and I'm the pastoral associate for global missions. Whether you're joining us from your living room, or your kitchen table, or at a favorite vacation Christmas spot, we're so glad that you're here with us.

So Father, in this online space, we are one church. The body of Christ coming to you with humble hearts, worshiping the God with us, the God who sees us. May your name be praised both in heaven and on earth. In Jesus name, amen.

Well, what are some of your favorite family Christmas traditions? Well, feel free to share those in the online chat. Now, having lived in crazy hot Texas for most of my life, when we moved to Seattle back in 2004, one of the Christmas traditions that our family started was driving north to British Columbia, five hours, and staying a few days near Whistler mountain. I mean, the beauty of the mountains in Whistler are a sight to behold. Just breathtaking. You absolutely feel like you are near heaven. I remember it was my second trip to Whistler, and we had the kids in ski school and my wife and I had the whole day of skiing together.

And after the last run of the day, the kids and my wife, they were exhausted. And I was just getting started, and I told them, "I want to go out for one last run." And I took the gondola up to the top. And then I took another lift to get to the very top of Whistler.

Now, at the base, the weather was perfect. It was sunny. It was clear. But when I got to the top of the mountain, it was a complete blizzard. I could barely see a few feet in front of me, but I wasn't scared at all.

And I just took off on the run with just excitement. Man, I was at Whistler. But as I was going down, I noticed that the blizzard was completely blinding me. I couldn't see the course. And I also began seeing trees, which I thought was weird.

And then I started to hit moguls, and I was soon trying to avoid the trees, and I was going down way faster than I could control. And as soon as I realized that not only am I lost, but I'm completely off path, I just started falling. I mean, like falling off a cliff falling.

I started tumbling over and over, and I had no idea where up or down was. My heart just stopped. And time seemed to slow down again for me, and fear began to fill my mind. And I thought, "Not only am I going to break a leg or even seriously get hurt, but I might just die." And I've never felt so scared in my entire life at that moment.

Now, I don't know where you are, but what are some of your fears? If you're comfortable with sharing those, please put them in the chat. Do you have fears of COVID and losing your health? Fears that your relationships are breaking apart? Fears that you won't be able to pay your bills? Fears that you won't be seen as successful or accomplished? Fears that you won't measure up to those around you, your family, your parents, your friends at school? Fears that you won't find that special right person in your life? Fears that keep you awake at night and fears that wake you up before the sun rises? And those fears are on your thoughts all day long. We all have them.

Those that serve alongside with me here at BelPres, our Go and Grow team and our Global Outreach team, know that recently my father, who is a widow and he's 84, he lives alone in Dallas. He has seen a downward turn health. His memory and mobility is getting worse, and I'm having to travel, and to see him to oversee his healthcare.

I love my dad. He is a pioneer in our family. I mean, when he came to the US with almost nothing, he helped his brothers and sisters, my mom's entire family, emigrate to the US. He is like the godfather in our family. And growing up in our home felt like a hotel because we had family coming in and out all the time as my dad just helped them transition into places of their own.

But now I fear for his health. It keeps me awake at night, and I wake up early in the morning because the fear that I won't be there to care for him and to help care for him when he needs me the most.

As I was preparing for the sermon, reading through the stories of Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary, the magi and the shepherds, King Herod, Elizabeth and Zecharia, I came across a story of Simeon in Luke Chapter Two. Someone who was paying attention as to the Messiah's coming when so many others missed it.

And as I read and I prayed through the scriptures, God spoke to me that the fears that I have don't have to have control over me, that Simeon's faith and trust in God can help us when we struggle with fears.

So follow along with me as I read through the scriptures, Luke Chapter Two, verses 22 through 35. When the time came for the purification rights required by the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, every first born male is to be consecrated to the Lord, 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.

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. And 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. 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 have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight for 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. 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 would be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed, and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Now, the story begins about 40 days after the birth of Jesus, and that was when the Jewish law required the rituals of purification and dedication to take place. So Mary and Joseph leave Nazareth and go to Jerusalem, and the story shifts to Simeon.

We find out that Simeon's a godly Jewish man, filled with the Holy Spirit, and a man that has received a strange promise from God that he would not die until he has seen the Messiah.

Now, we don't know exactly how old Simeon was. Christian tradition has him about 113 to over 200 years old. We also do not know when he received the promise from God and how long he has been waiting for this promise to be fulfilled. It could have been years, or it could have been decades.

Did Simeon ever lose hope along the way? Did he have any fears? I'm sure he experienced many of the same fears you and I have, but what makes Simeon unique is his enduring faith in trusting in God's promises.

And we know he was a devout and righteous. He was influenced by the Holy Spirit, and it was God's miracle that led him to the temple courts, that led him to Joseph and Mary, and God's divine direction to hold in his arms the Messiah, filling what he was promised by God. Now, the Bible's full of promises about God's love and forgiveness, about who we are as a people of God, about how we are to live, and about what is truly important in life. And Simeon is there to give us a glimpse of what it's like to live trusting in those promises. And he gets to see God. He gets to hold the Messiah in his hands. Simeon lived his whole life longing for just that moment.

Now, most of us, we live life longing for certain moments, but not the Messiah moment. The moments we tend to trust often have to do with our jobs, our careers, the stuff we have, money, relationships and our family. But as good as those things are, we can never ultimately trust in those things alone. They will and can fail us.

But you know what? God will never. We might misunderstand his intentions, but he will never break his promises. And that's the God Simeon built his life on, the God whose promises never fail, the God the Bible calls a rock. And that's why he says, "You can dismiss your servant in peace," which really means, "I can die now. My joy in life is complete." I love apostle Paul's own words in Romans Chapter Eight, verses 38 and 39. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels, nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any other powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ, Jesus our Lord. "

When I was in seminary, I had the opportunity to go back to my college, to pastor my old college ministry. And I met an old college friend when I was visiting the campus and we had

a chance to catch up. He told me that he had dropped out of college, and he started doing drugs, and he got mixed up in the wrong crowd, robbing stores and stealing. He then told me that he got put into jail for his crimes. And then he said he heard God's voice telling him that God loves him. And from that point on, he started to trust in that promise. He got into drug rehab, and he started working at a grocery store, and he started to go to church.

He shared that the demons of his past life continue to haunt him, but nothing like the past. And when he struggled with his fears, he would go to church. And if his church wasn't open, he would go into any church that was open.

And he would sit in the sanctuary, and he would think, and he would pray about the promises that God gave him while he was sitting in that cell. He said every time he did that, God's supernatural presence filled him and gave him the strength to go and move forward. You know, you will never know God's promises unless you let him speak to you. This Christmas season, Pastor Scott gave all of us homework to read through the gospels. So as you're reading through them, write down the different promises that God makes, and see how they're calling you to live.

Verses 29 through 32 are known as Simeon's Song. "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations, which alight for the revelation to the gentiles and the glory of your people, Israel."

What's incredible is that Simeon was the first to speak of Jesus being for are not just the Jews, but for all people, the gentiles. That the new covenant we see later would be made through Jesus's own blood, death, and resurrection.

And as I studied this section of scripture, I found over 32 Old Testament references. And I know there are more. Simeon was so grounded in the scriptures, no wonder he was filled with the Holy Spirit. His life and his understanding of God's words came hand in hand. Be devoted like Simeon. His communion with God made it possible for God to use him. Simeon we know was waiting for the consolation of Israel. The word waiting can also be translated as 'be ready to receive'.

The term expresses this eagerness to welcome. That emphasis transforms the concept of waiting from unknowing endurance to active anticipation. So Simeon walked with God each and every day until God revealed what he had promised him personally.

You know, this past week I smoked a 21 pound beef brisket for my all-in group, and it took me over 13 hours to smoke this one. And each hour I would go outside and spritz the meat to keep it moist. And it was pouring raining this week. I was getting drenched.

And I stayed up the whole night, getting maybe an hour sleep between in spritzes. But that waiting, it wasn't a chore, but a labor of love, a time of waiting because I knew what was coming, and I was anticipating the most amazing and succulent beef brisket that just melts in your mouth.

Now, I know for many of us, waiting often feels like impatience or annoyance. And I clenched my teeth, and I just tried to hold on until I could just move past whatever current trial looks like. And that's kind of like how we all react. And I want to get out, not welcome in.

So what would it look like for all, all of us to shift to a mindset where we are ready to receive more than just escape? Our difficulties look different through the lens of curiosity and welcome.

So this new year, BelPres, my encouragement to you are the words 'curiosity' and 'welcome'. Write those two words down. Put them on your laptop, put them on your board, on your refrigerator, and in the midst of whatever you might be waiting for, pray, "God, with curiosity I welcome what you have in store for me. Whatever that may be, teach me your wonderful truths as I continue to trust in you each and every day."

You know, when I was falling down Whistler mountain, I had no idea if I was going to survive. I was tumbling, and I think I must have just blacked out. And I came to and someone was talking to me. And it took a few moments when I realized it was another skier that was asking me if I was okay. I don't even remember answering him.

He told me to wait, and he came back with my skis. And I sat there and I just thought, "It's a miracle that I'm alive." And the skier asked if I could stand up and ski down. And I told him,

"I think so." So we started down the mountain slowly, and I was just keeping my eyes on the back of his skis.

And it took forever for us to get down the mountain, and I had no idea where we were going. I just trusted him and I followed him. And as we got to the bottom, he took off his goggles and he smiled at me.

And he said he was skiing off a remote part of Whistler and he saw me falling down the mountain. And he said that he couldn't believe I was okay because of the distance that I fell. He also said that where I landed was only just a few feet away from another drop off, that if I fell down that, I would not have survived.

And he looked at me and he said, "You shouldn't be skiing on that part of the mountain. It's for experts only." I just nodded. "And I was there at the right time to help you. Otherwise, it would've been a different story." And then he just disappeared. He left. I was just dumbfounded.

You know, I've had a lot of moments in my life where God stepped in, whether it was through a scuba diving instructor, a truck driver, my dad, an old lady, or even a skier. God somehow puts people in my life to save me, to help me along the way, to show me that he is looking after me.

And ultimately what's true in every case is that God sent his one and only son, Jesus Christ, to die for us. And I know that supernaturally, in all of those situations, Jesus was there for me because he loves me, because he sacrificed his own life up for me so I could be remade, renewed, forgiven, redeemed, refined, a new creation set apart for his purposes. Now, no matter what fears that we might be going through, the story of Simeon shows us that when we trust on God's promises, being grounded in the scriptures, focused on him with curiosity and welcome, being filled with the Holy Spirit, no fears can overcome that. Fears take a backseat because when you are looking for the Messiah, waiting [inaudible 00:19:36] for his return, he will make all things right. Jesus will bring his kingdom justice, and his righteous both here on earth and in heaven.

So Father, please keep our eyes and our hearts fixed on your son's return. We long for your kingdom to be made here on earth as it is in heaven. Make it so. In Jesus' name, amen.



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**Discussion Questions: Luke 2:22-35**

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*Read this week's scripture(s) & answer the below questions with your friends, family, or All In small group.*

**Opening Questions:**

- Looking back, were you able to apply any of the things we talked about last time to your life this week? What did you do? How did it go?

**Scripture Reflection Questions:**

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage and sermon?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

**Sermon Reflection Questions** - *Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:*

- The Bible has many promises of God that are for us. What are some of the promises in scripture that you hold closely to your own heart?
- In the sermon, Pastor John talks about "Welcome" and "Curiosity." In what ways have you been waiting for an answer from God, and how can these two words encourage you through them?
- What are some of the fears that you have as we come into the new year? Take some time to pray for one another.

**Closing Question and Application:**

- Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week?
- Who might you share this with?

**Closing Group Prayer:**

- Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.
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