

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2011

Waiting For Christmas

(Luke 2:25-32)

(Sunday, December 4, 2011)

I remember as children how we impatiently waited for Christmas. Christmas Eve seemed like the longest night of the year.

There was one man who waited for Christmas with more expectancy than any other. He was an old man named Simeon. Simeon shows that God has a people prepared even in the worst of circumstances. The story of Jesus' birth shows that when religious leaders and institutions are corrupt, God still has a quiet people prepared for His coming. The characters of Luke 1 & 2 – Elizabeth and Zechariah, Simeon and Anna, Joseph and Mary – reminds us that God will always have a faithful people, even in the worst of times.

Simeon shows us how to prepare our hearts for Christmas. We prepare for Christmas with integrity of heart and understanding of mind. There are certain things we should be and some things we should know as we wait for Christmas.

I. The Character of those who wait for Christmas.

Most of the people missed the significant events of that first Christmas. The political and religious leaders did not even know what was happening. There are many people in our city who will altogether miss the significance of Christmas because most of our concern is about Christmas trees and Santa Clause, etc.

Simeon was one of the few who saw and understood the mighty act of God that first Christmas.

(Sunday, December 11, 2011)

** What really characterized him?

1. He waited for Christmas with integrity.

The Bible says, "Simeon was righteous and devout." With reference to God's will, there was reverence, devotion, and care about spiritual duties. No one sees Christmas who does not guard the integrity of his life. Only those whose hearts are right with God will see and sense the significance of Christmas.

2. He waited for Christmas with intensity.

Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." The consolation of Israel is the promised Messiah. This man lived in expectation. He was looking and waiting for God to intervene. He expected something to happen. Christmas time ought to be a time to evaluate our spiritual expectancy. Most of us never expect anything to happen.

3. He waited for Christmas with inspiration.

The most critical aspect of Simeon's Character was his relationship to the Holy Spirit. Verse 25 says, "The Holy Spirit was upon Him" which means, he had an abiding communion with God. The Holy Spirit had given him a revelation – that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. The Holy Spirit gave him a direction. Verse 27 says, "moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts." The first Christmas was marked by a renewal of activity on the part of the Spirit of God. Every Christmas ought to be marked by a renewal of the Spirit in our lives.

(Sunday, December 18, 2011)

II. The Comfort of those who wait for Christmas.

A sense of comfort and well being, characterizes those ready for the significance of Christmas. That comfort comes from our relationship to Christ.

Comfort comes in our reception of Christ. Verse 28 says, "Simeon took him in his arms and praised God." In a literal sense, Simeon was the first person on record to receive Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he came at exactly the right time to precisely the right place. Many parents were bringing their infants to the temple for the act of presentation. Nothing physical or dramatic caused Mary, Joseph and Jesus to stand out from the crowd. Yet Simeon found his way to the Christ Child. I wonder today, has God led you to His Christ? The Holy Spirit is able to bring you to that precise time and place where your life intersects with Him. The very same Spirit that drew Simeon - draws you this Christmas season.

Comfort comes from our satisfaction with Christ. Simeon expressed total fulfillment of life when he saw the Christ. Verse 29 says, "Lord, now let thou servant depart in peace, according to thy word." His words reflect a servant who had been posted by His master to wait for a certain event. When that event has happened, the tired servant asked to be dismissed. Simeon discovered absolute contentment and total well being in seeing and receiving Christ.

**** Are you facing Christmas this year with a sense of well being and contentment in your life? ****

No matter what has happened this year, only seeing, receiving and knowing Christ gives contentment.

(Sunday, December 25, 2011)

III. The Concern of those who wait for Christmas.

Christmas gives us a comfort, but it also gives our life an ultimate concern and mission.

Christmas concerns the certainty of God's faithfulness. He is a God who keeps His promise. Our entire relationship to God depends on His faithfulness to His promises. In the coming of Christ, we see that God does keep His promises. At least 73 specific promises written in the Old Testament were fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah at Christmas. We may be sure that the God who kept His promises in the past is the God who will keep His promises in the future.

Lastly, Christmas concerns the universality of God's salvation. The old Jew, Simeon proclaimed that the baby he held was a "light for revelation to the Gentiles." He saw that what happened in Jerusalem that day was for the entire planet. The very fact you are here today is proof of that proclamation.

The Christian world mission cannot be separated from Christmas. It is news too good to keep. That's what the gospel is all about. Its good news!!!

We must tell the world what Christmas is all about!!

Christ is the reason for the season!!!