

A Man Like Simeon

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, December 29, 2019

Main Theme – Considering the biblical character of “Simeon” as this year winds to a conclusion.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Special Events**
 - Men’s Ministry – Saturday, January 11, from 9–10:30am
 - Women’s Ministry – Tuesday, January 14, from 6:30–8pm
 - Week of Prayer-Fasting – January 13–17 (Signups to Come)
- **Annual Business Meeting**

The 2019 Annual Business Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 19, 2020 following the Sunday Service. A slate of candidates qualified to stand for election (for the office of Deacon) has been included in this bulletin and posted in the Fellowship Hall. If your name appears on this list, prayerfully notify the Pastor of your intentions by next Sunday morning. Also, TODAY is the deadline for the submission of Ministry Leader Reports.

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work
 -Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN’S CHURCH**
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INTRODUCTIONS

As always it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you in this FINAL sermon of 2019. Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes.

NOTE – Please turn to Luke 2. We will get there in just a few moments.

SETTING THE STAGE

As I noted in recent weeks, there are some characters that we tend to talk about ONLY in the season leading up to Christmas. For instance, you’ll likely NEVER hear a sermon about Mary and Joseph in the middle of August! However, I do want to talk about a character noted in the Birth Narrative(s) of Christ this morning—even though Christmas is officially behind us.

i.e., This morning I want to talk about a figure named SIMEON (cf. Luke 2).

FYI – Everything that we know about Simeon is DERIVED from a few short verses (i.e., a brief encounter in the earliest days of Jesus’ life). This morning I want to examine this encounter, what it reveals about Simeon, and how his life should inform/impact modern living (as we transition into a New Year).

TO THE WORD

Let’s read through a segment of Luke 2. We will read the text in its entirety and then backtrack.

Luke 2:22–35 (NIV)

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.”

NOTE – Let’s DISSECT this passage—placing special emphasis upon the figure Simeon...

SEGMENT 1

Luke 2:22–24

22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him [Jesus] 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.”

FYI – This passage works to set the stage for this encounter with Simeon. Noteworthy Items:

- 1) A woman who bore a son was deemed ceremonially UNCLEAN for 40 days according to the Law of Moses. After that, she was commanded to offer a lamb and a dove or a pigeon (cf. Lev. 12:6). If POOR, she could offer two doves or pigeons (Lev. 12:8). THUS...
- 2) Mary and Joseph—in obedience to the Law of Moses—went to the Temple in Jerusalem to dedicate their firstborn to God and to bring the required offering for Mary’s purification. The fact that she offered a pair of doves or two young pigeons (v. 24b) v. the traditional lamb, etc., indicated that she was POOR.

SEGMENT 2

Luke 2:25a

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon,...

NOTE – It is at this point that a man in Jerusalem named Simeon APPEARS in the text. We are going to take our time in considering what Scripture has to say about this man. The Bible—in very short order—provides an ARRAY of noteworthy points.

SEGMENT 3

To begin...

Luke 2:25a (Emphasis Mine)

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was **righteous**...

FYI – This passage begins to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items:

1) The biblical record indicates that Simeon was a **RIGHTEOUS** man (i.e., possessed a right-relationship with God). This word/term speaks to the fact that Simeon had ‘judicial approval’ before the Lord (as we’ll note in a moment).

2) This does NOT mean that Simeon was sinless/perfect in himself. He was sinful as we all are:

Romans 3:10, 23

10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one . . . 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

3) This DOES mean that he was **JUSTIFIED** before God—as one who cast himself on the mercy of God by faith (in the pattern of Abraham cf. Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4).

Q. What is justification?

A. It is the declared purpose of God to regard/treat those sinners who believe as if they had never sinned (i.e., ultimately on the merits of Christ’s work). It is an act by which God judicially determines to treat the unrighteous as righteous (predicated upon faith)!

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 God made him [i.e., Christ] who had no sin to be sin [lit. ‘a sin offering’] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

KEY – We know that Simeon was **RIGHTEOUS** (i.e., justified before God by faith).

Q. What else do we know? Let’s continue on in the text...

SEGMENT 4

Luke 2:25 (Emphasis Mine)

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and **devout**.

FYI – This passage continues to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items:

- 1)** The passage calls him DEVOUT (lit. taking hold of that which is good). It is clear from this portion of Scripture that Simeon was a man who showed REVERENCE for the Lord and His ways. This was a man who walked carefully/obediently before God and man!
- 2)** The faith of Simeon (i.e., the basis for his justification) was made MANIFEST in the way in which he lived. This touches upon a significant principle: i.e., lifestyle matters...
- 3)** A biblical FAITH will MANIFEST in a corresponding lifestyle marked by ever-increasing OBEDIENCE, dedication to the Lord and His Word, etc.

Matthew 7:17

17 . . . Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

James 2:17

17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

NOTE – We live in an age where many people say: “I believe in God” (i.e., I acknowledge that He exists.” But such a faith CANNOT save! Consider what the Book of James says on this topic/matter:

James 2:19

19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

NOTE – Ours must be a faith that is accompanied by a corresponding LIFESTYLE of devout living!

KEY – We know that Simeon was DEVOUT (i.e., given to the Lord and His divine ways).

Q. What else do we know? Let’s continue on in the text...

SEGMENT 5

Luke 2:25 (Emphasis Mine)

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. **He was waiting for the consolation of Israel...**

FYI – This passage continues to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items:

- 1)** This was a man who was EXPECTANT (i.e., anticipating; waiting upon; looking for the work of God). His was a life characterized by a sense of HOPE—i.e., that God was going to fulfill His plan and purposes for His people and in this world!
- 2)** And what was the FOCUS of his expectancy? He was waiting for the CONSOLATION of Israel. The concept of ‘consolation’ implies COMFORT. The nation of Israel was waiting for the comfort of God, expecting that He would come to deliver/rescue (as He had done in delivering them from slavery in the days of Moses).
- 3)** As we will touch upon in the moments ahead, this reveals a high degree of BIBLICAL LITERACY in the life of Simeon. He must have been aware—through careful, deliberative study—of texts like Isa. 25:9, 40:1–2 and 66:1–11 (which speak to the consolation of Israel):

Isaiah 40:1–2

1 Comfort, comfort my people,
 says your God.
2 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.

KEY – This was a man who had a sense of HOPEFUL expectation (founded upon Scripture).

Q. What else do we know? Let’s continue on in the text...

SEGMENT 6

Luke 2:25–27a

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...

FYI – This passage continues to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items...

- 1) The HS was upon him. This is a NUANCED word that speaks to his connection with the Spirit:
- 2) Firstly, this was a man who was LED by the Holy Spirit (v. 27):

Luke 2:27a

27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts...

- 2) Secondly, this was a man of PROPHETIC INSIGHT (pertaining to his OWN life) (v. 26):

Luke 2:26

26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

FYI – What kind of personal connection did he have with the Lord to receive such a promise? I can only wonder how long his life was governed by this promise! I LOVE that this man's life was founded upon the personal promise of the Lord (prophetically revealed)!

- 3) Thirdly, this was a man of PROPHETIC INSIGHT (pertaining to God's greater PLAN) (v. 34–35):

Luke 2:34–35

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."

NOTE 1 – Simeon spoke prophetically toward the fact that the Christ would "cause the falling and rising many in Israel" (v. 34a). i.e., To those who rejected Him, Jesus became a stone of stumbling (cf. 1 Pet. 2:8) (judgment); those who believed are raised up (cf. Eph. 2:6) (life eternal and abundant).

NOTE 2 – Simeon spoke prophetically toward the fact that Christ would "be a sign that will be spoken against" (v. 34b). This speaks to the eventual rejection, hatred and Crucifixion of the Messiah.

NOTE 3 – Simeon spoke prophetically toward the fact that Christ would “reveal” the hearts of many (v. 35a). i.e., The rejection of the Christ would reveal the appalling truth about the ungodly, apostate condition of the Jewish nation.

NOTE 4 – Simeon spoke prophetically toward the personal pain Mary would experience (i.e., v. 35b – “a sword will pierce your own soul too”). This serves as a reference to the grief Mary would endure as she watched her own son die in agony (cf. John 19:25).

4) One thing that you often hear is that the age between the closing of the OT record (Malachi) and the dawning of the NT age (Matt) was prophetically SILENT. Overall this is quite true (i.e., that interval of time was simply NOT marked by great prophetic activity). Yet, Simeon was truly EXCEPTIONAL in an ungodly age, serving as a prophetic voice in the midst of great darkness!

KEY – He was a deeply SPIRITUAL man (e.g., led of the Spirit; prophetic unction & promise, etc.)

Q. What else do we know? Let’s continue on in the text...

SEGMENT 7

Luke 2:27b–32

27 . . . 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.”

FYI – This passage continues to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items...

1) Simeon was a man of deep BIBLICAL understanding. Simeon’s words assert that a) Jesus would be the salvation of the world; b) He would deliver truth not only to those in Israel but also to the Gentiles; and c) Jesus would be the glory of the people of Israel.

2) Why is this so profound? It took decades for many to realize that the work of Christ was not limited to one people/group. Even after the Resurrection of Christ and years after Pentecost, the Early Church thought the Gospel was for the Jews ALONE. It’s not until mid-way into the Book of Acts that the apostles realized God loved the Gentiles too.

Yet Simeon knew it all along (based upon clear but resented OT teaching cf. Jonah, Isaiah, etc.)!

KEY – This was a deeply insightful man who knew the Lord, His Spirit and the WORD of God!

SEGMENT 8

Luke 2:27b–30

27 . . . 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,

FYI – This passage continues to reveal the spiritual character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items...

- 1) This text reveals that Simeon was prepared to meet eternity.
- 2) Many live in great fear of death. Simeon, however, was READY to enter into eternity when God’s great work for him in this life was over! There is something to be said for that kind of faith and peace.

KEY – This was a man READY for eternity when his life’s mission was complete!

SEGMENT 9

Luke 2:33 (Emphasis Mine)

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

FYI – Finally, this text adds one more detail to the character of Simeon. NOTEWORTHY items...

- 1) He was impacting. His life and words—as he was led of the Spirit of God—caused people to think deeply about the things of God (i.e., ‘marveled’ is lit. ‘to be amazed or astonished’). Perhaps Mary and Joseph had not yet considered the truly global impact Christ would have...
- 2) ...But one thing is for sure—they would NEVER be the same after one conversation with Simeon. They were IMPACTED for time and for eternity!

SUMMATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

NOTE – I have touched upon the CHARACTER/NATURE of Simeon at some length:

- 1) He was righteous (justified before God by faith alone)
- 2) He was devout (given to a life of reverential obedience)
- 3) He was expectant (anticipatory re: the works of the Lord)
- 4) He was led of the H. Spirit (his life was particularly guided)
- 5) He had personal prophetic insight (governing per. promises)
- 6) He was given to prophetic utterance (spoke as an oracle of God)
- 7) He had a deep biblical understanding (insight that surpassed many)
- 8) He had incredible impact upon people (people were “never” the same)
- 9) He was ready to meet the Lord in eternity (prepared to pass from life to life)

Q. Pastor, why have you spent so long touching upon this character from centuries past?

A. Because I believe that the attributes of Simeon SHOULD inform and impact how WE live.

i.e., It would be a good thing if what was said of Simeon was ALSO said of US! As we bring one year to a CLOSE and prepare to ENTER into another, let us resolve to...

- 1) Embrace the righteousness afforded in Christ
- 2) Live lives that are characterized by reverential devotion
- 3) Embrace a sense of “hope-filled” expectancy and anticipation
- 4) Submit to the leading/guidance of the Holy Spirit (acts & activities)
- 5) Seek personal prophetic insight (pursuit of governing personal promises)
- 6) Function as oracles of God (to herald what He would have us proclaim)
- 7) Delve deeper into the Word of God (consistent study—“deepening”)
- 8) Operate as forces of spiritual impact (positive influence on others)
- 9) Ready ourselves for eternity (“not ready to live→ready to die”)