



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of Expectation!

Luke 2:21-40

Message #6 of 50 – S778

Sermon given on February 11, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

A Story of Expectation!

Luke 2:21-40

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 2**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- The gospel of Luke details the stories of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Sometimes the stories of our life don't turn out the way we want them to - I have come to realize – that is life!
- As Christians, Jesus promised us a good life **John 10:10b**
I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
- We are going to see two people this morning whose lives probably didn't go the way they wanted to, but they still expected good to come into their lives
- And their lives and attitudes can help us to expect better in our lives
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of Expectation!**
- Last time we looked at the Christmas story – the Incarnation
- God took on human flesh and came into the world as a helpless baby
- Imagine that – God as a helpless baby
- We learn a number of things about Joseph and Mary as we study through these first couple of chapters
- They were people of faith – God spoke to them through the angel Gabriel and they believed and responded
- We see next that they were good Jews – they follow the commands of Scripture
- **Luke 2:21**
- Circumcision was so important to the Jews that it was even allowed to be done on the Sabbath
- It dates back to Abraham and was commanded in the Law **Leviticus 12:1-3**

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised...’”

- Circumcision was the sign of God’s covenant with the Jewish people
- At this ceremony, the Child’s name is announced – Jesus = Joshua = Jehovah is salvation
- When the angel of the Lord was speaking to Joseph **Matthew 1:21**
And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.
- Jesus came to save people from their sins
- It seems that Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem for a while after Jesus was born
- **Luke 2:22-24**
- ‘firstborn son...holy to the Lord’
- The word ‘holy’ = ‘devoted to service to the God of Israel’
- Jesus came to do what the Lord wanted **John 8:28-29**
Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”
- Verse 24 is why we say that Joseph and Mary were poor
- Two turtledoves or pigeons was the minimum that could be offered in this ritual
- The usual sacrifice was a lamb and a bird
- Interesting contrast – this couple tasked with raising Jesus – the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world cannot even afford a lamb to sacrifice on His behalf
- So, Joseph and Mary bring the Baby Jesus to the temple to do their religious duty and have two interesting encounters
- **Luke 2:25-26**
- ‘Consolation of Israel’ = the Messiah
- Simeon was expecting the Messiah and had gotten a revelation from the Holy Spirit that he would lay eyes on the Messiah before he died
- **Luke 2:27-33**
- Simeon may have been a priest, or he may have just been there to worship God

- But upon seeing the Baby Jesus, he sensed that God’s promise had been fulfilled
 - Imagine what Mary must have thought as this strange old man asked to hold her forty-day old baby
 - Look again at verse 30 – ‘my eyes have seen your salvation’
 - As Simeon looked down into the face of this tiny baby, he was looking at God’s salvation
 - Jesus is salvation – **H. A. Ironside**
- If you would see God’s salvation you must see the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ
 - Speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Simeon speaks of the significance of this Child
 - **Luke 2:34-35**
 - ‘fall and rising’ are two interesting words
 - ‘fall’ has the idea of worsening circumstances. Up and including destruction
 - ‘rising’ is the opposite – causing to rise up – this word is also used to describe resurrection
 - The story of Jesus’ life demands a decision. There is no middle ground with Jesus. You are either for Him or against Him. And that decision has eternal consequences. That makes our telling of His story much more important.
 - Simeon concludes his time in the Scriptures with a couple more things
 - I wonder what Mary thought about Simeon comment to her
 - If you remember **Luke 1:48b**
- For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.**
- Simeon was given a sense of something that Mary didn’t know
 - The future held something for her Son that would cut her in two
 - Not only was she blessed to carry and mother the Savior of the world, but she would watch as He sacrificed Himself on a cruel wooden cross
 - As Mary tries to grapple with what Simeon said, another character enters the scene
 - **Luke 2:36-37**
 - In many ways her story is tragic – seven years after she was married, her husband died, and she never remarried

- The phrase ‘a widow of about eighty-four years’ could mean she is 84 years old or that she has been a widow for 84 years – she is old
- In her early twenties, Anna’s story changed, she became a widow
- And while her story changed, it didn’t end
- At some point she ended up at the temple in Jerusalem
- And there she found a way to serve God
- She fasted and prayed night and day – whenever the doors of the temple were open, she was there
- Fasting = going without food for religious purposes
- Praying – interceding to God on behalf of others, or her nation
- Many people might look down upon Anna’s ministry, but God esteemed it enough to make sure it was recorded in the Bible forever
- God made you to do something **Ephesians 2:10**
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- Anna is an example to all of us that we are not too old to be used by God
- Anna’s example is also convicting – this old woman is serving God night and day – Am I doing what I should? – giving God my best?
- Anna also witnesses the dedication of the Baby Jesus
- **Luke 2:38**
- We don’t know how long that Anna served in the temple before this happened, but the sense is that it was for a long time
- She had been praying for redemption – liberation, deliverance
- Go back a couple of pages – Zacharias expressed the hope of Israel
- **Luke 1:68-75**
- Seeing the Baby Jesus, and hearing the words of Simeon, she knew that the hope of redemption was in that Child
- Anna had a new story – that redemption – or salvation was at hand
- She told her story to ‘all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem’
- God had promised to redeem or save His people – people came to Jerusalem hoping in God’s promises

- Anna had a new ministry – to share the story of Jesus – God kept His promise by sending Jesus to save them from the greatest enemy of all – their own sins
- Simeon and Anna appear only briefly in the story of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, but their stories echo through time
- Your story may not be a famous portion of the story of what God is doing in the world, but it no less important than Simeon’s or Anna’s
- Luke concludes this section with a brief narrative of the family’s next move
- **Luke 2:39-40**
- Interestingly, Luke leaves out the account of the wise men and the family traveling to Egypt – don’t know why
- ‘the Child grew and became strong in spirit’
- Speaks of Christ’s humanity – Jesus was God in the flesh, but He was a man – He went through all the same things growing up that we did – He just did it without sin
- The story of Simeon and Anna is one of expectation – they expected God to do what He said He was going to do
- From their stories I see three keys to making our own stories like theirs
- First key – They were **Engaged** with God
- It says of Simeon that he was just and devout
- ‘just’ = right with God – not perfect – he dealt with any issues/sins
- He repented of his sins, and focused on doing what was right
- ‘devout’ = Simeon took his faith seriously – not just something he did on Sunday mornings
- Of Anna, it says she served God night and day
- Even in her old age she found a way to serve God
- To get engaged – repent of your sins – take your faith seriously – find a way and place to serve God
- Second key – They were **Expecting** God to act
- The fact that they were both in the temple the day Jesus’ parents brought was not some religious exercise
- They believed God and they responded to what they believed
- Need to know what God is going to do – read the Bible

- Need to believe what you know about what God is going to do
- Need to act upon what you believe
- It doesn't matter what you know and believe if those things don't show up in how you live your life
- Third and final key – They were **Enabled** to wait for God to act
- It says of Simeon that he was filled with the Holy Spirit
- It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to live the Christian life in a way that pleases God, blesses others and grows our faith
- He enables us to engage with God – to do what is right – to repent – to serve
- He enables us to wait for God to act – by helping us to know, believe, and act upon what God has said
- And the more we allow the enabling of the Holy Spirit, the more we are able to engage with God and wait in expectation of what He said
- Both Simeon and Anna allowed the Holy Spirit to write their story
- They played the parts that God gave them in the story of His redemption of the world
- You have a part in God's story
- As a Christian – your story is a part of Jesus' story – what does your story say about Jesus?
- Get engaged with God – Expect God to do what He said – and allow the Holy Spirit to enable you to live a life that adds to the story of Jesus
- We are going to partake of Communion – ask the Holy Spirit if you need to work on any of those things