

The Parish of Wellow

Simeon

Luke 2:22-40

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Passage

Luke 2:22-40 - NIV

22 When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, 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 upon him.
26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
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 now dismiss your servant in peace.
30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to 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."
36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,
37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.
38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.
39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.
40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

2. Sermon Notes

3 character traits of Simeon:

- i. He is a man of PERSEVERANCE (verse 26)
- ii. He is a man of PERCEPTION (verse 27)
- iii. He delivers an important PROPHETIC message (verses 29-32)

2.1 Simeon a man of PERSEVERANCE (verse 26)

- God promises Simeon that he will see 'The Lord's Messiah' before he dies.
- Simeon is clearly a man of significant age as God's promise of seeing the Lord's Messiah comes after much waiting and perseverance.
- Simeon does not give up on God but trusts God to fulfil his promise even if that requires great perseverance from Simeon.
- Simeon's perseverance pays off and the greatest day in his life is when he holds God's only son in his arms.

2.3 Simeon a man of PERCEPTION (verse 27)

- Simeon is a man close to God and his perception comes from being attuned to the Holy Spirit.
- When Jesus was brought into the Temple, Simeon wasn't there. However, Luke tells us that "Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts."
- We too, like Simeon can develop a Godly perception by being in tune with the Holy Spirit through prayer and by living our lives according to the principals set down in The Bible.

2.4 Simeon delivers an important PROPHETIC message (verses 29-32)

- As Simeon holds Jesus in his arms, he expresses his delight in the words of the Nunc Dimittis.
- In these words Simeon recognises Jesus as Messiah but he also receives a special prophetic word about the role of the Messiah: Jesus will be 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles'
- This news from God would have come as a shock to Simeon as it was going to be a shock to all Jews.
- The Jews were expecting an all conquering Messiah to come. One who would set them free and boot the hated Romans out of their land. He was their Messiah and in their eyes no one else was worthy of him.
- The thought that salvation was going to be available to the Gentiles as well as the Jews was going to require a mega change in the Jewish mindset.
- But then prophecy - the revelation of God - often requires us to change of our preconceptions.

2.5 Simeon's Prophecy continues (verses 34 and 35)

- Simon tells Mary that Jesus far from being a quick-fix -all conquering hero-Messiah that the Jews wanted, Jesus was destined to be a stumbling block for many in Israel, who would reject his divine claims.
- And then Simeon prepares Mary for the Cross: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too."
- Here at the beginning of Jesus' life we get a second glimpse of the Cross, our first having been given with the gift of Myrrh presented to Jesus by one of the Magi. (Myrrh is a bitter, aromatic, transparent gum exuded from the bark of various trees and shrubs that are native to Africa and southern Asia and its main use was to embalm the dead)

Candlemas is the turning point from Christmas to Easter. A time when we leave the joy of remembering Jesus' birth and prepare ourselves for the Cross through Lent.

2.6 In conclusion may the:

- PERSEVERANCE of Simeon be a challenge to us to listen and believe God's word, even if it seems that God is taking an inordinately long time in producing the goods.
- PERCEPTION of Simeon be a challenge to us to draw close to God in regular prayer and Bible Study
- PROPHETIC Message of Simeon be a challenge to us to be more open and to change our preconceptions in response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

3. Questions to consider

3.1 How easily do you give up on people or situations? Is God challenging you today to persevere with a certain individual or group? Or is God asking you to persevere in a certain situation?

3.2 When was the last occasion that you spent time outside of a Sunday drawing close to God in prayer or Bible Study? Is God encouraging you to do this more? You could use these weekly notes as a way of drawing close to God in the middle of the week.

3.3 Simeon would have been profoundly shocked by what God had in store for the Gentiles and the Jews, he could so easily have denied God's message because it did not fit his mind set. How open are you to change? Is change something you embrace or is it something you resist at all costs? Is God calling you today to radically change your mind about something?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293.