

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park and Faith Family

Title: Like Simeon and Anna

Lesson: Luke 2:22-39

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

Good morning Church! I hope you had a blessed Christmas with your precious families and friends. Today is the first Sunday after Christmas and the last Sunday of this year. From big social issues to personal issues, so many things happened this year. I hope we can close our eyes for a moment and look back on this year.

We are waiting for this coming new year with expectation. The bible defines God's people as those waiting. Especially, those waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise.

According to a commentary, Abraham, spiritual ancestor of all believers, had waited 25 years for his son Isaac God had promised. God's promise to give His people the land of Canaan was fulfilled 430 years later. Like this, God's people can be defined as those waiting for the fulfillment of His promise. We feel happy when waiting is achieved in anticipation. Today's gospel lesson describes the attitude of those waiting for His promise.

According to verse 25, "there was a man named Simeon in Jerusalem. The Bible describes him as righteous and devout, and he eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him." When baby Jesus was born, it was 500 years later after prophet Isaiah predicted the coming of the Messiah and 400 years later after Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament. After the prophets, the Israelites had experienced a dark age where they could not hear God's voice during 400 years. They would have waited in the beginning for the Messiah to save all human beings according to the prophets, but 1 year later, 2 years later, 10 years later, and 40 years later, the promise about the coming of Messiah was not fulfilled, so they gradually forgot the promise or they may have given up on the fulfillment of the promise. However, there were people who waited all their lives for the promise. One of them was the man named Simeon.

His life shows to us how to wait for God's promise. He was devout. If we wait for a long time for something that doesn't happen, we get tired and sometimes we may want to give up. But the Bible tells that he lived his whole life devoutly and holy, waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. He lived hard, waiting for the promise to come true. He didn't waste his time. Beloved, like this, I hope we will try to live devoutly and holy and faithfully constantly as the people of God who are waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise. In verse 26, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. We can know that he was waiting and he had the conviction of faith received from the Holy Spirit. As a

result of waiting faithfully for the promise, he met Jesus Christ, who came to earth as Messiah.

Beloved, I know you already have many plans and expectations as the New Year approaches. So, I'd like to ask you, "What are you waiting for?" "What do you want to accomplish in your life?" "How are you waiting for the promise of God?" "Do the plans and hopes belong to God or your desires?"

Verse 36-37 tells that there was also a prophet, Anna. She was very old. After she married, she lived with her husband for seven years. Now she was an eighty-four year old widow. She never left the temple area but worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day. Unlike the three Gospels, women and children appear in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew, Mark and John do not usually introduce women and children, but the kingdom of heaven of the author of Luke includes men and women, adults and children, and the elderly.

According to verse 38, she waited for the fulfillment of the promise faithfully and approached at that very moment. Likewise, we will be able to experience the fulfillment of God's promise as well when we live faithfully and devoutly day by day. May you realize what God wants from you in anticipation and waiting for the New Year and live holy and faithfully night and day. Amen.