

## For Those Looking Forward

2025-12-28 – Luke 2:21-40



The good news of the Gospel promises comfort now and for all eternity for all who believe. Come join us as we look at how the Lord used the testimony of two faithful people to reveal to us how he fulfills His promises.

Well, good morning, everyone. Merry Christmas. You know, for some of you, the day after Christmas is the day that you look forward to for a long time because you won't have to listen to Mariah Carey for like 11 months. My son is already looking forward to next Christmas as he shows us what's on the boxes of what he got on Christmas Day and says, "Hey, why'd the box show this, but I only got this?" He hasn't yet learned advertising and marketing.

But I wonder, what are the things that you look forward to? There are many things that we should look forward to, and in fact, the posture that we should have as believers is one of looking forward. When we talk about Advent, when we talk about the first coming of Jesus, for those who were faithful and righteous before the Lord, they were waiting on the Lord to send the Messiah. And once he has come, you may think that the waiting is over, and yet, near the end of Jesus's ministry, after his death and resurrection, the disciples are up on a mountain with him. And while he was with them, they were asking him if he was going to bring about the kingdom of God. They said, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" They said, "Is this the end? Are you coming? Is this the day of the Lord?"

And Jesus responded, ***"It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, unto the ends of the earth."*** (Acts 1:7–8) ***And after he said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him from their sight. While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."*** From this point, they returned, and they go, and they begin the ministry of the Christian church.

For us today, the looking forward to the coming of Jesus—we're not looking forward to his first coming, but his second coming. If you're a believer, every time we take communion, we read, most of the time, ***"Whenever you take this, you remember his death until he returns."*** (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:26) And as we talk about his return, we are talking about faithfully looking forward to his second coming. And there is a lot we can learn about his second coming and how to faithfully look forward to it when we look at those who were there at his first coming.

### **How to Faithfully Look Forward**

Today, if you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Luke 2, verses 21 through 40. We're going to meet two people named Simeon and Anna who were faithfully looking forward to the first coming of Jesus. And from how they regarded him, and from their posture towards him, and their faith in the Lord,

we are going to see things that we can take as we wait on the Lord, because we are still waiting on his coming.

We still live in a world that is not at peace, though if you are a believer, you are at peace with God. We are in a world that is fallen and broken. I've had a mixture of joy at the Lord answering prayers and sorrow at the state of the world this week because in Nigeria the Christians who were being persecuted we saw through the US the Lord acted to stop some of that persecution and I rejoice but I also mourn that it comes at the cost of the sword in this life because what would be better is if every knee bowed and every tongue confessed that Jesus is Lord. Someday there will be peace and it won't come at the edge of a sword but at the judgment of Jesus because he is coming to judge the living and the dead. And for you if you are a believer this is good news that we should be faithfully looking forward to. And if you're here today and you're not a believer this passage is a warning and that the whole of scripture is a warning because for those who don't believe when Jesus returns he will judge the living and the dead. And for those who believe and who look forward to his return, we will spend eternity with him. And for those who reject the message of the gospel, you will spend eternity in hell. And so I pray that you are faithfully looking forward to his return and that you have found salvation in his name.

And to that end, let me open us in prayer.

*Father in heaven, we thank you that you sent your Son. We thank you that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We thank you that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, and he came in the form of a baby. He lived a perfect life. He died on the cross for our sins. He rose from the grave. He ascended into heaven where he reigns. And we thank you, Lord, that for all who look forward to his return, we will not be disappointed. We will spend eternity with him and with you at peace with you because of the blood of your son.*

*Father I pray right now that your spirit would be moving in our midst that you would give us all eyes to see and ears to hear what your word has to say. Father I pray you would speak to me and speak through me that these would be your words and not mine. And we pray all of this in the name of your son, in the name of the Messiah, Jesus Christ it's in his name we pray amen.*

Well, we're looking today at **How to faithfully look forward**. And to do that, we're going to be in Luke 2, 21 through about 40. And as we read, we're going to be introduced to Simeon and Anna, two people who were faithfully looking forward to the coming of the king. And from them, we're going to see three things that we can learn.

#### **How to Faithfully Look Forward**

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return

And the first thing we should take from this passage is that when we long for peace, we should remember that he has come and will return. When you long for peace, remember he has come and he will return. Amen.

**When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return**

When the eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus—the name given by the angel before he was conceived. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, (Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord) and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons).

Luke 2:21-24 CSB

***When the eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord*** (Luke 2:21–22) ***and to offer the sacrifice.*** Now in parentheses there, it talks about the fact that Mary and Joseph are offering sacrifices that in that day would have been required according to the law to be pure before the Lord. They show themselves to be righteous before the Lord in each and every moment that we see them in the early life of Jesus. We're to commend Mary and Joseph. Joseph could have divorced Mary when he found out she was pregnant, but because of a vision from the Lord, he was a righteous man and stayed with her. Mary, when she hears she will be pregnant, says, "Lord, I am your servant." In both of them, we see two people who are trying to follow the Lord well and succeeding.

Now, in this passage, we learn a few things. First and foremost, if you remember a week ago, we looked at the birth and circumcision of John the Baptist. And if you remember, there was a flood of people. The whole community gathered to celebrate, and they were all arguing about what should we name John. They didn't want to name him John, but Elizabeth and Zechariah made sure he got the name that Gabriel had said would be his name. But the whole community was there because they knew there was something special about this child.

There's nothing in this passage about the eighth day of Jesus' life outside of they did what they were supposed to do. It's a reminder of the obscurity of which he entered the world, and not just obscurity, but the humble way in which he entered the world, because when it talks about the sacrifice, it says, stated in the law, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. The law actually says a lamb and a pigeon or a dove, but for those who can't afford it, two doves or two young pigeons. And this is an important note, because when you read it, it's just a reminder of the humble way our King entered the world. If you had the Son of God coming into your household, you'd scrape every penny together to have a good sacrifice, right? Like, I mean, for Christmas, we ate a giant steak at my house. Like, you know, if he was coming into your house, but this was what they could afford. And it is a reminder of the humble origins of Christ.

**When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return**

There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, **looking forward to** Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah.

Luke 2:25-26 CSB

As we keep reading, we're introduced to Simeon. ***Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah.*** (Luke 2:25–

26) Now the sermon is called **How to Faithfully Look Forward**. And it's because of the word that is here in the Greek for looking forward to.

**looking forward to – *prosdexomai***

to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event

*Louw-Nida*

**Looking forward to here means to remain in a place and/or state with expectancy concerning a future event.** It's a word that carries with it hope that God will carry out his promise and waiting on that. We are not told how old Simeon is in this passage, but we should read this as this man is well along in years. When he speaks, we're going to hear him say, "All right, Lord, I can die in peace now." He's advanced in age, he has been waiting on the Lord, and the Lord shows him what he has been waiting on.

This language of **looking forward to**—why do I spend so much time on it? Well, it's a very rare word in all of the New Testament. Luke uses it five (5) times in the Gospel of Luke and a few times in the book of Acts. He uses it more than half the times it shows up in Scripture. It's a unique word in Luke's writing because it is always in reference to waiting on the Lord to deliver.

**looking forward to – *prosdexomai***

to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event

*Louw-Nida*

You are to be **like people waiting for** their master to return from the wedding banquet so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. Blessed will be those servants the master finds alert when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will get ready, have them recline at the table, then come and serve them.

Luke 12:36-37 CSB

In Luke chapter 12 the first time it comes up after Luke 2 Jesus is talking to his disciples and he says you are to be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet. You are to be people placed in a household waiting for your master to return expectantly, waiting in a way that shows faithfulness. **"You're to be people waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once."** (Luke 12:36) Now in that day, if you were a servant in a household, if you've ever seen Downton Abbey, you know that when the people get back in, the whole household, everything they do—I've only watched like one episode, so just, I'm gonna butcher this to those of you who are fans of the show, but the people, you know, like they take their coat off and they hold it and the person grabs, you know, like the master comes in and the people are ready to serve in every way the master upon their return. That's how we are to wait on the Lord.

And here's the beauty of this passage. **"Blessed will be those servants the master finds alert when he comes. Truly, I tell you, he will get ready and then have them recline at the table, then come and serve them."\*** (Luke 12:37) The deep irony is for those who are looking for the Lord and faithfully walking in obedience. In the end, it will not be they who serve him, but he who serves them. This is Jesus washing the disciples' feet. This is Jesus caring for those who are his, restoring them. This is the book of Acts, turning the world upside

down as he who was the highest of high humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross for those who would follow him.

**looking forward to – *prosdexomai***

to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event

*Louw-Nida*

All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man **welcomes** sinners and eats with them."

Luke 15:1-2 CSB

The next instance is in Luke 15. This is the passage about the lost coin, the lost sheep and the prodigal son. **All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."** (Luke 15:1–2) And the irony here is you may say, well, this man looking forward to sinners and eats with them? No, it's an incredibly weird verb in this case because it's passive towards those he is welcoming. The idea is this man allows them to look forward to him when he eats with them. He allows those that the Pharisees would have said, they are not welcome in the kingdom because they are not good enough for the kingdom. He allows them to long and look forward to the kingdom of God.

**looking forward to – *prosdexomai***

to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event

*Louw-Nida*

There was a good and righteous man named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, who had not agreed with their plan and action. He was from Arimathea, a Judean town, and **was looking forward to** the kingdom of God.

Luke 23:50-51 CSB

Joseph of Arimathea, who is a member of the Sanhedrin, this is in Luke 23. He was one who was looking forward to the kingdom of God. He rejected what the other Pharisees were doing when they put Jesus on the cross through the Roman government. He's the one Jesus has buried in his tomb, you know. And he was looking forward to the kingdom.

**looking forward to – *prosdexomai***

to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event

*Louw-Nida*

*Each mention of this word in the Gospel of Luke is tied to those seeking to wait on the Lord faithfully, or those longing to be allowed to be among those who wait on the Lord, and in all five uses the Lord remembered and revealed the truth to all who looked forward to the Messiah's coming.*

In each instance in the Gospel of Luke that we see this word, it's tied to those seeking to wait on the Lord faithfully or those longing to be allowed among those who wait on the Lord. And in all five uses, the Lord remembered and revealed the truth to all who looked forward to the Messiah's coming. When we talk

about looking forward to in scripture, for those who faithfully wait upon the Lord, for those who trust in him, for those who long for what only he can bring, they will be satisfied.

My grandma Caroline, I've talked about her before, but when she was 15, she heard the gospel at a tent revival in Omaha, Nebraska. And she wanted to go up front at the end for the altar call. And her ride said, "If you go up front, we're leaving you here." And she left with her friend. And she spent 70 years of her life regretting that moment. And when she was 85, it was right around 85 she's actually she's at my parents house and I was living there it was before Jess and I got married I was in my 20s and we were talking to each other and as we were talking she said "What is it all coming to" and I said "Well I don't know what it's all coming to and that it just keeps getting worse and worse. I know what the ultimate end is" and I started to share the gospel with her and as I shared it with her she told me "My whole life I have longed for this, but I know I missed it, because when I was 15, I didn't go up front." And I remember just sitting there in awe, because if you would have asked me, I would have told you my grandma was the holiest woman I knew, the most righteous woman I knew. She didn't really talk about the Bible, but she did everything she could to love and care for people. She desperately wanted to please God. And 70 years of her life, her testimony was, "I know this isn't enough." And yet when she heard the gospel, we sat there, she said, "I want to follow Jesus." And in that moment, she became a believer. And on the other side of that, she was still kind-hearted. She also told anyone who would listen about Jesus Christ. Because for those who are looking forward to the kingdom, looking for the kingdom, God will show them it. It is such a beautiful thing when we see people come to know the Lord. And for those looking forward to God to work, to save, they will not be disappointed.

**When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return**

There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, **looking forward to** Israel's **consolation**, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah.

Luke 2:25-26 CSB

The language here is looking forward to Israel's consolation. It's Israel's comfort. It's language of Isaiah 52 and language of Isaiah 25, where the promise is that God will bring salvation and deliver his people. It's language that for those who trust in the Lord, ultimately they will have peace before him. It's language that though we have been separated from God by our sin, he will make a way for us to return to him because salvation belongs to the Lord.

**When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return**

**Guided by the Spirit**, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law, Simeon **took him up** in his arms, praised God, and said,

Luke 2:27-28 CSB

And so **guided by the Spirit, Simeon enters the temple**. Now this is important to note, guided by the Spirit, this is Old Testament language still because Jesus has not died and risen. We have not seen the Pentecost. But in the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord would come on people and guide them and lead them. We see this with David. We see this with Saul for a season. We see this with prophets and others. But on the other side of the resurrection and at the Pentecost, we see that the Spirit no longer merely comes on us, but is in us. And so there's more today, but in this day, we see that God is guiding through the work of the Holy Spirit, Simeon.

**And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,** (Luke 2:28) And I'm going to pause here and be really nerdy about the Greek for a moment. I spent all that time on prosdechomai, **looking forward to**. It's a weird word in Greek. It's not the normal word. If you were listening to the Gospel of Luke in Greek, when it said the **looking forward to** word in Greek, you would go, "What?" And you'd have to like register in your head. It's not the normal framing of the word. And then a few verses later, when it says Simeon took him up in his arms, the language here, pros dexomai, pros is to, **looking forward to**, and dexomai is receiving. Pros dexomai is **looking forward to** receiving from God. And here it's just dexomai, which is the receiving. And you're saying, "Pastor Matt, I don't need to know this Greek." You don't need to know this Greek. But if you lived in the first century and if you heard the Gospel of Luke in the Greek, when you heard prosdechomai and then heard it say Simeon dechomai took him, it is literally he has been longing for, He has received. In his hands now is the thing he has been waiting for his entire life.

The language in this moment is so hard to bring to English, but in Greek it's like a trumpet blaring and going, da da da da da da da. Thank you. I didn't plan to do that. I'm glad I did now. But the point here is this moment is one of those moments in scripture where everything he has been waiting on from God most high, is 7 to 10 pounds in his hands. In the language of receiving, if you've ever been around a mother of a newborn and you go, "Let me have your baby," right? Like that's a, "No, hand sanitizer, please. Are you sick? Are you?" No, but the fact that he has him and the language used here is such unusual language. But in this day, when he takes him up and begins to praise God, before we even get to what he says, the trumpets are already ringing.

**When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return**

Now, **Master**, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised.

For my **eyes** have seen **your salvation**.

You have prepared it in the presence of **all peoples**—  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and glory to your people Israel.

Luke 2:29-32 CSB

And here's what he says. "**Now, master, you can dismiss your servant in peace as you promised.** And that word **master**, it is a unique word. It is a word for the one who is **master** above all. In Luke chapter 1, we are told that Jesus is going to be the Son of the Most High. In Luke chapter 1, we are told that John will be the prophet of the Son of the Most High. And now he, Simeon, is talking **master**, your servant is at peace. He's saying, I have seen everything I need. As you promised, **For my eyes have seen your salvation. You have prepared in the presence of all people a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.**" (Luke 2:29–32) Simeon here is saying, everything I have hoped for and everything you have promised is this 7 to 10 pound baby in my hands. God became flesh and dwelt among us. And through him we have salvation. And in this moment, in Simeon's words, there's an echo here.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald,  
    who proclaims peace, who brings news of good things,  
    who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"  
The voices of your watchmen— they lift up their voices,  
    shouting for joy together;  
for every eye will see when the Lord returns to Zion.  
Be joyful, rejoice together,  
    you ruins of Jerusalem!  
For the Lord **has comforted** his people;  
    he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The Lord has displayed his holy arm in the sight of **all the nations**;  
    all the ends of the earth will see the **salvation** of our God.

Isaiah 52:7-10 CSB

Because these words, if you go to Isaiah 52, the language of eyes and salvation and for all peoples, the language even of comfort and consolation. In Isaiah 52, "*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald who proclaims peace and who brings news of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' The voices of your watchmen, they lift up their voices, shouting for joy together. For every eye will see when the Lord returns to Zion.*" Now that language of watchmen is those who are looking forward too.

*Be joyful, rejoice together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has displayed his holy arm in the sight of all the nations. All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.*" (Isaiah 52:7–10) With the words of Simeon, he is saying that the Messiah that was promised and the good news about that Messiah, he has come.

### How to Faithfully Look Forward

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return

So when you look for peace, remember he has come and will return. Because as we look to faithfully look forward, the starting point is we need to know what we're looking forward to. And we're looking forward to the one who has already brought salvation. If we don't think he has already brought salvation, we miss the point of the gospel because he has already died for our sins and he rose and he reigns. In this life, the theological term for us on this side of the cross, waiting for his second coming, it's already, but not yet. We have received his salvation. We have the Holy Spirit. When God looks at us, he sees us as righteous before him, not clothed in our righteousness, but clothed in the righteousness that comes from Jesus, because our sins are forgiven by his blood. For all who believe in this life, we have been made right before God. We have peace with God.

And you may say, "Pastor Matt, you say I have peace with God, but I have doubt, I have sin, I have struggles, I have strife. I feel like I can never do what I hope to do." You're in good company because Paul talks about it. "My mind is willing, my body is weak." Paul talks about "I had a thorn in my side and I prayed and God said, my grace is sufficient in your weakness." The reality is in this life that we are not going to perfectly carry out the gospel, but the reality is also that when God sees us, he sees us as his holy children redeemed by the blood of Christ. That means that in this life, as we look forward to his second coming we don't need to look forward to it saying that then we'll be at peace with him because we already are. Now we still, inside of that, need to seek to walk in obedience, to walk faithfully before him. That's what Simeon does his whole life, and that's what Anna will do as we keep reading. But when you long for peace, remember

he has come and will return. We are waiting on his second coming, but we know the outcome of his first coming. He died, he rose, he reigns. We have received the Spirit through the work of his blood, through his death on the cross.

**How to Faithfully Look Forward**

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return  
When you face trials, trust His finished work is not undone

This brings us to our second point. **When you face trials, trust his finished work is not undone.** As we long for peace, as we recognize we have peace before God, the reality in this life is we will face struggles. Some are self-imposed because of our pride and sin, and some come about because this world is evil and full of darkness.

**When you face trials, trust His finished work is not undone**

His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary, "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed—and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Luke 2:33-35 CSB

When we face trials, we must trust his finished work is not undone.

After Simeon says these things, *his father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary, "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, Mary—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* (Luke 2:33–35)

Now, in these words, for the first time we see in the Gospel of Luke, not just triumph at the first coming of the Messiah. Everything so far, the birth announcement to Zechariah about John, the birth announcement to Mary, the response of Mary, the response of Zechariah, the angels, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to all whom God's favor rests." All of that has been incredibly joyful.

And now for the first time, we see a reality. The coming of the Messiah, you would expect everything to just go well. But many are going to fall. Many like Pharisees who say he welcomed sinners and tax collectors. You see, they thought by their righteousness they were ready for God to dwell in their midst. They probably said, "Well, I'm not that righteous," but what they meant is, "I'm not that righteous, but look at all those people I'm more righteous than." Their comparative theology put them in their minds up as close to God as a human could be. And yet it was those who were humble that the promises they will be the ones to rise. And Jesus will be a sign that will be opposed. This is the first hint in the Gospel of Luke about his coming death, because he will be opposed. The Messiah coming into the world will be opposed by his own people. The light entered the world, and the world loved darkness, and they rejected him. But of course, what they intended for evil, God used for good through his son's death and resurrection.

To Mary, Simeon says, "**And a sword will pierce your own soul.**" And there's a couple elements of this that throughout church history have been argued. First and foremost, this clearly speaks of the anguish of her son dying on the cross, the son of God dying a criminal's death, crucified. There's also an element of this

in the Gospel of Luke where Mary multiple times is going to try and interact with Jesus in Luke 8, and we see another in Luke 12 where there's a reality that Mary expresses doubt. Her and Jesus' brothers, they come to Jesus and they want to talk to him. And he says, "Who are my mother and children, or mother and brothers and sisters, but those who follow the Lord?" There's a reality here that this passage, your son is the Messiah, the son of God, you know of the virgin birth, but you're still going to have some measure of doubt about him. Because Mary, just like all of us, is a sinner in need of a savior. ***But ultimately, the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed through the ministry of Jesus. Jesus Christ***, the judge of the living and the dead, will be salvation to those who stand humbly before him. And for those who seek in their own pride to stand before him, they will fall and spend eternity separated from him.

**How to Faithfully Look Forward**

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return  
When you face trials, trust His finished work is not undone

When you face trials, you must trust his finished work is not undone. For us today, when you face trials in this life, the gospel, when Jesus dies and rises and ascends to heaven and the Holy Spirit comes down, in the book of Acts, what we see is that the early church as they explode in numbers very, very quickly, they also begin to have deep, deep struggles. The Romans don't like what they're saying because Caesar is God and king, not Jesus. How could the Christians worship a king who died on a cross? What a silly notion. The idea that Jesus rose from the dead is a thing that they think is a source of mockery and scorn. And for the Jewish people, they do everything within their power to quell the gospel from spreading. And what they do, they whip and they beat and imprison Christians. And what do the Christians do in response? They rejoice to share in the suffering that their Savior partook. Because what they know is that none of this changes the reality that Jesus died and rose. When we face doubts or struggles internally or externally, when we feel like the world is against us and what we believe as followers of Jesus, that does not change the finished work of Jesus. When he died on the cross in John, he says, "It is finished," it is completed. His death and resurrection, there is nothing that will put an end to it. And when we look forward to his second coming, we look forward to it knowing that his first coming was sufficient. His second coming, when he comes, he will fulfill all that has been promised. When you face trials, trust his finished work is not undone. As we faithfully look forward, when things arise, it should not lead us to say, "I wonder if God is still in control. I wonder if he really loves me. I wonder." Because of course he does. He displayed it on the cross.

**How to Faithfully Look Forward**

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return  
When you face trials, trust His finished work is not undone  
While you wait, proclaim what he has already done

And this brings us to our last point. While you wait, proclaim what he has already done.

**While you wait, proclaim what He has already done**

There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and was a widow for eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers.

Luke 2:36-37 CSB

While you wait, proclaim what he has already done.

*There is also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and was a widow for 84 years. She did not leave the temple serving God night and day with fasting and prayers.* (Luke 2:36–37)

Now, first and foremost, she was married seven years and then a widow 84 years. She's at least 91 years old. The average age for marriage in that day and in that time and in that culture, very different than ours, was between 12 and 15. Most scholars look at this and say she was about 105. That's our best guess. And for 84 of those years, she was a widow in the temple. Now, when it says she did not leave the temple, this is not referring to she was always in the temple. But if you showed up at the temple, you would immediately say, "Oh, there's Anna. She's always here." She was fasting and praying. She didn't fast and pray for 84 years straight, but that is what she was known for. That was how she lived. That was how she spent her time. And in Anna, we see someone who has been faithfully waiting on the Lord. 84 years! There might be a few of you that have been alive that long. I'm not going to make anyone raise their hands or anything, but it's such an amazing thing to consider.

#### While you wait, proclaim what He has already done

**At that very moment**, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about him to all who **were looking forward to** the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him.

Luke 2:38-40 CSB

**At that very moment**, (Luke 2:38) And the language here is divine appointment language. So the way the Holy Spirit guided Simeon, the Holy Spirit is guiding Anna. **She came up and began to thank God and to speak about him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.** (Luke 2:38) The language of to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem tells us that it wasn't just Anna and Simeon. In the Old Testament, we see tell of a faithful remnant who will serve the Lord in truth, who will faithfully wait on him, who will cry out to him, who will seek to see him do that which he would do. And Anna, in this moment, sees the Messiah and she worships and she starts telling everyone around her how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news.

It's worth noting, this is before Jesus drove out the money changers and the animal sellers from the temple. And so at this time, the temple, probably at any time during the day, would have been pretty crowded. And yet Anna would have been someone that just about everyone knew who visited the temple. "Oh, there's Anna, the one who's always here." And the language of her thanking God, it's a very unique word. It's the only time it's used in the New Testament, but it is exuberant praise. It is a praise of just deep adoration and loud praise, saying, "God has brought the one we have been waiting for!" All who are looking forward to redemption, it has come!

#### How to Faithfully Look Forward

When you long for peace, remember He has come and will return

When you face trials, trust His finished work is not undone

While you wait, proclaim what he has already done

So while you wait, what do you need to do? You need to proclaim what he has already done. Anna spent her life looking to the Lord, and the second she saw the way that he would bring about salvation, she immediately begins to thank God and tell others about it. What a wonderful thing. Whenever I read this passage, I think about there have been people in my life, I mentioned my grandma. From the moment she knew the gospel, she would tell anyone she interacted with, "You've got to know about Jesus." And my grandma became a believer very late in life. Anna was faithfully following all of her life and her testimony from about the age of 22 until 105 was to point others to God. And when she saw the Messiah, she said, "This is what we've been looking for." And she rejoiced and pointed others to do the same.

#### How do we faithfully look forward?

- First off, when you long for peace, remember he has come and will return. Through the work of Jesus, we already have peace.
- When you face trials, trust his finished work is not undone. In this life, when we feel far from God, when we feel the pressures of this world, if we are believers through the work of the Spirit, we know that nothing in this life can separate us from God because of the work of his Son and the work of his Spirit.
- And while we wait, we are to proclaim what he has already done. To the disciples who are looking up in the sky we talked in Acts 1 they're looking up and they're seeing Jesus ascend the angels come and they say "Hey he's going to come back the same way but now go do what he told you to do" and they head to Jerusalem and when they receive the spirit they begin to proclaim the gospel to all who will hear.

Now I want to take a moment, there's a few people in this room that might be advanced in years. Not going to say who or anything. I'm 39, so I don't have to fall into this category. But if you're well along in years, something that I occasionally hear from believers is they talk about, "Well, I did my time." And if that's your mindset, there is no retiring from citizenship in the kingdom of God. God in heaven does not look at you and say, "Eh, you know, you've got nothing left to give."

The longer you have been alive as a believer, the more examples you have of what he has already done. I have a dear mentor named Don Long. I've talked about him before. I'm reusing some stories today, but Don Long is one of my favorite people. One of the reasons I'm in ministry is because when I was a punk 22-year-old, I talked to him and he said, "You should come serve at my church." And he disciplined me and built me up. He retired about a year ago, and I saw him last summer. And when I saw him and talked to him, I will never forget. This man is six months into retirement, and his calendar is busier than ever. He was a pastor who did outreach and led mission trips. And he's like, "I've got more mission trips this year than I had the last two years." As we were talking, I was like, "Are they still paying you?" And he's like, "No. I just do it now." And it's wonderful. And he joked with me about, "Well, I do it now, but I don't have to do any of the admin because someone at the church does it." But he goes on these trips. He still does all these things. And he spends every waking moment he can with his grandkids or with his neighbors. He spends all of his time living out the gospel.

If you're a believer and you're well along in years, I want to encourage you that to the end of your life until you have no breath left, until you are in his presence, let your testimony be that of someone who faithfully follows the Lord. Let it be said of you when they look at you to be like, "Oh, that's like Anna. She's praying all the time." If you're a believer well along in years and you say, "I've got nothing left to offer," you can

always pray. You can always fast. You can always lift up others in the Lord. Grandparents, let the thing your children know most about you be your love of the Lord. Do not let them think anything else is greater than that, except your love for them can be right under that. But make sure, grandparents, that your kids know your love for the Lord first and foremost.

And for all believers, we are called to look forward to his second coming. Every time we take communion, we are looking forward to that second coming. And the best way we do that, is we trust in his promises and we tell others about what he has done. I want to encourage you, if you are a believer, you should be proclaiming the good news to others. If you want to faithfully look forward to his second coming, the way to be faithful, the way to be ready for the master's return is found in the way that we point others to him. The way that we point one another within the body, the way we remind one another and encourage one another and the way we point out to others so that all who are looking for him can see him.

Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, we thank you, Lord, that as we gather together, we come together knowing of your first coming and knowing of the promise of your return. And Lord, we do not know the day or the hour, it is not for us to know, but Lord, let it be said that we are ready for your return. I pray, Father, that for each believer here, that they would leave today thinking, "How can I proclaim your goodness? How can I help others to know? How can I cling to your promises myself? How can I preach the gospel to myself and others?" I pray, Lord, that we would be a people found ready when you return.*

*And I pray, Lord, that if anyone here does not know you and does not have saving faith in your name, that even now you would open their eyes to the truth of the gospel, your spirit would grab hold of them, that they would be able to rejoice and proclaim that which you have done and that which you will do. We thank you, Lord, that we have peace and that your peace extends to all who long for you and your salvation. We pray all of this in your holy name and in the name of Jesus, amen.*

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Pastor Dan Chookaszian

It's only by grace that we are saved through faith. It's not of ourselves; it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. This is the gospel. Christ is ours by faith, not because of anything we've done, but only because of his mercy. Do you know him? Have you been reconciled to him?

Simeon and Anna were in the temple—old, old, and for a long time seeking the Lord, waiting for his coming, looking for him—and the Holy Spirit revealed the baby Jesus to them when they came into the temple. The ministry of the Holy Spirit always reveals Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus Christ to you, he's revealing you to you even now. And he's calling you to faith in the Messiah. He came once and is coming again. He came once as a sacrificial lamb, and he's coming again as a lion.

If you're already a believer, I was thinking of Mr. Carlson—long time seeking the Lord. And he's producing deeds, works—not for salvation, but in keeping with repentance, as John the Baptist will say in the next chapter in Luke chapter three. He's living a life of repentance in faith and trust in the Lord. He's finishing well. May we finish well. And for those of us who are younger, may we ask the Lord to give us grace to

follow him well. Have you put your faith and trust in Christ? There is no other way. He's coming again. May we have the wisdom, like Simeon and Anna, to look for the coming of the Messiah.

Let's pray.

*Lord, we look for your coming. May we be found faithful by your grace, watching and waiting, rejoicing when you return. May we be found faithful by your grace, watching and waiting, rejoicing when you return. Lord, that day will be a day of great joy. In Christ, you will be ours forevermore, and we will walk with you in Zion City. Lord, we are looking forward to this day. It's only by your grace. Holy Spirit, please continue to reveal Jesus Christ to us. And for anyone here who has not yet seen you, Lord, as Messiah, open their eyes now. Raise them from death to life. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.*



## Digging Deeper –**For Those Looking Forward** – Luke 2:21-40

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

### **Read Luke 2:21-40**

- The sermon highlights the Greek word *prosdexomai*—remaining in a place with hopeful expectancy for God’s promise. Simeon and Anna lived this way for decades. What are you currently waiting on the Lord for (personally, in your family, church, or the world)? How can you cultivate the kind of patient, hopeful expectancy they modeled rather than passive waiting or despair?
- The first point teaches that when we long for peace, we remember Jesus has already come (bringing salvation and peace with God) and will return (to make all things new). Where in your life do you most deeply long for peace right now? How does remembering Christ’s finished work on the cross give you peace today, even when circumstances are still broken?
- Jesus’ parents offered the sacrifice of the poor (two turtledoves or pigeons) at His presentation in the temple. What does this detail about Jesus’ humble entrance into the world teach us about the kind of King He is? How does His humility challenge the way we think about power, success, or what we “expect” from God?
- Simeon’s words in Luke 2:29–32 directly echo Isaiah 52:7–10. Read both passages aloud. How does seeing the baby Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s ancient promises of comfort, salvation for the nations, and light to the Gentiles deepen your worship this Christmas season?
- Simeon prophesied that Jesus would cause the fall and rise of many and that a sword would pierce Mary’s soul (Luke 2:34–35). The sermon reminds us that no trial can undo Christ’s finished work. Share a trial (past or present) you’ve faced. How does trusting that “It is finished” change the way you endure hardship or doubt?
- Simeon says Jesus will be “a sign that will be opposed” and that “the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” How have you seen Jesus opposed in your own life, culture, or relationships? In what ways does encountering Jesus reveal what is really in people’s hearts (including your own)?
- Anna spent decades in the temple fasting, praying, and then immediately proclaiming the child to all who were looking for redemption. Pastor Matt said there is “no retiring from citizenship in the kingdom of God.” Whether you are young or advanced in years, how can you follow Anna’s example of lifelong devotion and proclamation this coming year?
- The final point calls us to proclaim what Christ has already done while we await His return. Who in your life needs to hear the good news of what Jesus has accomplished? What practical step can you take this week to point someone toward Him (through words, actions, invitation, or prayer)?
- Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.