

During the month of December our small group lessons will revolve around the Christmas story. This week our focus is on Hope and the story of Simeon and Anna from Luke 2:25-38.

Adopt A Family: Christmas is a time of giving and I would like to encourage your group to pray about helping one or two families from our community. This coming weekend we will have family names available. All we ask is that you stop by the table in the lobby and pick-up a family packet this weekend, which will include instructions and the names, ages, and sizes of all the children. From that list; purchase a gift for each child and if possible purchase some food for the family's holiday celebration. Then, contact the family and make arrangements to visit the home, drop off the gifts and spend a few minutes blessing the family. A few minutes and a few dollars could forever change a family in our community as you show Jesus to them in love.

Christmas Hope:

Biblical Hope is far more than wishful thinking. It is to expect God to come through. Read the account of Simeon and Anna's Hope from Luke 2:25-38

Read: Luke 2:25-38

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."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, 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.

Share a memory with your group, perhaps from your childhood, about waiting for something you really wanted for Christmas and how that created a great anticipation and a great joy when it was finally received.

1. What does "waiting" have in common with "Hope"?
Use this question to get people talking in your group. When we have biblical hope, we have an expectant heart, trusting and patiently awaiting God's movement. Waiting becomes a time for celebrating and worship. It is as if you already have the promise because the giver is trustworthy and has assured you the gift. And it leads you to tell everyone about the gift.
2. How could Simeon see the Lord's Messiah in a child of a poor family? Why didn't all the other visitors to the temple see what Anna and Simeon saw?
The Bible is clear here that Holy Spirit was leading and revealing things to Simeon. He knew not by wisdom or education but by the Spirit of the Lord. Other were not being led by the Holy Spirit and therefore did not see or understand what Simeon and Anna knew from the Lord. This brings us to an important truth revealed here by the experience of Simeon and Anna. That truth is that only the Holy Spirit can reveal the things of God. We cannot learn them or grasp them by intellect alone.
3. Based upon what you read in Luke 2:25-38, what were Simeon and Anna expecting from the Messiah?
They expected salvation (verse 30). Jesus was a light (a new hope) to the Gentiles as well (verse 32) and a glory to all God's people (verse 32). But Jesus would also cause some Jews to rise and some to fall (verse 34) and that He would reveal the hearts of men as they come against him (verse 35) and it will be hard even for Mary (verse 35). Anna recognized that Jesus was the redemption of God's people and the coming of His Kingdom to earth (verse 38).
4. Why do you think God chose the form of a baby to usher in His presence among us as Savior of the World?
Ask for opinions. Of course it fulfilled Prophecy but I think beyond that is was way to show that only by His Spirit would man come to know Jesus Christ. Others were looking for royalty and a King. A poor child didn't match their expectations.
5. What do you think the widow Anna was praying for day and night? Why do you think she was prompted to speak about Jesus to those in the Temple?
Share what you think. I believe based upon her response she was desperate for God to reveal Himself and redeem His people.
6. How have Simeon's prophetic words to Mary been revealed as true in the life and Lordship of Jesus Christ?
Jesus certainly was Savior of the world carrying the sins of men to the cross. He unlike other Jews, showed love and compassion on all people, Gentiles included and ushered in a new idea of God's chosen people. His Disciples became the leaders of the Church while his adversaries, the Pharisees became His enemies. It became clear as the Jewish leaders plotted against him and eventually sent him to the cross that they had hardened hearts and his own mother would watch her son be beaten and put to death.
7. How might you have responded if you would have been one of those who came to the Temple to worship and heard Anna or Simeon's testimony?
It would have been easy to fall into the trap of unbelief because a poor child isn't what I expected in a Messiah. On the other hand, it would have been amazing as the Spirit revealed truth and as the prophecies of old are uncovered and fulfilled to

This Weeks Daily Devotional Reading

- Day 1 - Luke 1:1-25
- Day 2 - Luke 1:26-56
- Day 3 - Luke 1:57-80
- Day 4 - Luke 2:1-20
- Day 5 - Luke 2:21-40