

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**December 11, 2022**  
**Light And Life To All He Brings - HOPE**  
**Luke 2:22-32**

---

On the day of Christ's birth, the angel of God appeared in the middle of the dark night to a group of shepherds on a hillside. This was his message...

**Luke 2:11**

**11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

After the angels presented Jesus to the shepherds, the story of Christmas continued with Jesus being presented by Mary and Joseph at God's Temple in Jerusalem.

**Luke 2:21-32**

**21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And 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 male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said 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, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."**

Into the darkness of this broken, hopeless world, God sent His Son to bring us HOPE. So, we light this third candle of Advent as a reminder that our HOPE is found in a person...and His name is Jesus.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, we are studying Luke 2 and focusing on the 4 traditional themes for Advent: peace, joy, hope, and love. This morning, we are going to look at a man named Simeon who met Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus when Christ was just over a month old. And what we will see is that Simeon shows us what it looks like to live in the Hope of Jesus.

But, before we look at our text, I want to spend a couple of minutes establishing a definition for the word hope. In our language, we use the word hope with a wide variety of meanings.

1. Wishful thinking. My father-in-law and I both enjoy fishing. Quite a few times throughout the years, we've been able to go fishing with each other. I love him with all my heart, but I can

honestly say he is the worst fisherman I know...and it's not even close. I'm not sure he can land a fish sandwich at McDonald's. Yet, he persists in fishing. Every time we go out, I say something like, "I really hope you catch one today, Dad." So, there I'm using the word hope as wishful thinking. I have zero confidence he will catch a fish. That's one way we all use the word hope.

2. Confident expectation for future good based on circumstances. Sometimes, I go out fishing with my son who, unlike my father-in-law, has caught some pretty good fish with me. And there are days when I can tell the conditions are really good for catching fish. On those occasions, Logan might say something like, "Dad, is there any hope we are going to catch fish today?" And I'll reply with something like, "Well, the conditions are right, and I know the fish are here...and Papaw isn't here, so I expect us to catch something. I'm hopeful." That's a confident expectation based on favorable circumstances. Things seem to be pointing in the right direction for us to be optimistic. But that's not certainty. And the reason I'm not certain in that scenario is because I'm still in the equation. While my father-in-law is the worst fisherman I know, I'm far from the best fisherman I know. I have a tremendous capacity to mess things up. So, while I might be optimistic with hope, I'm far from certain whenever a fishing trip depends on me.
3. Confident expectation for future good based on truth. My friend, Rocky Vanhooze, is a professional fishing guide. Rocky and I have gone fishing on multiple occasions. I've always caught fish with Rocky. I've caught some monster fish with Rocky. Rocky has forgotten more than I'll ever know about fishing coastal Florida. So, if I'm going fishing with Rocky and you ask me, "What hope do you have that you'll catch fish today?" My answer would be, "Rocky. Rocky's my hope. He knows what he's doing, and he's never let me down, so I'm certain we will catch fish or he would call the trip off." In that case, my hope is the furthest thing from wishful thinking. It's a confident expectation based on what is true, specifically what is true about a person.

And that's what the word "hope" means in the Bible. It's a confident expectation for future good based on absolute truth. Primarily, the truth about a person...about God Himself. Throughout the Scripture, you find the saints being urged to hope in the Lord (Ps. 71:5; Ps. 42:5; Isa. 40:31; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:10). What reason do we have to confidently expect our future will be good? Our reason is a person, and His name is Jesus. Our hope is in the Lord.

That's what I pray you leave with today and live with for the rest of your life on this planet. And that's what we find in this man named Simeon. He is a great illustration of what it looks like to live with hope in the Lord. Let me show you why I say that.

Look at verse 25

***25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.***

The word "consolation" simply means comfort or encouragement. So, Simeon was a man who was patiently waiting for the comfort of Israel. What does that mean? Well, in the Old Testament, God used prophets to deliver messages to the people of Israel. And one of those prophets was a man named Isaiah. And the message he was chosen to deliver was largely a message of judgment.

Israel had rebelled against God, and because of their sin, they would experience a time of hardship when they were separated from God's blessing.

But Isaiah also prophesied about a time that would come when God would show them grace by redeeming and restoring them. Isaiah describes that time as a time of comfort or consolation.

**Isaiah 49:13**

**13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.**

**Isaiah 52:9–10**

**9 Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

Simeon would have known Isaiah's prophecy that a day of redemption and salvation was coming, and he looked forward to that time of consolation. He confidently expected future good, so he waited for it. In other words, he lived with hope.

And his hope was rooted in the truth about a person. That's what verse 26 in our text shows us:  
**26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

The consolation of Israel would correspond with the coming of Christ. That's because every part of the comfort God had promised was rooted in what Christ would accomplish for God's people. For instance, God's people would be redeemed from their sin because Christ would redeem them. God's people would be restored to God's blessing because Christ would restore them. So, the hope of Simeon was rooted in and centered on the absolute truth about Jesus, who is the Christ. That's why Simeon is a picture of what it looks like to live with hope in the Lord.

And, in the time we have left, I want us to take a close look at our text to see what we learn about living with Christ-centered hope. Let me go ahead and give you our big idea and then show you where I see it in this text.

**Big Idea: Christ-centered hope believes, waits, and obeys.**

Now, let me show you why I say that from our text.

1. Christ-centered hope believes what God says.

Remember, biblical hope isn't wishful thinking. It isn't simply being optimistic. Biblical hope is a confident expectation for future good based on absolute truth. And the clearest source of absolute truth is the Bible, which is the very word of God. Hope is nothing more than wishful thinking unless it is rooted in absolute truth. Notice how you see this take shape in Simeon.

You see this twice in two verses. Verses 25-26:

**25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

So, we already looked at the book of Isaiah to see where some of the promises about Israel's consolation were found. And verse 26 connects another thing God said to Simeon's waiting. God said Simeon wouldn't die until he actually witnessed the coming of the Messiah who would bring about the consolation of Israel. The implication is clear: Simeon believed what God said which enabled him to live with a confident expectation that he would experience that future good.

And let me show you just how powerfully his faith in God's promises empowered his confident expectation. Look down at verses 29-32:

**29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."**

These verses are dripping with confident expectation. In verse 29, Simeon says "God, you can go ahead and let me die, I'm at peace." Why would he say that? Because he believed something good was waiting for him beyond His life. Why would he believe that? He tells us in verse 29: Jesus is God's provision for salvation. Simeon was so full of faith that when he looks at Jesus, he is confident that Jesus is going to save him. And Jesus was only a month old! He hadn't lived His whole life on earth, yet. He hadn't died on the cross, yet. He hadn't risen from the dead, yet. But Simeon believes everything God has promised He would do through the Christ, so he is supremely confident that his future was ultimately good because of Jesus. And if Jesus came from heaven to earth, then how is He not going to do everything else He said He would do. Simeon believed that so thoroughly that he considered it all done even though Jesus hadn't done it all, yet.

And that's a GREAT picture of biblical hope. It believes Jesus will do it all even though Jesus hasn't done it all, yet. And just think how it would change the way you live if you looked to Jesus in faith and confidently expected that everything He has promised to do for you is as good as done, even if He hasn't done it, yet.

Let me give you some examples of what Jesus has promised to do for you.

**Galatians 5:5**

**5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.**

Jesus promises to make us completely righteous. That means we will be completely free from any sinful thoughts, desires, and actions. In other words, we will be righteous just like Jesus is righteous. I don't know about you, but I can hardly imagine being the kind of person who is immune to

temptation. I can't imagine never wanting to sin again, never desiring anything but what is perfectly right. But that's exactly what Jesus promises to do for everyone who trusts in Him.

How would it change your battle with sin if you lived with confidence that it is as good as done?

**Romans 8:23-25**

**...we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.**

One day, Jesus is going to transform these broken bodies into glorious, resurrection bodies that will never again experience sickness or weakness or decay. How would it change your struggle with sickness and weakness if you lived with confidence that it is as good as done?

**Titus 2:13-14**

**13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.**

One day, Jesus is coming again. And when He does, He will rescue us from the lawlessness, or godlessness and sin, of this present age.

This week our congress passed the so-called "Respect for Marriage Act." That legislation opens the door for Christians in every walk of life to lose their jobs and face serious legal consequence for supporting the Bible's teaching that marriage and sexuality are only for one man and one woman for one lifetime. The reason I bring that up is because it is easy to feel a sense of hopelessness at the condition of our world.

How would it change your struggle with the godlessness of this age if you truly believed Jesus is coming again and will deliver this world and all of His people from the grip of godlessness? What if you were so certain of that truth that you lived as though it's as good as done?

Hope believes what God has said...so hope confidently expects it will come to pass.

2. Christ-centered hope waits for God to work.

When our faith in God's promises is certain, we can patiently wait for God to work. That's exactly what Simeon shows us.

**Verse 25: Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel**

Hope waits for God to work. That's an essential element of hope. Actually, the words for hope in the original language of the Bible are often translated as "wait." (like those who wait upon the Lord) As a

matter of fact, I hope you noticed that the passages I mentioned a moment ago connected hope with waiting.

- ***Galatians 5:5 says we “eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.”***
- ***Romans 8:25 says we “wait [for the redemption of our bodies] with patience.” In this hope we were saved.***
- ***Titus 2:13 says we are “waiting for our blessed hope,” which is the return of Jesus to this world.***

Hope waits for God to work. Let me put that into plain English: We need hope because we will have to live through long periods of time when God hasn't done what He has promised He'll do. Hope doesn't turn away from God. Hope doesn't put God on our schedule and then take matters into our own hands when He hasn't met our timeline. Hope waits for God to work.

And all of us are in God's waiting room in some way or another. You're waiting for your healing. You're waiting for your prodigal to return. You're waiting for your deliverance from the trials of your life. You're waiting and watching the clock, wondering what God is doing.

And I want to encourage every one of us this morning who is in God's waiting room. He isn't idle or distracted. He isn't far off or unconcerned. He hasn't forgotten what He promised, and He isn't wondering how it's all going to turn out. You want to know what He is doing? Well, just think about what He was doing at Christmas.

#### **Galatians 4:4-5**

***4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.***

For thousands of years, people like Simeon were waiting on God to send His Son into this world. And do you know when God sent His Son into this world? At the exact right time! Not a moment too soon and not a moment too early. And that's what He is doing today. He is waiting for the exact right time to fulfill every promise He has ever made.

Do you know when you will receive the healing and redemption of your body? At the exact right time. Do you know when the prodigals will come home? At the exact right time. Do you know when you will be delivered from the trials of your life? At the exact right time.

Christ-centered hope waits for God to work because Christ-centered faith believes God is always right on time. So, let me ask you this: What promise from God are you waiting to be fulfilled? Where in your life are you being tempted to take matters into your own hands or to start looking somewhere other than God to do what God has said He would do for you? Would you pray for God to strengthen your faith to believe He will do what He has said and to give you strength to wait on the Lord?

Christ-centered hope waits on God.

### 3. Christ-centered hope obeys what God commands.

Hope may wait on the Lord with patience, but patience isn't idleness. People who hope in Christ don't just camp out on their couches and do nothing. They obey what God has said. Let me show you that in the life of Simeon.

***25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout,***

Simeon was righteous. That's just another way of saying he had faith in the Lord and did what was right. Simeon was devout. That word means "to be God-fearing." It's used to describe people who were careful to keep what God has commanded in His law.

***27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple,***

There's no indication that Simeon came to the temple because he knew Jesus would be there. It simply says he came to the temple in the power of the Spirit. Why would he come to the temple? Because God commanded His people to worship Him at His temple. And Simeon was living in the power of the Holy Spirit, so He simply obeyed God.

Hope is confident in God. That means when God tells us how we are supposed to live, hope is confident that obedience to God will lead to blessing from God. So, Christ-centered hope obeys what Christ has commanded. For instance, in 2 Corinthians 9, God promised to pour out blessing on those who faithfully and generously give to His kingdom work. So, when you hope in Christ, that means you confidently expect God to do what He said, and you give as an expression of your faith in Jesus.

God said in Psalm 1 He will bless those who read and meditate on His word. So, when you hope in Christ, that means you confidently expect God will do what He said...so you read and meditate on the Bible as an expression of your faith in Jesus.

God has promised to bless husbands who love their wives like Christ loves the church. He has promised to bless wives who honor their husbands as is fitting in the Lord. He has promised to bless children who obey their parents. He has promised to bless those who practice His plan for sexual purity. He has promised to bless those who work honestly and honor their bosses. He has promised to bless those who love and serve their neighbors. He has promised to bless those who take care of their families. He has promised to bless those who go to Him in fervent prayer.

And when you hope in the Lord, you are confident He will do exactly what He has promised, so you step into obedience as you depend on His power. So, are you living with the kind of hope in the Lord that is willing to obey what He has said?

Hope believes. Hope waits. Hope obeys.

So where is your hope this morning? May the light of Christ shine the light of truth into your hearts and may Jesus be your hope this Christmas and until Jesus comes again!