

# Hurst Green Evangelical Church

6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019

Luke 2:22-29

## Simeon and Anna

Our Reading today is that familiar passage of baby Jesus at the temple and meeting Simeon and Anna – both of whom are old but have lessons for us today.

But firstly what were Mary and Joseph doing at the temple?

Well Jesus needed to be circumcised – that is what happened to baby boys on the 8<sup>th</sup> day.

And it seems that they are taking advantage of being at the temple to present the offering to purify Mary after giving birth to a son. Now that should have been on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day according to Leviticus 12 but they seem to be doing it early.

But they are doing it because they are a devout couple. But still a poor couple as they offer the pair of doves which is an option for those that could not afford a lamb.

Now being devout is the act of showing a deep religious feeling or commitment and by now this young couple had certainly shown their commitment to God and what he wanted of them.

It is hard to think of what it would mean to be as devout as they were in today's day and age.

They had risked the social stigma of illegitimacy and shown the faithfulness to continue with their marriage.

Months later they had had it all confirmed as we see in the scriptures and we should know these scriptures for they are there for our encouragement. We have the songs of blessing from both Elizabeth and Mary and here in Luke 2 we have the shepherds and their encounter with some angels.

The awesome display in the fields nearby which left the shepherds terrified as they were told the good news which sent them hurrying to Bethlehem.

And once they had seen it

### **Luke 2:17-18 (ANIV)**

<sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

All those people there for the census hear the good news and were amazed – can this story still amaze us or have we become a little too familiar – have we heard the story too many times?

### **Luke 2:25-26 (ANIV)**

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

We have the holy Spirit at work here – The Spirit has revealed to Simeon that he will see the Messiah but the important thing is that Simeon believed him.

That leads us to a big question for our lives – what has the Holy Spirit revealed to us and have we believed him.

Now I am no mind reader but I know what went through your heads when I said that – you don't think the Holy Spirit has revealed anything to you!

Therefore you have nothing to believe and you are off the hook!

You are so wrong!

Let's put aside whether the Holy Spirit has revealed anything to you personally and I will argue he has – you may have chosen not to hear it or to ignore it but God has spoken to you through the Holy Spirit.

But putting that aside God has spoken to you through the Holy Spirit by what he has put in his bible.

The New Testament is stuffed full of promises for you but for this sermon let us pull out just one or we will be here for a late night sitting.

Matt 16:18 when Jesus tells us that he will build his church on Peter. Now you can try and wriggle out by saying you are not Peter but look at what Peter had just done:

You are the Messiah – that same statement of belief that we each should hold – Christ is our Messiah and so Christ will build his Church on each one of us.

Do you believe that?

Is that part of your life and are you waiting to see it fulfilled in the same way as Simeon was waiting to see his promise fulfilled?

Because look at how Simeon was waiting:

**Luke 2:27 (ANIV)**

*<sup>27</sup> 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,~~*

He was letting the Spirit direct him in his daily life – the Spirit sent him to see Jesus having promised him he would.

Can we say that we let the Spirit direct our lives or are we too busy?

Once again you can try and wriggle off the hook by saying that you have not heard the Spirit but I know and you know that you have.

As we talk together we come across so many instances when God has put us in the right place at the right time.

- To take a word of encouragement to someone
- To take a gift to a fellow member of the Church.
- To spend some time with one another.

Oh there are so many ways this can happen and we witness that it does happen as we talk to one another and mention what we have been able to do for each other.

Those are the times we let the spirit direct us or we did not notice the spirit directing us but what of the other times?

God sets things up and he is more than capable of ensuring that you are there and nudging you to get you to do the right things. But you have to do it!

Are you?

And then there was Anna at 84 years old. Spending every day fasting and praying the Holy Spirit got her to this place as well.

She knew her scriptures and recognised God at work in her world – heaven was touching earth that day and I am sure a choir of angels had been reported back to Jerusalem in the eight days since their music had rung over the sheep and the shepherds.

She saw the Messiah and spoke to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Now we know that the powers that be had their heads in the sand and so here we have two lay people announcing the Messiah to any who would listen and to a group that knew their scriptures and were waiting to see the redemption of Jerusalem.

We know our scriptures but are we waiting to see the second coming in the way they were waiting for the first coming?

Do we live in anticipation? Anticipation that our God moves in our world and we need to be on the look out for what he has done and is doing for he may want us to be part of it.

Simeon and Anna were not priests or even part of the temple hierarchy – they were what we would call lay people and yet here they are.

Now each one of us is a lay person – including those of us who end up out the front some weeks – we are those lay people God seems so keen on using because he selected his disciples from among the lay people and throughout the new testament as he builds his church he is using the lay people.

Get ready to be used!! And used in a mighty way for God has great things for this church – we are here at this time for his great things and we need to be eagerly waiting for them – we need anticipation that God will do what he has said he will do.

He has built this Church over the last few years. I was not around then but as we look around we have more people than we have had for many years and we are a family with people of many age groups.

God has not put together this body in this place at this time just for fun – we have work to do as we see our God at work.

We need to remember the warnings to the seven churches in Revelation and in particular to Sardis in Rev 3

**Revelation 3:2-3 (ANIV)**

<sup>2</sup> Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup> Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Of course our deeds are not complete and they will not be until the second coming but we need to be awake and holding on to all we have been taught so that we will be alert and ready when Christ comes again in the same manner he left in the first place.

We need to be holding on to these teaching with eagerness and devotion so that the Spirit may lead us and we may be part of God's body here on earth.

The lesson for us from this passage is that we should be like Simeon and Anna:

- Just and devout in all we do. Knowing and obeying all we have been commanded.
- With the Holy Spirit in us we should be watching and waiting – of course for the second coming but also for heaven touching earth where we are today.
- We need to be the temple of our Lord – our boding together forming his temple here in Hurst Green.
- We needing to be sharing the news of the God's salvation with all those around us.
- As Anna did we need to be talking about our Christ with all those who are looking for the redemption of Jerusalem – that is each other for it is our encouragement that will help our friends in their daily struggle.

In 2019 there is a great struggle in heaven as the ways of the evil one are destroyed for that is the reason that Christ appeared (see 1 John 3|:8)

We are part of that struggle so let us do our part and be known for our devotion to our faith and our anticipation to see the promises of God fulfilled on this earth.