

Blessed are the Pure in Heart:
Simeon and Anna
Luke 2:22-40



Background: This Sunday is our last Sunday of Advent, the last Sunday before Christmas! Advent is a time of waiting, of longing, of hoping. What do you find yourself longing for this week before Christmas? Perhaps it is gifts? Perhaps it is a vaccine? Perhaps it is a return to the ordinary? Whatever it is, we all know that waiting is difficult. Especially in a culture expecting instant gratification, waiting is not fun. In our text this week, we meet Simeon and Anna who are waiting, waiting for God to bring salvation and redemption. But, more importantly, these two characters, who demonstrate a purity of heart, show us how to wait *well*. Are you waiting *well* this Advent season?

Sermon Text: Matt 5:8, Luke 2:22-40 (NIV)

Matthew 5:8

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Luke 2:22-40

I. The Setting (22-24)

22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

II. The Greeting of Simeon (25-35)

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.”

III. The Greeting of Anna (36-38)

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.

IV. The Epilogue (39-40)

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions (pick 3)

- a. What are you longing for this Christmas season? How are you “living toward” whatever it is?
- b. How do you relate to Simeon’s example of waiting well (righteous, devout and singing a song of hope-filled praise)?
- c. Anna was living hopefully and counter-culturally. How do you plan to live hopefully and counter-culturally this Christmas season?
- d. How often do you consider our ultimate hope of seeing God face to face? Richard Baxter once said that we should spend at least 30 minutes a day focusing on heaven. How do you respond to this encouragement?