

WAITING ON THE PROMISE

December 17, 2017 | Pastor Keith Jenkins

Pastor Keith shared with us that he was walking through an Advent devotional this year called; "Infancy Narratives" (Matthew & Luke). He said that he had found a renewed sense of expectancy and reinvigorated hope this Christmas season. This was centered on the Second Coming of Christ, our greatest hope!

Keith also told us that it is not his nature to be a pessimistic person, but he admitted that the endless news cycles loaded with more destruction, death, depravity and despair have had an effect on him. He found that he began to be drawn to the news of the day, much like those passing by the scene of an accident.

There is no doubt that all of us have some type of personal burden that we are carrying that can rob us of the peace and joy that this time of year can bring.

So, as a church we find ourselves in the same position as Israel found themselves...waiting on the Messiah to come. This waiting is not like waiting for your Starbucks, that's not a biblical view, as we shall see.

Timing is everything, and everything has a "set time"

Eccl 3:1 "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens":

Galatians 4:4-5 "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship"

The "fullness of time" or "set time" of the Lord literally means, when all His purposes have been accomplished...

"We should desire ONLY what has been fully processed by God"

"Waiting on the Lord", is a common biblical theme. All who have ever followed the Lord have found themselves in the familiar posture of WAITING.

- Noah built an ark while he waited 120yrs for it to rain
- Abraham waited 25yrs before he received the promise of a son
- Joseph had a dream at 17yrs old and it was fulfilled in his late 30's/early 40's
- Moses waited 40yrs to discover his calling as a deliverer
- Israel as a nation, waited for deliverance under intense bondage in Egypt for 430yrs
- Hannah waited for a son...
- Israel waited for the Messiah....AND THEN

All of us are in the posture of waiting for something:

- Waiting on Christ's second coming
- Waiting on a miracle of some kind
- Waiting on a promise/word of the Lord of some kind
- Waiting on a husband/wife
- Waiting to conceive a child
- Waiting for a deliverance of some kind
- Waiting for restoration or reconciliation
- Waiting for the Lord to speak instruction, purpose
- Waiting for the salvation of someone you love

- Waiting on a financial blessing or a deal to close
- Waiting on the comfort of the Holy Spirit as you mourn...

WE ARE ALL WAITING

I want to introduce (to some for the first time) Simeon & Anna who “waited on the Lord” in Luke’s gospel...

Luke 2:22-38 “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.” 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 prophetess, 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”.

LET’S CLARIFY WHAT WE MEAN BY; “WAIT” FOR THE LORD

“Waiting” does not mean inactive resignation to our plight or condition

- To wait is to expect eagerly, to look for
- To continue steadfastly
- Having a sense of reliance on God even in our activity

Psalm 127:1 “Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good”.

1. THEY WERE EMPOWERED BY A TRANSCENDENT HOPE

Simeon and Anna had hope that would NOT be diminished by their present circumstances.

Luke 2:25-26 “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”.

“A transcendent hope refuses to be held captive by present unfavorable circumstances because it remains anchored in eternal things”

PAUL’S PERSPECTIVE:

2 Corinthians 4:13-18 “It is written: “I believed; therefore, I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal”.

Having hope for things in this life are good and important, but we must ask ourselves, do we have any “Transcendent Hopes”? (The hope that is anchored in eternal things).

An important question to ask ourselves; if it all didn't work out or happen like we wanted, do you have any hopes ...that are eternal?

You can only say: *"our light and momentary troubles"* if you have an eternal perspective.

Psalm 25:3 "No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame"

Surely, Simeon and Anna had personal desires and hopes for their lives...

- To live in a country of their own that was occupied by Rome
- For justice & freedom from Roman tyranny and occupation
- To prosper in every way
- To have a family...

Yet, their hope was not diminished because their eyes were fixed on something even greater than their personal prosperity!

All of the followers of the Lord in times past, as recorded in Hebrews 11, developed a 'CLEAR ETERNAL VISION and HOPE BEYOND THIS LIFE'

Hebrews 11:13, 16 "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them (BY REVELATION) and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth".

16 "Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one".

2. WE HAVE NEED OF ENDURANCE (PERSEVERANCE) IF WE ARE TO SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES

- a. Anna lost her husband and moved into being a widow; WORSHIPPING, FASTING & PRAYING
- b. Mary would have to endure watching Jesus suffer and die

Hebrews 10:35-38 "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37 For, "In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay." 38 And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back."

- c. Simeon and Anna never "shrunk back", they leaned forward in faith, pressed in, eagerly waited with anticipation

3. WAITING ON THE LORD RENEWED THEIR STRENGTH

Psalm 40:30-31 "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint".

- a. This is not natural but rather 'SUPERNATURAL' strength, empowered by the Holy Spirit
- b. Simeon and Anna's strength didn't wane...IT WAS RENEWED

We need to know that there will always be time between conception and the birth of something. We need our strength renewed; we need to be encouraged as we wait.

4. WE WAGE WAR WITH THE PROMISE/WORD OF THE LORD

1 Timothy 1:18-19 "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies (the promise) previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience,"

Make no mistake, we have to battle while we are waiting. There are many enemies; here are a few:

Delay - I would have thought by now, (fill in the blank)

Discouragement - Loss of confidence/enthusiasm (stir yourself up)

Disillusionment - to realize that a belief or an ideal is false

The enemy will whisper in your ear, that you're "disqualified". The matter of the fact is, outside of Christ, we are disqualified. But, because of his redemptive work, his promises in our lives are yes and amen.

How many times did Simeon have to remind himself of God's promise? "Okay Lord I'm 80 years old now, but I still believe in your promise".

Hebrews 10:23-25 "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful"

LASTLY, WAIT IN A CROWD

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching".

Don't try to do it on your own, wait in community, there is strength and protection there.

When David was confronted with a new challenge, he would recount his past victories and God's faithfulness.

Psalm 37:25 "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread".

"If he never does another thing for me, I will still serve him"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In this lesson, we're looking at "waiting". Not a fun thing, but it's not only a continuous biblical theme, we have all experienced waiting on the Lord. Take time to discuss times where you found yourself waiting of God.
2. Many times as we wait, it is about timing. Re-read the scriptures at the bottom of page 1 and discuss this statement: "Timing is everything, and everything has a "set time".
3. Discuss the biblical examples of men and women of God who had to wait. Also look at the list of things we often have to wait for, do you see yourself on the list? What's missing off the list?
4. As you re-read Luke 2, what did you notice or learn about Simeon and Anna? Do you see yourself in this account?
5. Beginning on the bottom of page three, what do we mean when we say "wait"? Also what did Pastor Keith mean by the phrase; "Transcendent Hope"? "A transcendent hope refuses to be held captive by present unfavorable circumstances because it remains anchored in eternal things"
6. Finally, what role do each of these play as we wait
 - **Endurance**
 - **Renewing of Strength**
 - **Waging war**
 - **Wait in a crowd**