

The Journey... Walk as Jesus Walked

Part 3 – A Righteous Man is Rewarded

Luke 2:21-39 – Scott Voorman – December 13, 2009

Homeletics: LUKE 2:21-39

Baby Jesus is revealed as the promised Messiah.

TCTAT pursue righteousness and look for Christ's return.

Have you ever ordered something in the mail and knew it was coming, but didn't quite know when? Do you track it on the internet now as it comes UPS? I noticed when I ordered my BMW from Germany, that some people track the ship by satellite as it leaves Germany and travels across the ocean. They check each update as it transitions from carrier to carrier. They talk with others about the coming of their car. Are you like that about anything?

Today we will look at a man who was looking for the coming Messiah. He and his story have been an inspiration to many people over the centuries, and to me since I was 19. This account, recorded only by Luke, sits in the shadow of the birth of the Jesus and is easily missed. My college choir director was moved by this account and shared with us the art and music over the centuries drawn from this emotional picture of the old man finally seeing the promised Christ child.

Today we will look at what the old man (and old widow) have to teach us. I'll start with a visual picture of what two different artists were inspired to paint. I'll close with a recording my college choir made of the song of Simeon in 1976. I was 19. If you look at itunes online, you will find 50 musical settings of the song of Simeon. None of them are the one I wanted to play for you. My righteous

wife found the CD with the ancient recording I needed. There are likely over a thousand different settings written, often coupled with the song of Mary.

(SLIDE OF Simeon in the temple)

v. 21 On the eighth day, Jesus was circumcised and named Jesus, as the Angel had said before he was conceived.

v. 22 Following the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord as the consecrated first born male.

v. 24 They offer the sacrifice in line with the Law of the Lord: A pair of doves or two young pigeons.

I. Joseph and Mary fulfill their religious duty and bring Jesus to the Temple.

Numbers 3:11-13 Law given to Moses 1400 BC and passed down for 1400 years.

The Lord said to Moses: I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, for all the firstborn are mine.

Joseph and Mary followed the Law of Moses and consecrated Jesus at the temple.

Jewish heritage and ritual, instituted about 1400 years before, requiring the first-born male to be dedicated to the Lord. (Numbers 3:11-13). You will note, that the Lord provides a substitute, in this case, the Levites (and an offering of the lamb or birds). Compare Abraham 2000 years BC, God required Abraham's first-born son, but God himself provided the substitute with a ram.

1. Jesus came to fulfill the law, not break it, so his parents obediently followed the ritual.
2. Joseph and Mary believed the Angel's words, as evidenced by their naming the baby Jesus.

3. What institution/ritual do you practice based on scriptural instruction from 2 thousand years ago. Baptism, communion, tithing, worshipping together.

When you do this and teach your children, you are fulfilling your religious duty and sustaining your Christian heritage as your forefathers did. Cf. Deut 6:6-9

v. 25 There was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was looking forward to the coming Messiah and the Holy Spirit was on him.

v. 26 The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen Lord's Christ.

v. 27-28 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts and when the parents brought Jesus to do what the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying

v. 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to your word, For my eyes have seen thy salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people. A light to be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

v. 33 Joseph and Mary marveled at what was said about him.

v. 34 Simeon blessed them and said to Mary. This child is destined to cause the rising and the falling of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken AGAINST.

v. 35 So that the thoughts of hearts will be revealed, and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

4. 400 years with no prophet, no Word from God.

Cf. Jamestown, 1607

Would you be following your religious tradition? (God preserves a remnant for his plan of salvation)

1. Devout. Fulfilling religious obligations. (note, these definitions are not exclusive to Christianity. Almost all religions tell you to do the right thing. Many request or require devotion)

Cf. you can be diligent in exercise, but still be unhealthy. Eg heart dz or cancer. You can be devout but trust in the wrong object or religion.

What does a devout Christian look like today? What do we DO? Partly visible. Eg. Church, service, sacraments, memorize and meditate on scripture. Pray, fast, tithe, care for the poor.

Righteousness: A little more complex:

1. Righteous Morally upright. (Webster)

Matt. Does right.

Dr. Laura: Do the right thing.

Gary Voorman “Doing the right thing is not always easy”

Lynn Adele, looking at me. No man is righteous.

OR nurse Tobie: “All boys lie”

Many texts on righteousness: More texts on righteousness than on blessed or bless.

Don't confuse right living or righteousness with being right with God or righteous in God's sight.

Positional righteousness with God.

Romans 3:10 There is no one righteous, not even one.

Isaiah 64:6 All our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

Ecc. 7:20 There is not a righteous man on earth.

- a. Declared Righteous (positionally righteous) eg. Romans 1:16-17 Romans 3:22 II Corinthians 5: 21.

So then, though we can never in this world be perfectly righteous and fulfill the law, because of Christ, we wear righteous clothing and are seen by God as righteous.

- b. Thief on the cross. Righteous? David, an adulterer, murderer, poor father, righteous? Paul, a persecutor of Christians: Righteous? Scott, a self-centered, selfish, self-righteous, spiritually undisciplined, but otherwise pretty good person, righteous? How about you? **ONLY BY THE GRACE OF GOD.**

Righteous living and righteous character.

- a. Noah Gen 6:9. Daniel, Abraham, Stephen, the apostles,
- b. My Dad, Mom, John Erwin, Dick BTW, if I left you off this list, it is not necessarily because I don't consider you righteous, it is because I am testing your attitude at being left off the list.
- c. Pharisees Devout? Righteous? Perhaps, but not enough. (selfish, dishonest, did NOT recognize God on earth, did religious things to be honored by people, honored power and prestige more than God) Matthew 5:20
- d. Matt 5 Beattitudes
- e. Righteous acts eg. Galatians 5:26. cf fruits of the spirit, Justice, goodness. Honest, Fearing God, God honoring. Not selfish, care for the needy, pray, are as bold as a lion, detest the dishonest.)
- f. Don't we normally know what is right? Phil 4:8

2. Simeon knew the scriptures and LOOKED for the coming Messiah. The Holy Spirit (pre pentecost Spirit revelation.) Isaiah 42:6-7 A light to the Gentiles, open the eyes of the blind, set the captives free and release those who sit in darkness. Matthew 11:4-6 (Simeon knew who and what he was looking for.)
3. Simeon alluded to, and predicted that the Savior would be pierced by a sword. Not just a political delivering King as many Jews sought.
 - i. Psalm 22:16 (David 1000 BC)
 - ii. Isaiah 53:5 (740 BC)
 - iii. Zechariah 12:10 (500 BC)

Principles:

1. Righteousness is rewarded:

I Sam 26:23. “The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness.”

Matthew 5:6, (hunger and thirst for righteousness...will be filled)

Matthew 5:10-12 persecuted for righteousness... theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Insulted, persecuted because of Jesus name. ...great is your reward in heaven

Psalm 1:6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 34: 15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

Prov 11:6, 8,9,10,19,21,23,28,30,31.

Col 3:1-4 Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your HEARTS on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set mind on things above, not on earthly things, for you died and your life is now hidden in Christ

with God. WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS YOUR LIFE APPEARS, THEN YOU ALSO WILL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.

2. The Holy Spirit reveals truth
3. God has always had a plan to include Gentiles in Salvation.
4. You are either for Christ or against him.

Christ is either:

Cornerstone or stumbling stone

Lord or lunatic/liar

v. 36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; having lived 7 years with her husband, then as a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

v. 38. She came up to them, giving thanks to God and spoke about Jesus to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

5. God cares for, sustains, and blesses the weak who trust in him.

If this in some way describes you, give thanks to God for his Savior, be diligent in your devotion to God, and call on his people to care for you.

If you are blessed with God's bounty, remember the poor and weak.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

6. God rewards those who long for his appearing.

Colossians 3:1-4.

I Thessalonians 2:19 Paul's crown when Christ returned.

II Timothy 4:8. Crown of righteousness... to all who have longed for his appearing

Application

1. Are you righteous, positionally? **YOU CAN DO NOTHING** except **ACCEPT** it.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, **AND PURIFY US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.**

2. John 6:28,29 What must we do to do the works God requires? Jesus answered: The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.

3. Would people consider you righteous? Devout? Are you devoted to the right things? (See Matthew 6:21-25) What do you need to change in your life?

4. Are you looking for the second Advent/coming?

5. Are you telling people about Christ and his return?

I would like to end with what has become known as the Song of Simeon. The composer, Alexander Gretchanenoff, was born in Russia in 1869, studied with Rimsky Korsikov, emigrated to New York in 1939, and died 6 months before I was born in 1956. I met this setting of the Song of Simeon in 1975 as a sophomore at Calvin College. This was recorded in May closing our last concert celebrating Calvin's Centennial in 1976.

Table Talk

1. Are you righteous in God's sight? (positionally righteous)
2. Would people consider you righteous?
3. How devoted to God are you? How do you know? See James 2:18
4. Are you looking for the second coming? Really?
5. Are you telling people about Christ?

Additional Life Group Questions

Who are righteous people named in the Bible? Why were they considered righteous?