



THE SONGS OF CHRISTMAS

INTRO: This week we meet Simeon, a faithful Jew who's reached the end of his life, but not before he receives one more surprise from God. The text describes him as "righteous and devout," looking forward to the day when Israel would find true peace and fulfillment through the Messiah. Like many of us, he's waited a long time (decades!) for his prayers to be answered. Yet Simeon has not grown bitter or resentful over the course of his life. Through the Holy Spirit, he's learned how to pay attention to God's faithfulness despite his circumstances. Simeon believes that all good things have their beginning and end in God. Sure enough, when he enters the temple one day, he comes face-to-face with an extraordinary visitor--the child Jesus, the promised Messiah.

1. What are you waiting for in this season of Advent?

READ Luke 2:25-33

1. Describe Simeon in your own words. Who might he be compared to today?
2. Look at Simeon's "song" in verses 29-32. How would you describe it in one word?
3. The Holy Spirit is mentioned three times. What does this tell us about faith and how God works?
4. Look at Simeon's response to Mary (verses 34-35). What do you think he means?

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. When have your prayers been answered in a surprising way?
2. When God feels distant or silent, how do you usually respond? Why?
3. How is a spirit of surrender connected to receiving God's peace?
4. What is one thing, person, event, etc. you need to surrender to God this week? What's one step you can take to trust God more authentically?

OUTRO: We don't know much about Simeon, but we do know his life is characterized by longing. Many of us might say the same about our lives. Yet Simeon doesn't give into despair, not even at his old age. That's because he's not anchored in fear or the need for control. Rather, he's anchored in the promises of the Psalms, God's assurances to you and me. Eugene Peterson writes that "the promise of the Psalms is not that we shall never stub our toes, but that no injury, no illness, no accident, [and] no distress ... will be able to separate us from God's purposes in us." Simeon doesn't just get this; he **lives** it. By God's grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can, too. When we trust in God, nothing can separate us from His purposes or the Messiah.

PRAY TOGETHER.

(Pray to surrender whatever prevents you from trusting in God more fully.)