

## Keep Calm...Christmas is Coming

Hope is Here

Luke 2:25-38

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**Text Introduction:** “Keep Calm...Christmas is Coming” is the theme of this year’s *Singing Christmas Tree*. We have adapted that, of course, from the popular phrase, “Keep Calm and Carry On” that was first developed by the British government in preparing her citizens for the Second World War. As I contemplated this phrase, I began to think what an appropriate phrase this is to communicate the truths of Christmas. In light of Jesus Christ bursting into our world to bring hope, joy, peace, and most of all salvation, we of all people, believers in Christ, should “Keep Calm and Carry On.” So, this Christmas Season, I am endeavoring to remind us of those reasons associated with Jesus’ coming that we have to “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Two weeks ago, we said that we should keep calm and carry on because God is here! Isaiah prophesied that His name would be called Immanuel, which translated means, “God with us.” Because God is always with us, we should keep calm and carry on.

Then, last time, we considered a second reason to Keep Calm. Not only is God here, but because He is here, peace is here. Isaiah further prophesied some 700 years before the birth of Christ that “a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) Today, I want to offer a third reason. We should keep calm because Hope is here.

**Text:** <sup>25</sup> There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel’s consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple complex. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for Him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took Him up in his arms, praised God, and said:

<sup>29</sup> Now, Master,

You can dismiss Your slave in peace,  
as You promised.

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation.

<sup>31</sup> You have prepared it  
in the presence of all peoples—

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and glory to Your people Israel.

<sup>33</sup> His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and told His mother Mary: “Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed— <sup>35</sup> and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> and was a widow for 84 years. She did not leave the temple complex, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers. <sup>38</sup> At that very

moment, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

**Introduction:** The text before us today gives us the account of Jesus' earthly parents bringing Him to the Temple for an ordained time of consecration. His parents are doing for Him all that "was customary under the law." (verse 27) This would have been some 40 days after His birth. In this experience further revelation is made known as to who Jesus is. This recognition is made by a man named Simeon, who was righteous and devout and looking forward to Israel's consolation, and a woman named Anna, righteous in her own right, being one who stayed in the Temple Complex to pray. In other words, both of these, fully aware of the Prophets' message of the coming of Messiah, longed to one day be alive to see that Messiah.

But, here is our question for the day. What kept Simeon and Anna going to the Temple looking for Messiah? If we do the math, the last prophet, Malachi, had spoken over 400 years before this day in the Temple. Other major prophets, like Isaiah, had prophesied over 700 years before this day. What kept Simeon and Anna going to the Temple?

I think we find our answer in one word: Hope.

What's the difference in hope and faith? I do believe there is a difference, because the writer of Hebrews said that "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." But, I also believe that Biblical hope, the kind of hope that I want to talk about today, is more than just wishful thinking. So what is the difference in hope and faith?

Hope is faith in waiting.

When I think about hope, I think about the little boy playing Little League baseball. He is out in the field when his father arrives late for the game. Through the fence his father asks, "What's the score?" "18-0!" says the little boy, "We're losing." Trying to offer comfort his dad says, "I'm sorry, son." With the hope only a Little Leaguer could have, he answers back, "Don't worry, Dad, we haven't even got up to bat yet!" Now that's hope.

Hope is faith in waiting, so what do we do while we wait? How do we sustain that hope?

**What do we do while we Wait?**

**Trust God's Word.**

#### **4 Factors Related to Your Trust**

1. Obedience: "this man was righteous and devout"

The greatest indicator of our belief in God's Word is not what we say, but what we do. There are lots of people who say that they believe God's Word, but the real test of belief in God's Word is acting on His Word.

2. Expectant faith: “looking forward or (waiting for) the Consolation of Israel”

The word used here, translated “waiting,” is a word that has the connotation of being in a state of expectancy. It is the same word used by Luke in Luke 12:36 in a parable associated with readiness for the Lord’s return. So, the idea of the word is more than just waiting, but rather waiting with a certain expectancy that the thing that you are waiting for is going to occur.

We don’t really know how old Simeon was when he saw Jesus, but we have a good idea how old Anna was. According to verse 37, she was easily over 100 years old. Regardless of their age, the implication of the text seems to be that both Simeon and Anna had waited a very long time.

A preacher of another generation, G. Campbell Morgan, summarized waiting on God this way:

Waiting for God is not laziness. Waiting for God is not going to sleep. Waiting for God is not the abandonment of effort. Waiting for God means, first, activity under command; second, readiness for any new command that may come; third, the ability to do nothing until the command is given. - G. Campbell Morgan

3. Leadership of the Holy Spirit: “and the Holy Spirit was upon Him”

One commentator even suggested that the Holy Spirit led Simeon to go to the temple that particular day. Though this is speculation, what is certain is that Luke has already indicated 10 times in his Gospel something about being led by the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Holy Spirit is a partner with trusting in God’s Word.

4. Right Understanding: “that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah.”

A critical point of trusting in God’s Word is the correct understanding of God’s Word. Certainly, Simeon understood that now that he had seen the Christ, he was ready for death. We must trust God’s word with a correct understanding of God’s Word—not as we want to understand God’s Word, but as God wants us to understand His Word.

**Trust God’s Timing.**

The trouble with waiting on God is to trust His timing. When we have to wait we battle two extremes. We either want to quit or we want to hurry things along on our own. The Bible is filled with examples of both. Many had given up on waiting for the Messiah. From the lesson of Simeon and Anna, notice these three truths about God’s timing.

- God has a purpose in His timing.

Why did Jesus come the day that Jesus came? Why did Simeon, Anna, and others have to wait for the Messiah? Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians gave this answer, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.” (Galatians 4:4) Jesus was born at the right time. We don’t know the exact date, but it was the correct date. We

don't know the day He is coming again, but it will be the right date. I don't know why you have to wait for your answer, but I know that it will come on the right date. Everything in my life has happened on the right day—not necessarily the day I chose or would have chosen, but by faith, I know on the right day.

The purpose is given to us in verse 31-32. The people of God had to be prepared for the birth of Jesus.

- God has a plan for you in His timing.

God also has a plan for you in His timing. For Simeon, his death was somehow attached to the coming of Messiah. For Anna, she was learning something about prayer. Like Anna, God may be building in you greater understanding. Like Anna, God may be building in you greater thanksgiving. As she, as some people call it, “prayed it through,” God was building in her a greater understanding and a greater thanksgiving.

- God is at work even while we wait.

Our wait does not mean that God is idle. We must believe that while we wait, God is at work.

The message of Christmas is that Hope is here! About hope, someone said ....

- “Today, many people are adrift morally and spiritually, confused and fearful — not knowing who they are or where they are going. We live in a world dangerously torn by hate and violence and conflict, and yet we feel powerless to do anything about it.

Is there any answer? The Bible gives a resounding “Yes!” There can be **hope**, and there can be changed hearts and a changed society as we yield ourselves to Christ.”

- Perhaps the greatest psychological, spiritual, and medical need that all people have is the need for **hope**.”
- “Christ wants to give you **hope** for the future.”
- “For the believer, there is **hope** beyond the grave, because Jesus Christ has opened the door to heaven for us by His death and resurrection.”
- “Faith points us beyond our problems to the **hope** we have in Christ.”
- “My **hope** does not rest in the affairs of this world. It rests in Christ who is coming again.

The author of all of these last words is the Rev. Billy Graham. No wonder his last message to America has been called *My Hope for America*. Christ is the only hope for America. Christ is the only hope for you.