

## Advent Hope Luke 2:21-40

**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.”

**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 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.

**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.



### **A Want is not a Hope**

Our Wants Have Nothing to Do with Hope

We want so many things.

Sometimes we use the word hope to frame a lot of our own desires.

I hope it doesn't rain.

I hope a get a fingerling this Christmas.

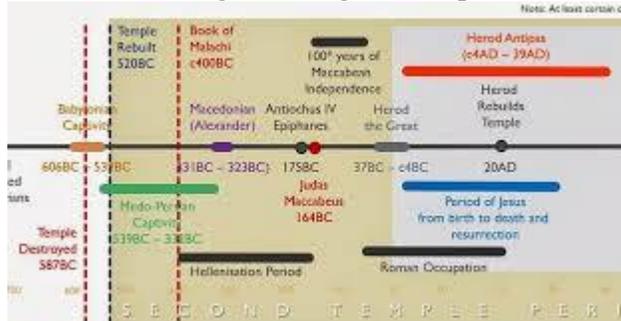
I hope to find a real bargain at the thrift store.  
But true hope is defined by something much deeper.



### Hope is born in Despair

True hope requires the real possibility of loss.  
I hope this relationship will get back on track.  
I hope my sick child will be okay.  
I hope to be accepted for who I really am.  
These are real longings that have real consequences that can be life shattering.

Simeon & Anna grew up in a time of the destruction of Hopelessness.  
Simeon and Anna by all accounts could have been restless, bitter.  
Both lived through the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy in 63BC



As a part of history, there was a rebellion by the Jews led by the Maccabees.

This you can read about in the apocrypha or Catholic Bibles.

[It was added by St. Jerome when he translated the Bible into Latin and added these historical books as a supplement to fill in the gaps during the 300 years between OT & NT.]

Jewish independence was established after the Persian & Greek Empires.

With the rise of Rome, however, Pompey, the Roman general ended Jewish independence.

Saw their people oppressed all their lives.

They had, in their own time tried to bring about the dream of the Kingdom of Israel.

Simeon may have seen his own peers as a young men fight the Romans.

He may have been one of them himself.

Those who took the future into their own hands, hoping for victory.

But that victory never materialized.

They were killed by the Romans or crucified.

A generation of young men, Simeon's friends and peers.



Anna, if married at the normal age would have become a widow she in her twenties. Perhaps due to the same siege.

She would have been helpless, relying upon charity of family or by begging.

Life for her as a woman would have been extremely difficult in a time of patriarchy.

A contrast to the priests and teachers of the law from the story of the Magi.

They knew all the prophecies, about Bethlehem but never lifted a finger to find him.

They did not hope or believe in a messiah.

They were happy in their places of prominence and power.

They did not live in hope of something more,

they were already living in the kingdom they wanted.

Simeon and Anna lived by hope.



Simeon was a man who was righteous and devout – waiting for the messiah.

In all his waiting, he did not turn from the ways of God.

He did not grasp for or chase after false hopes.

Simeon was full of the Holy Spirit – pre Pentecost

He knew the voice of God.

Enough to keep waiting for the Messiah.

Anna never left the temple – worshipping night and day, fasting & praying.

She was honoured by being named a prophetess – one who knew the will of God

She recognises Jesus.

If you have never felt the pain of loss, you do not know what it is to hope.

Hope is for those who know what it feel like to have it slip away into despair.

Sow how did Simeon and Anna find hope?

### **Hope is Found in the Surrender of Our Own Dreams**

"Do What it is you Have in Your Heart to Do."

Who said these words?

To Whom?

It was Jesus to Judas.

Judas who placed his hopes in his own machinations,  
thinking he could control the outcome.

It led only to his betrayal of Jesus and to his deeper despair and death.

It echos the words of our world today.

"Not My Will but Yours."

These are the words of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

One phrase will destroy the world and the other will save it.

There are two roads to hope.

One is about the false hope of wants.

The other is about the surrender to the Promise of the Kingdom.



Simeon and Anna had their own dreams that never came to be.

They had no kingdom.

Perhaps it isn't a surrender as much as the discovery of a singular truth.

Our dreams are too small, too petty.

Jesus is inviting us to something much bigger - a dream that encompasses all of us.

It is God's dream, God's mission, God's will.

This is How Simeon and Anna learned hope.

By letting go.

And what did they know?

They knew who Jesus was.

They didn't know the details but they were shown the face of God.

In him their hope was found.

They would not live to know his work on the cross.

They could never have imagined that we would be in this room worshipping Jesus.

But I think they know now.

They placed their faith in a baby.

And that Baby became Salvator Mundi, Saviour of the World.

We are a part of the fulfillment of their hope.

A Hope that is still alive today.

That kingdom is here and yet on the way.

It is about miracles

it is about faith and love.

Not our Kingdom but God's



### **Hope Allows us to Live and Die Well**

What are your wants?

What are your dreams?

How do we align them to the Will of God?

How do our lives align with the Kingdom?

My hope is that you will discover this sooner rather than later.

Many reach Simeon and Anna's age without ever figuring it out.

My hope is that we each will not only figure it out

But participate in the coming of this Kingdom.

Hope informs how well you live as well as how well you die.

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—*

*I took the one less traveled by,*

*And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost, The Road not Taken