

Simeon

Lawrence Kimbrough

Everything we know about Simeon springs from 11 short verses in Luke, chapter 2. That's it. And then he's never heard from again. But if you only had 11 verses to leave behind – 11 verses to sum up your life, your character, and your depth of worship – you'd take Simeon's in a heartbeat.

Perhaps he was a man of few words, anyway. A man of deep, ponderous thoughts, of devout, unwavering worship but not of long, drawn-out conversation. Nothing suggests that his life was even remotely spectacular. We might have read his story with the same passion that drives us to Leviticus for our morning devotions. Might have come in handy at bedtime...

But the Bible says he was a good man. And he loved God.

And he was waiting . . . waiting . . . waiting . . . waiting to see something he had read about in the Prophets for as long as he could remember, something God had promised him personally that he would see before he died:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

Waiting. Waiting on Jesus. That was the theme of Simeon's worship.

But waiting can be boring, discouraging, maddening. It can tease your hopes, toy with your assumptions, jam the signals on your spiritual progress. It's not the best way to get people at church to notice you.

Yet even when his heart told him he was kidding himself, Simeon clung to God through the restlessness. And for every time he tightened his grip on the invisible hand of faith, that's how much sweeter the fulfillment was when it finally arrived.

Simeon learned that faithfulness is the purest form of worship.

Imagine what went through his mind that incredible day. He couldn't have known with 100 percent certainty that it was a baby he was looking for. There was no nametag embroidered on Jesus' blanket. Who knows how many times he'd tottered into town before and spotted someone who arrested his attention . . . and he wondered. All the more reason why that special morning could have raised the same, familiar doubts in his mind.

But a man full of the Spirit, who's lived long enough to love the Lord with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, he recognizes God's voice when He speaks. And while everyone around him was lost in the hum and small talk of their daily activity, oblivious to the fact that the object of their worship was in the temple, in the flesh, Simeon saw his Messiah.

So glorious and enraptured was his worship of the Christ child, it even caught Mary and Joseph by surprise. Like Simeon, they knew who their baby was. They also knew he was keeping them up nights, going through diapers as fast as they could wash them. Real life was setting in. But Simeon's worship was so full, so authentic, its awe rubbed off on a young carpenter and his new bride. There they stood, the three of them, lost in the unity that comes from genuine worship.

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Now Simeon could die in peace. He could look back on a life of waiting, following, and faithfulness, and say that nothing had been wasted. Because of God's grace, every moment had served a purpose.

His waiting was over. His worship had just begun.

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