

## #2-The Forgotten: An Older Man

06/08/2009 - Jim Johnson – Luke 2:21-35

Old age is a strange and challenging time of life. Some older folks tend to wonder if God was only interested in them as long as there was something they could do for Him. Does He still care even though body and mind have slowed down? Luke 2:21-35 says yes.

In verses 21-24 Luke gives us the backdrop to the story. Forty days after the birth of Christ, His parents fulfilled the law by going to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice for cleansing and to dedicate their firstborn child to the Lord. It is when they get to the temple that our story actually begins. The story centers on an older man named Simeon and the God that remembered him.

### A. The Spirit was \_\_\_\_\_ Him – 25

The main character is a man named Simeon. His name means “God hears.” As to his character – he was righteous and devout. Simeon was also a hopeful man. He was waiting for God to send the Messiah to redeem and restore the nation of Israel to her former greatness. Verse 26 seems to indicate that he was an older man. Tradition dates him at 113 years old.

Luke gave him the title of “a man.” He was no one of special stature or significance. Except that the Spirit was upon him. When the Spirit came upon someone it meant that God had chosen that person to perform some unique & special service for him. This was the case with Moses, Gideon, David and many other OT greats. But, Simeon had something even better than these men. When the Spirit came upon someone in the OT era it was temporary. But with Simeon, it was a state of being. The man was constantly accompanied by and influenced by the Spirit of God.

### B. The Spirit had \_\_\_\_\_ to Him – 26

The Spirit gave him Simeon the assurance that he would personally be permitted to look upon the Christ, the Messiah of Israel - not in the hereafter, but in his lifetime. This message was more than something than could have been derived from reading his Bible. He was given a specific personal assurance.

### C. The Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ Him – 27

Simeon was enjoying just another ordinary day when the Spirit of God began to nudge him over to the temple. So he went, in the spirit. Once there he saw a young couple walk through the gate. The Spirit prompted Simeon to move closer. He wondered, “Is this why the Spirit has led me to this place?”

### D. The Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ Him – 28-32

As he drew near the Spirit began to shout to his heart. This is Him, this is the one. Simeon you are now looking upon the Lord’s Christ, the one who will grow up to redeem his people and his nation. The Spirit had kept his promise to Simeon. The man who had been looking for the consolation of Israel, now looked upon the very person who would bring it about.

He responded to God with a song. (29-32) Simeon was now ready to die. The only thing that had ever been important to him was to see the advent of the Messiah. He had seen it, and was happy

Simeon was then given a special message for Mary. (34-35) He wanted her to know that the child, the long awaited Messiah would be received by some, rejected by others. Those who would receive Him would be rise up and be saved, those who opposed him would fall. He wanted her to know that her boy and the way he will be treated will create agonizing pain for Mary. The Spirit gave Simeon the ability to peer into the future to see the rejection of Christ that was coming; the mockery that would take place and even the crucifixion that would take His life.

## REFLECTION

At this point the story of Jesus goes on, but the story of Simeon ends. We never see or hear of him again in the NT. Given that he may have been 113 years old, he probably died soon after. God had kept his promise and he was fulfilled and ready to go.

If Simeon's culture was anything like ours, then Simeon no doubt was counted among the Forgotten. The elderly in every culture tend to be politely pushed aside in favor of youth, vigor, efficiency, beauty and so on. Occasionally an older person is consulted for their wisdom or honored for their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, but mostly they are pushed to the periphery of life – and forgotten.

But this story, however, says that God does not forget the elderly. He took Simeon and placed His Spirit upon him and spoke to him and led him. He made a unique and special promise to him and then kept it. God also used Simeon to encourage and affirm Joseph and Mary and prepare Mary for the pain ahead. He also gave the church a gift in his song (29-32) (often known as the Nunc Dimittis)

## APPLICATION

For the older folks among us - **Know that God will never \_\_\_\_\_ you.**

You matter to him just as much as the younger person. If your heart beats for God as Simeon's did. If you cultivate righteousness as Simeon did. You can be sure that God is just as anxious to use you as He did Simeon.

For you younger folks. **You need to \_\_\_\_\_ too.**

If God is not willing to forget the elderly – should we? The tendency of the young is to quit listening when a person reaches a certain age and to despise them for slowing down the line, or forgetting their glasses. It should not be that way. Simeon reminds us that even the older soul is a very valuable person in the eyes of God.

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## FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. For the older folk: If you are not involved in ministry. You should be. God is not done with you yet. It may be as simple as being a part of an FBC prayer cell.
2. For the younger folk: Audit your attitude concerning the elderly. Give it a word. Would it be patient or impatient; tolerant or annoyed? Etc.
  - a. Do a field trip to a nursing facility and love someone.
3. For all: Go see the movie Up and then discuss it with your family. What lessons does it teach about caring for one another?