

Waiting for God's Salvation and Finding it in Jesus! (Malachi 3:1-4 & Luke 2:22-

52)

28-Dec-25

Malachi 3:1

¹ "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

Luke 2:22-52

Jesus Presented in the Temple

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 marvelled 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.

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

⁴¹ Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Please have your Bibles open at Luke Chapter 2 – starting at verse 22.

There’s a **sermon outline** for you to take **notes**.

Let me **pray** first. Let’s pray...

Intro/Waiting

Waiting!

We all do it – don't we?

Things like...

Waiting for the man or woman of your dreams!

Waiting in the doctor's waiting room!

Waiting in queues at the shops or in traffic!

Waiting to be seated!

Waiting on the phone to speak to someone! [like Centrelink]

Waiting for your team to win!

Waiting for the sermon to end!

And then we have encouraging sayings like: “***Good things come to those who wait***” and “***Some things are worth waiting for***”

But is there anything you would be willing to wait your entire life for?

It would have to be something pretty special – wouldn't it?

Our 1st point is “**God often calls His people to wait**”

[Slide-1st Point]

Israel had to **wait** for the Messiah to come – God's Chosen Anointed One – the one who would bring **salvation**

Salvation means - *deliverance from sin and its consequences [which is death] deliverance by God's Messiah – our Lord Jesus*

Sin and death have plagued humankind since Adam and Eve broke God's rules in the Garden of Eden

And the only temporary solution the people of Israel had was to make animal sacrifices for their sins – over and over.

But **God promised a permanent solution** in sending a **Messiah** – but it would be in God's timing – and there would be a **wait**

In fact, between the OT and NT – there is a **400 year wait!**

God often calls His people to wait (Luke 2:22-24; Malachi 3:1-4)

We pick up the story in Luke chapter 2 – verses 22-24 – where this 400 year wait – is finally over – and it was worth waiting for!

Mary and Joseph bring their firstborn child – baby Jesus – to the Temple - to give thanks to God

This baby – is no ordinary baby – as we learnt on Christmas Day – this baby – is **God's chosen Messiah** – the **Saviour of the World** – Immanuel - **God himself with us**

In bringing Jesus to the temple – the 400-year-old prophecy of Malachi we read in our OT reading from **Malachi 3:1** - is fulfilled – God, through Malachi said:

[Slide-Malachi 3:1]

"I will send my messenger [John the Baptist], who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord [Jesus] you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

God keeps His promises in His own perfect timing – and God’s promises often involve - **God calling His people to wait!**

It’s fair to say though – it would be difficult to see at this moment in the temple – how baby Jesus is to bring about that salvation for humankind!

Faithful obedience leads to Spiritual Insight (Luke 2:22-28, 36 to 38)

Which brings us to the 2nd point “**Faithful obedience leads to spiritual insight**”

[Slide-2nd Point]

When Mary and Joseph presented baby Jesus at the Temple – vv22-24 – they were obediently following the OT Law – that the *child had to be circumcised after 8 days* (Gen 17:12; Lev 12:3) – and that *every first born male had to be consecrated before the Lord* [to remember how God preserved the first born sons when He rescued the Israelite people out of Egypt] (Exodus 13:2, 12) – and *a sacrifice had to be made* [as a purification offering after childbirth] – and Mary and Joseph due to their lowly status could only offer the poorest of sacrifices - “*a pair of doves or pigeons*”

Mary and Joseph faithfully obeyed God’s Law – still not fully understanding the miraculous events surrounding their son’s birth – **they simply walked by faith – not by sight.**

What about us?

Are we prepared to walk - by faith – not by sight?

Are we prepared to **continue following God’s Word** and are we prepared to wait on God - even when we can’t see the end result yet?

Will we continue to pray for that miracle, even though it's a long time coming?
(pause)

Now, in the Temple that day – there was an elderly man called **Simeon** and an elderly woman called **Anna**.

This is no coincidence – but a God-incidence!

Simeon had been waiting all His life for the “*consolation of Israel*” (v25) – in other words - Simeon was waiting for God to send the Messiah to bring comfort to God's people and bring them out of the distress and long suffering they had experienced

And the HS had revealed to Simeon – v26 – that *Simeon would not die before seeing the Lord's Messiah!*

Simeon had faithfully obeyed God - waiting for this promise to be fulfilled!

And Simeon obeyed the HS that day – v27 – and went into the temple courts – at exactly the right time – where he met Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus!

And once he held Jesus in his arms – v28 – Simeon had the spiritual insight to know He was holding ‘*the salvation of the world*’

That's just magical - isn't it?

(pause)

Then there's **Anna** an **84-year-old widow** – v36 - she's faithfully *worshipped at the temple day and night – praying and fasting* – v37 – *waiting for the Messiah to come!*

She too has been given **spiritual insight** – v38 – and *gave thanks to God for Jesus and spoke all about Him!*

Simeon and Anna's faithful obedience and waiting – was rewarded by God - revealing to them the identity of the Messiah

And because of their faithful obedience – **Mary and Joseph get to find out more about who their son really is!**lication

There are many things that go into a healthy church and fruitful ministry, but here we see two of the most important factors of becoming a healthy Christian and a healthy church. If we want to become a healthy Christian, and if we want this church to be healthy, **we need to follow the example of Anna.**

First, spend as much time as possible - **worshipping God, serving God, fellowshiping with other Christians, learning the Word of God.** That's the first thing. It will help us; it will help the church.

But secondly, **spend as much time as possible praying.** **Prayer is the lifeblood of the church.** Prayer is what keeps a church and its ministries supported and moving forward. Prayer is what keeps us in communication with God. Prayer is what holds back the spiritual forces of darkness. Prayer is how we can support me as the minister and support the elders and uphold the ministries here and everybody else in leadership positions.

And we see this in Anna. **She was a prayer warrior.** Not only did she pray, but she fasted, and she did it night and day. **I pray that God may give every church many people like Anna who serve God with fasting and praying - night and day.**

Jesus' salvation is available to all people (Luke 2:29-32)

My 3rd point is – **Jesus' salvation is available to all people** – vv29-32

[Slide-3rd point]

As Simeon holds baby Jesus in his arms – v29 – he is so grateful to the Sovereign Lord for keeping His promise – and for – v30 – being able to see God's salvation with His own eyes.

And then Simeon reveals that Jesus will bring salvation - not just to the people of Israel – v32 – but also be a light of revelation to the **Gentiles** (non-Jews) too!

What Simeon is revealing is that **God's plan** is to allow people of all nations to be saved from sin and death – and allow people of all nations to be forgiven of their sins and have a place in Heaven.

That's why Jesus will grow up to say "*I am the Light of the World*" (John 8:12) and to say "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6)

Everyone on this planet has the opportunity to repent and believe in Jesus' death for the forgiveness of their sins – and to believe Jesus's resurrection gives them eternal life in Heaven!

Application

Like Simeon and Anna – it's our job to reveal God's plan to others! Are we doing that?

(pause)

Application

In today's culture – sometimes younger people think that older people have nothing to teach them – and sometimes the older people believe it!

And on the flip side; sometimes older people know they have a lot they could teach and pass on to the younger ones – but they'd rather spend their later years fishing, or golfing or bowling etc. and they “retire” from Christianity!

Both these views are wrong – **The Bible says that those who are younger should learn from those who are older** (Titus 2)

Jesus' salvation brings joy, but it is also costly (Luke 2:33-35)

My 4th point is – **Jesus' salvation brings joy, but it is also costly** – vv33-35

[Slide-4th point]

As Simeon spoke about Jesus – v33 - Mary and Joseph marvelled about what Simeon said about their son!

Then Simeon continued V34 – *“**This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.**”*

What Simeon is saying is - Jesus' ministry - will **cause the fall** of those who resist God and reject Jesus as their Saviour – which will expose their sin and unbelief – and Jesus will also **cause the rising** of those who trust and follow Him, bringing salvation, hope, restoration and joy!

As our OT reading says in Malachi 3:2-3: ***who can endure the day of His [Jesus'] coming? Who can stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...***

Jesus' offer of salvation will be either a **stumbling block** to people or will be **the foundation of their lives** – there's no third option

Simeon also has the spiritual insight to know that Jesus' salvation is going to be costly for Jesus' dear mother, Mary – at the end of v35 – Jesus' salvation will mean “*a sword will pierce her own soul too*”

Mary will experience **deep emotional and spiritual pain**. She will witness the **opposition, rejection, and suffering** of her Son, especially His **crucifixion**. [As parents here this morning – we can relate to Mary here - we often go through anguish when our children suffer – don't we?]

Just as Jesus' mission involves sacrifice and hardship, Mary will share in that sorrow **by association and empathy**.

It shows us - that following God's plan can come at a **personal cost** to those who love, trust and obey Jesus.

Mary's experience models to us - **faithful endurance amid pain and suffering**.

Following Jesus is costly for us too!

We too - will suffer, be rejected, persecuted and misunderstood.

Our Response to Jesus' Salvation (Luke 2:40-52)

What will **our response** be this morning **to Jesus' salvation**?

Assuming we already believe?

[Slide-Response Heading]

Well – **we are still waiting today**

Waiting for - **God to answer that prayer we've been praying for some time now!**

Praying for a loved one to turn away from a wrong choice they've made?

Praying for a loved one to follow Jesus?

Praying for reconciliation in our family?

And so on...

Waiting! Waiting!

And...

Waiting for - **Jesus' to return one day!**

Verses 40 to 52 – can help us as we wait...

In these verses – we fast forward from Jesus being a baby to Jesus as a young boy – who is now in v40 - *filled with wisdom and the grace of God with Him* – and then v41 – **Jesus' parents take Him to Jerusalem for the annual festival of Passover** – and **Jesus** is now **12 years old**.

But in vv42-47 – **Mary and Joseph are in panic mode** – when Jesus goes missing for 3 days – and they **eventually find Jesus in the Temple** – v46 – *sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions* – and – v47 – *everyone who heard Jesus was amazed at His understanding and answers!*

Obviously Mary would have been beside herself – losing her son for 3 days and she expresses her anxiety to Jesus in v48

Jesus' reply in v49 is amazing – and **these are His first recorded words!**

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. *“Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house [literally going about my Father's business]?”*

We can get **our response** from His reply...

[Slide-1st]

1st - It reminds us who we belong to

Jesus knows He belongs to **His Father**.

For us, it reveals the truth that **our primary identity is as God's children**, before any other role or responsibility. **We belong to our Heavenly Father!**

Application: Do we see our lives, decisions, and priorities as shaped first by our relationship with God the Father?

[Slide-2nd]

2nd - It shapes our priorities

Jesus is drawn to His Father's house because He is about His Father's business.

What is **His Father's business**?

The Work of Salvation through **His Son!**

So, right from a young boy, **Jesus express His compulsion that is upon Him to be at one with His Father in saving humankind!**

For us, **it challenges what we centre our lives around.**

Application: Is God's purpose to save people for Heaven - **shaping what we devote our time, our energy, and our attention to?**

[Slide-3rd]

3rd - It teaches obedience even when others don't fully understand

Mary and Joseph do not fully understand Jesus' words—yet Jesus still returns with them in obedience.

Faithfulness doesn't mean being understood; it means being faithful.

Application: Are we willing to follow God even when others don't fully "get" it? Even when others get us wrong? Even when others think we're weird or think we're a fruit loop?

[Slide-4th]

4th - It calls us into a life of attentive listening

Jesus is found **listening and asking questions** – v46 - in His Father's house.

Being "**about our Father's business**" begins with **listening to God's word**.

Application: Are we making space to **listen to God**, by reading and meditating on His Word? That would be a **good New Year Resolution!**

One final thought,

[Slide-Conclusion]

Without Jesus' salvation – we would have **no forgiveness** – **no eternal life** – **no hope** – and **in a wretched state!**

Therefore - we should be forever thankful for Jesus' Salvation that He brings to us!

Let's pray

Heavenly Father, we thank You that in Jesus You have kept every one of Your promises. We thank and praise You for sending Your salvation into the world.

Teach us to wait faithfully as Simeon and Anna did, to trust Your timing, and to

welcome Jesus as Your light for all people. Help us, to walk in obedience to You as Jesus did. Make us a people who recognize Your Son, delight in Him, and follow Him all our days. In His name we pray. Amen.

Benediction

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”