

PROFILES OF DEVOTION Text: Luke 2:21–40

Keeping the Flame of Faith Alive in Every Stage of Our Life

Introduction:

- 1. It was dark times for Israel around the time of the birth of Christ...**
 - a. Israel was occupied by the Roman Empire
 - b. King Herod was a Tyrant who tried to Kill the Newborn King Jesus
 - c. The Temple was run by Sadducees who sold their souls for power
 - d. The Law of God was replaced by the strict traditions of the Pharisees
 - 2. Today it might be easy for Christians to get discouraged and give up hope...**
 - a. The divisions that are dividing the country... Churches... Families... Friends...
 - b. The godless ideologies being taught to our children
 - c. Cultural Pressure to Conform to the World...
 - 3. But this is not the time to become bitter and loose hope...**
 - a. It is Time to be strong for God and His people...
 - b. to keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts for God and the next Generation
 - 4. Simeon and Anna are not mentioned any where else in the N.T.**
 - a. These unknown Saints are not mentioned before, or after this account...
 - b. But Luke records their Faith, Hope, Love and Devotion to God
 - c. They did not give up hope even during the darkest of days—And They Were Rewarded for It!
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I. THREE PROFILES OF DEVOTION TO THE LORD

A. JOSEPH AND MARY (v.21–24)

- 1. MADE SURE TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOD'S LAW**
 - a) **CIRCUMCISION:** The sign of the covenant for all male Israelites
 - b) **DEDICATION:** They named Him Jesus as the Angel told them to
 - c) **PURIFICATION:** Mary fulfilled God's law for purification after giving birth
 - d) **SACRIFICE:** Also required by God's Law—sacrifice offered at the Temple
- 2. OBEYING GOD'S LAW EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE HUMBLE AND POOR...**
 - a) Notice the Sacrifice they Made at the Temple...
 - b) Notice How the Law of God Made Provision to Protect a Poor Mother
(Leviticus 12:8) ⁸ 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'
 - c) This is the Offering That Mary and Joseph Made to the Lord
- 3. THEIR LOVE FOR GOD IS SEEN IN THEIR DEVOTION TO KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD**
 - a) Jesus was Born to a Poor, Hard Working, Family of Devout Faith
 - b) Which Shows You What God Considers Important
 - c) Of all the families of Israel God chose this one for Jesus

B. SIMEON (v.25–35)

1. SIMEONS FAITH... Here is a Man Who Walked Close with God Even During Difficult Times...

- a) Israel was occupied by the Roman Empire, ruled by pagan Caesars
- b) King Herod was a Tyrant who tried to Kill the Newborn King Jesus
- c) The Temple was run by Sadducees who sold their souls for power
- d) The Temple was run as a den of thieves by the High Priest who profited from it
- e) The Law of God was replaced or re-interpreted by strict traditions of Pharisees
- f) We Don't Exactly Know Who Simeon Was—he is not mentioned before or after this
- g) But Some Scholars believe Simeon was known in Jerusalem, tracing Simeon as the son of Hillel, and the father of Gamaliel.
- h) Matthew Henry says, “the Jews say that he was endued with a prophetic spirit, and that he was turned out of his place because he witnessed against the common opinion of the Jews concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah.” (Henry)

2. SIMEON'S HOPE... But Simeon Never Lost Hope in God's Promises...

- a) He Has waited on the Lord—and this is no accidental meeting!
- b) He Recognized the Messiah Even While Hundreds or even thousands are in Jerusalem and Don't recognize the Messiah
- c) Now Simeon Holds the Light of the World and the Glory of Israel in His Arms!

3. SIMEON'S PROPHECY...

- a) Jesus would be the Cause From Which **MANY WOULD FALL**
- b) Jesus would be the Cause From Which **MANY WOULD RISE**
- c) Jesus would be the Cause of **MUCH OPPOSITION**
- d) Jesus would be the Cause that would **REVEAL THE HEART (John 3:16–19)**

Jesus completely turned the world power structures upside down!

- Now the Blind can See! The Lost are Found! The Dead are Alive!
- The Poor in spirit—not the Proud in spirit would have the Kingdom of God
- The Meek—not the Powerful will inherit the earth
- The Merciful—not the Manipulative will receive mercy
- Those who exalt themselves will be humbled—those who humble themselves exalted!

C. ANNA (v.36–38)

1. Anna Was a Widow: She Had Known Sorrow—but Did Not Become Bitter

- a) Her husband had died after only 7 years of marriage so she was alone
- b) Sorrow can do one of two things to us.
- c) It can make us hard, bitter, resentful, rebellious against God.
- d) Or it can make us kinder, softer, more sympathetic.
- e) It can Destroy our faith; or give us a Deeper Faith

2. She Was 84 Years Old — But She Had Never Given Up Hope

- a) Sometimes old age wears people down and causes them to give up hope
- b) Anna Never Gave Up Hope

So How Did Anna Become Such an Example of Devotion and Faith?

1. She Never Stopped Worshipping God

- a) She Loved to Be in the House of God
- b) She wanted to be close to God
- c) She Continually Worshipped and Gave Thanks to God

2. She Never Stopped Praying to God

- a) She Was A Woman Devoted in Prayer Day and Night
- b) Anna was a Prayer Warrior!

3. She Never Stopped Sacrificing for God

- a) She Was A Woman of Great Self-Denial for God
- b) Not only did she pray but she fasted and prayed
- c) And When She Found Jesus She Told People About Him!

II. SOME LESSONS FOR US

A. DEVOTION TO GOD IS FOR EVERY STAGE OF LIFE...

WHETHER GROWING IN FAITH—OR GROWING OLD WITH GRACE

1. Joseph and Mary Were Young and Just Starting Their Life...

but they Made Sure to Raise their family in the Lord! (Lk 2:39–40)

- a) There are Many Worries and Anxieties in Life—especially for the Young
- b) Jesus Tells Us How To Prioritize Our Life Properly by Seeking God First
(Matthew 6:31–34)

The Main Thing is to Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing!

- c) Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness
and all these things will be added unto you.

2. SIMEON WALKED CLOSELY WITH THE LORD...

- a) So Close That He Had Been Promised by the Holy Spirit –
– that He Would See the Messiah before He Died. (Matthew 7:7)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

3. ANNA HAD GROWN IN FAITH... AND WAS GROWING OLD WITH GRACE!

- a) As a Widow for so many years... ANNA Could've Had a Lonely and Bitter Life...
- b) Living Alone with Regrets of the Past of a Life Lost to Tragedy.
- c) But Anna Didn't Have Time To Complain... or Gossip... or Grumble...
- d) She Was Too Busy in Devotion to God, in Prayer and Worship...
and Telling People About Jesus!

“The years had left Anna without bitterness and in unshakable hope because day by day she kept her contact with him who is the source of strength and in whose strength our weakness is made perfect.” (Barclay)

There is No Retirement in the Church—There are too many Needs

- The Need for Encouragement, the Need for Prayer and for godly Example
- The Bible Says, Older Women Teach the Younger Women
- The Church Needs Every Member Doing Their Part

B. THE FAITHFUL DO NOT FEAR DEATH—THEY DEPART IN PEACE

1. After Years of Searching—Simon Had Found the Savior! (v.28–32)

- a) The Author of Space and Time—Entered Space and Time
- b) Fully God—Fully Human—And Simeon Was Able to Hold the Messiah in his arms!

2. Simeon Had Found the Prince of Peace—and could now depart in Peace!

- a) Jesus Went to the Cross to Give Us Peace (Romans 5:1-5)
- b) Now We Can Have Peace with God...
Peace within Ourselves... and Peace with Others...
- c) This is How the Faithful Can Depart in Peace...
Because We Found Jesus the Savior!
- d) Just Like Simeon! The Fear of Death is Replaced by the Peace of God!
- e) This is a Part of The Work of Jesus on the Cross...
to Release us of the Fear of Death (Hebrews 2:14–15)

3. The Faithful No Longer Need to Fear Death—They Can Depart in Peace

- f) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” (Revelation 14:13)

C. APPARENTLY SIMEON TOOK THE PROPHECIES OF GOD SERIOUSLY Mary and Joseph did... Anna did... —DO WE?

1. Simeon Searching and Waiting for the First Arrival of the Messiah— Even During Dark Times of Discouragement...

2. We Search and Wait for the Second Arrival of Jesus: His Return

- a) There are so many distractions and worries of the world...
Questions and Debates over Politics and Current Events...
- b) So Many Worldly Problems that it is Easy to Get Discouraged

3. Remember: The Main Thing is To Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing!

- a) Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness that was Offered by the blood of Jesus on the Cross

CONCLUSION:

- 1. If You Seek and You Too Will Find the Savior (Jeremiah 29:11–13)**