

2010 ADVENT SERMON ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS ...LOVE

Luke 2:25-38

On this fourth Sunday in Advent
We look at Love

Christmas lasts longer than you think.
Early in our marriage we started a Christmas tradition that,
We don't take down the Christmas decoration until into January
And we don't finish paying for the presents until April.

Why do toymakers watch the divorce rate?
When it rises, so do toy sales.
According to the analyzers, four parents and eight grandparents
tend to compete for children's affections, so they buy toys.
[L.M. Boyd, Spokesman Review, March 15, 1993](#)

Today we look at love.
Can it too be bought?
My little Granddaughter Katrina has been thinking and thinking of what she'd like to ask
Santa for Christmas for this year....finally one day this week...she woke up and came
running downstairs: "Mommy, mommy! I know what I'm going to ask Santa for!"
"I'm so glad you finally thought of something.....what is it?"
"well...I really don't need any more toys....so...I'm going to ask Santa if I could have my
Daddy back!!!"
He mommy said: I wish you could have seen the smile on her face...she truly thought
that would be the best Christmas Present ever.....and that Santa would *absolutely* be able
to grant her her Christmas Wish!
Now her daddy is with the 452nd serving in Afghanistan and will be gone for a year.

What do you want for Christmas?
Don't we all just want a little love?

Today we look at an Old man and an Old woman
Who wanted their love back.
They weren't married.
They probably didn't know each other,
Because they lived in a culture where a man
didn't speak to a woman in public
Not even his own sister.

What is unique about them is that they are both very old.
And very ordinary and probably wouldn't have caught anyone's notice.
25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout.
But this man was a patriot in Israel.
Identified as the son of the famous Hillel, president of the Sanhedrin
**He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon
him. Luke 2:25**

Israel had had independence for some six hundred years.
 Like our nation when we have had freedom for so long
 We forget the privileges of this freedom.
 It benefits and its hard won joys.
 But Simeon was a patriot.
 He believed in his nation
 Because he believed that they were meant to bring a blessing to the whole human race.

Even though God had been silent for over 400 years
 He loved God and
 And He understood that God loved the world
 And that God had promised to send a messiah.

Simeon never forgot
 He never ceased to look for it to happen.
 And the Holy Spirit had told him that he wouldn't die until
26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Luke 2:26

Then One day.
 Simeon came into the Temple.
 Saw a poor couple.
 And directed by the Holy Spirit
27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. Luke 2:27
Knew it was the messiah.
We all need direction

A man absolutely hated his wife's cat and decided to get rid of him one day by driving him 20 blocks from his home and leaving him at the park.
 As he was getting home, the cat was walking up the driveway.
 The next day he decided to drive the cat 40 blocks away.
 He put the beast out and headed home.
 Driving back up his driveway, there was the cat!
 He kept taking the cat further and further and the cat would always beat him home. At last he decided to drive a few miles away, turn right, then left, past the bridge, then right again and another right until he reached what he thought was a safe distance from his home and left the cat there.
 Hours later the man calls home to his wife: "Jen, is the cat there?"
 "Yes", the wife answers, "Why do you ask?"
 Frustrated, the man answered, "Put that critter on the phone. I'm lost and need directions!!!"

But still one wonders if Simeon every got impatient.
 Did he even doubt the promise he had received?
 We struggle with our doubts don't we.
 But in spite of our doubts,
 We stay in the word, and listen to the Spirit,
 And the Holy Spirit led him to this young couple.
 As they brought
When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the

Law required, Luke 2:27

So it says

28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, Luke 2:28

Did Mary and Joseph think this strange?

Its one thing for a stranger to approach a couple,

Smile at the baby,

Makes some cute sounds to get the baby to smile.

Ask about its age and its name,

Then move on.

But to take the baby from the parents?

I gotten very cautious of touching children.

And I hardly ever talk to little kids in the toy aisle of the store anymore.

Because their mothers get all excited.

But to take an infant today from a young couple

Just like that????

One had best know the couple very well.

But old Simeon had just begun.

He wasn't content to hold the child.

He made a speech.

With a prayer written into it.

29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss ^{F8} your servant in peace. Luke 2:29

He looked up to heaven and said:

Now I can die!

I can die in peace, because my life is fulfilled.

30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." Luke 2:30-32

Simeon didn't reveal anything new to Joseph and Mary about Jesus.

They marveled that a stranger would know

And that everything that was said by all of God's messengers harmonized so perfectly.

I'd like a church full of Simeon's.

Those who live a long life,

Hold to a grand dream,

Maybe that is why the Mishna which preserved the of saying of the great rabbis,

Has no word for Simeon.

They hated him because he believed that God would someday send his love to Israel

Through a savior who would not only bless Israel

But gentile as well.

Simeon believed in Jesus of Nazareth.

Isn't that what every relationship wants.

That when it seems that the love has died,

When the dream has dimmed.
 The promise is long in coming.
 Love still last, and longs for what can be better in spite of the pain.

A young man said to his father at breakfast one morning,

"Dad, I'm going to get married."

His father asked: "How do you know you're ready to get married? Are you in love?"

"I sure am," said the son.

"How do you know you're in love?" asked the father.

"Last night as I was kissing my girlfriend good-night, her dog bit me and I didn't feel the pain until I got home." [Source Unknown](#).

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, Luke 2:34

And death would be a part of it.

35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." Luke 2:35

His life would cost her suffering and pain.

But God was sending his love to the world for Christmas.

Now as this was going on someone else was edging into the picture

An 84 year old woman named Anna.

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; Luke 2:26

Anna didn't have a very good life.

She was married as a teenage

And had been widowed just seven year later

And probably without any children.

she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. Luke 2:36-37

And had survived as a widow for some sixty years.

In a world where widows had to be supported by the closest male relative,

A brother, brother-in-law, father or a son.

We don't know How Anna managed it.

But she was a prophetess.

Prophet didn't have employers or pension program.

They were freelancers,

Dependent on the response and trust of the people who heard them,

Or consulted them.

Lukes Gospel tells us that she was a righteous women

Maybe it wasn't just for religious reasons.

Some of it might have been her economic.

But as the years went by,

She became even more focused.

And the bible says:

“She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. Luke 2:37

I loved to have women like Anna in our church.

Selfless in their serving.

Caring not for what others may think.

Just bringing their love for God to Christmas.

I have found that often the most willing to serve in the church

Are not the young,

But the elderly, the senior citizens,

Those who are growing older day by day, but

Who are not weary of well-doing,

Whose bodies are growing weak and worn,

But who take more and more pleasure in serving others.

And giving more and more to service,

Until they come to heaven.

When she saw the baby Jesus

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.

What a day it was.

For an Old man

And an old woman.

Who had gotten the news early that

Israel prayer has been answered.

And they got energized,

And began to speak to every person they could find.

To tell them that God’s love had come at Christmas.

Christmas wasn’t over the night Jesus was born.

It didn’t end with the shepherds coming ,

Or the wise men.

Christmas had just begun.

SLIDE---When Simeon saw the child

He saw the profound love of God

He said:

Now I’m ready to die.

When Anna saw the child

she begins to tell everyone in reach about

this child who would bring redemption.

Their responses are quite typical of men and women.

A man more quiet and introspective....

Hears he news

Think inward and becomes reflective.

A woman more expressive.
Hears the news
Turns vocal, and social and becomes expressive.

It figures.
A man ready to die,
A woman ready to talk.

But they were both right.

Anna wanted the world to know of Jesus love
That we are touched by God,
And He has heard our cry,
And came to us.
And changed us.

Aren't we all touched by the lives God changes.
This year I meet a man whose life was changed by God.
I never tire of hearing his story over and over,
How God saved him,
Gave him a new direction.
Reenergized his marriage.
Brought purity to his heart and mind.

Yes we all should tell the story
That we have seen the messiah.
That was Anna mood and she was right.

But Simeon was right too.
When he saw the love of God in the Baby Jesus.
He said:
I have seen the Lord,
I am ready to die.

Too many people in our world are not ready to die.
Because they haven't seen the savior.
They haven't been to Bethlehem,
They haven't been to Calvary.

But for those who have.
And for those who have accepted him,
And believe in the love that God sent into the world.

We are ready to live and ready to die
Because what we discover is that
THE love in Christmas last a lot longer than you think.
It last into eternity.