

An Encounter With Jesus Reveals Your Heart
Luke 2:21-40

I know you have heard of the 12 Days of Christmas but have you heard of the 12 days after Christmas?

<http://xmasfun.com/Lyrics.asp?ID=82>

**The first day after Christmas, my true love and I had a fight,
And so I chopped the pear tree down, and burned it just for spite.
Then with a single cartridge, I shot that blasted partridge,
That My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.**

**The second day after Christmas, I pulled on the old rubber gloves,
And very gently wrung the necks of both the turtle doves.
My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.**

**The third day after Christmas, my mother caught the croup;
I had to use the three French hens to make some chicken soup.
The four calling birds were a big mistake, for their language was obscene.
The five gold rings were completely fake and they turned my fingers green.
The sixth day after Christmas, the six laying geese wouldn't lay,
I gave the whole entire gaggle to the A.S.P.C.A.**

**On the seventh day after Christmas , what a terrible mess I found,
All seven of the swimming swans had long since Christmas drowned.
that My true love, my true love, my true love gave to me.**

**The eighth day after Christmas, before they could suspect,
I bundled up the eight maids a milking, nine pipers piping, Ten ladies dancing, 'leven lords a leaping, Twelve drummers drumming and sent them back collect.
I wrote my true love, "We are through, love",
and I said in so many words,
"your Christmas gifts that you gave me, I'm sorry but were for the birds!"**

The sentiment of that song the *12 Days after Christmas* reveals something about all the Christmas hype doesn't it...

After the glistening wrapping paper with the perfectly match bow is torn off and thrown into the fire, there is a gift there that doesn't solve the problem of the marriage does it.

After the sparkling lights on the immaculately decorated trees are thrown in a box and put in the attic...there family rooms return to normal and so does the family....

After the exhilaration of getting a good deal at the mall fades, the bill comes and the finances are still a wreck....

After the nations attempt to celebrate Peace on Earth on December 25, War resumes on December 26.

The sentiment of that song the *12 Days after Christmas* reveals that the worldly y Christmas hype was just that--hype... And people are left with yearnings and dreams and expectations that were not filled by the 12 Days of Christmas gifts, nor the lights, nor the decorations, nor the promises.

I don't know where you are today in regard to the type of Christmas you had. I indeed hope you had a blessed Christmas.

But if you didn't having a soothing Christmas...what will you do with those unmet expectations? Those unfilled dreams? Those broken promises?

Let me say this and it may shock you...Don't drown them out...and by all means don't mask them over with other unrealistic expectations, fanciful dreams, and false promises.

Those unmet yearnings/realizations of your soul may help prepare your heart to see Jesus more fully when you encounter him. We are going to unpack that more and more today and you will see why I say that as we study our text today.

Throughout December we have been studying the first 2 chapters of Luke.

All through Luke 1-2, Luke has been detailing responses of those who have encountered Jesus upon his arrival to this earth....

Zacharias...The Priest who didn't believe the signs became the sign

Mary...The Young Teen who so knows the song of Hannah in the OT becomes the mother of her own Savior and burst out in the Song of Hannah 2.0

The Shepherds...The outcasts of society became the first responders to the birth of Jesus

Today in Luke 2, Luke records what encounters with Jesus will do.

Luke 2:34. Behold, this *Child* is appointed

for the fall and rise of many in Israel,

and for a sign to be opposed—

35and a sword will pierce even your own soul—

to the ***end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.***"

An encounter with Jesus WILL ALWAYS REVEAL YOUR HEART. ALWAYS.

There is no escaping that when you are exposed to the person and message of Jesus **for the first time** or on **a daily basis**, your response REVEALS YOUR HEART

Take a look at the entire text we are studying today...Everybody should have a handout with the text on it. If you don't have a hand out... turn to

Luke 2:21-40 which is page 45 in the back section of the bible in the chair in front of you.

21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Notice how loaded with significance that these 28 words are about JesusGod coming to earth as man indicated his solidarity with mankind but now...His circumcision—**Solidarity with His people**...He is one of us.....His Name Yahweh saves.....given by angel before conception.....

22 And when the days for their purification **according to the law** of Moses were completed (40 days after the birth....1 week before circumcision, 1 month before reentering the temple --ceremonial uncleanness from the contamination of blood and bodily fluids in childbirth), they brought Him up to Jerusalem *to present Him to the Lord* 23 (as it is **written in the Law** of the Lord, "EVERY *firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD*"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said **in the Law of the Lord**, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

What do you see here in this opening scene...Joseph and Mary coming to the temple to present baby Jesus to the Lord..to dedicate Him...Now in Jewish law...the baby was not required to be brought to the temple Primarily just mary coming and fulfilling her ritual purification....But this scene of Mary bringing baby Jesus to the temple is reminiscent of some other scene in Scripture....Where have you seen a similar scene to this in past Scripture?....

1 Samuel—the lowly, meek--Hannah came and left Samuel at the tabernacle
God has been embedding in His Son's birth patterns and allusions for His people to lock on to and recognize.

If you remember when Pastor Green preached on Mary's magnificat (my soul magnifies) he mentioned that Mary's song sounded a lot like Hannah's song. Mary knew Hannah's song... and not just Hannah's song...the God behind Hannah's song! It was apparently that Mary, this 14ish young lady knew God's ways well... as she comprehended how her God worked in history..

Now the pattern is repeating itself in Mary and Joseph bringing the little boy to the temple...just like Hannah...and Luke then makes it clear **that this one Jesus** is the fulfillment of the pattern of firstborns males in the OT... that "EVERY FIRSTBORN MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED **HOLY TO THE LORD**"

All the first born males that had been dedicated to the Lord up to this time were prototypes or pictures of this ultimate firstborn son dedicated to the Lord and deserves right ...HOLY...to the Lord...None else like him....

Jesus Not Samuel....Jesus...not David....Jesus not Moses....fulfills this pattern to the max.....

Not sure Mary and Joseph fully recognize this yet... but they are willing vessels...And at the temple they encounter some--lets say "interesting"-- people when they arrive at the temple...

Please note that the most significant encounters that they experience are not from the ESTABLISHED PRIESTHOOD THERE. THE ESTABLISHED RELIGIOUS PRIEST HOOD STRUGGLED TO RECOGNIZE JESUS—Remember Zacharias???

Encounter #1 (Develop—Imagin me an old man from the community of Jerusalem—maybe about 80 years old)

25And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26**And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27**And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, **28** then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;
30For my eyes have seen Your salvation,
31Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

34And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother,
"Behold, this *Child* is appointed
for the fall and rise of many in Israel,
and for a sign to be opposed—
35and a sword will pierce even your own soul—
to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Encounter #2 (Develop—Imagin me an 84 year old women who loiters at the temple night and day...nobody really knows why she is there at the temple)

36And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, **37**and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. **38**At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Conclusion

39When they had performed **everything according to the Law of the Lord,** they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

40The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the **grace of God was upon Him.**

Two encounters with Jesus....an encounter with Jesus WILL ALWAYS REVEAL YOUR HEART
Four questions for you today about your encounter with this one, called Jesus

1) Will you even recognize the only one of us who fulfilled God's Righteousness?

Sandy Zeeger sang the song "Where's the line to see Jesus" ...

I can tell you where it was Saturday night, a week ago right here at the Living Nativity with over 2100 people coming through.

But where is the line at the Mall...Where is the line at the court house... Where is the line in Washington DC...

Maybe the question should be rephrased...Instead of Where is the line...Why don't people see?-

How many years did Simeon wait in line? Decades....The text says he was looking...and he would not taste death until He saw.....

How many years did Anna wait? Follow the logic..She was 84 years old when she saw the Messiah waiting in the temple after becoming a widow. If she was a typical Jewish girl she probably married young and as the text says lived with her husband before he died for 7 years...then she went to stay in the temple looking for the redemption of Israel...So if she was widowed in her 20's or 30's she was waiting in for 50 years.....

These two individuals were **LOOKING FOR YEARS** and when Jesus arrived on the scene they immediately recognized Him.

Did Mary's Aunt Martha knit Jesus a sweater that in red letters said...I am Jesus... the Messiah....Did Jesus have a mark implanted on his head like Harry Potter whom everyone recognized....no....

How did they recognize this baby....the text says they were filled with the Holy Spirit...But also they were looking....

Why do people look for something? Because they have a need. Bingo!!

What did they recognize that they had a need for? In their own words they recognized they had a need for redemption/ consolation/ salvation

And Luke inserts something intriguing here about Mary the **Mother of the Savior of the world**

Joseph and Mary offered for themselves a sin offering..."A pair of turtledoves, or two pigeons." Lev 5:11 is clear that this was a sin offering and **it is clear that this was a sin offering for those who could not afford to bring a lamb....But in reality they did dedicate to the Lord the only lamb that ever mattered into the temple of God..Joseph** and Mary recognized their unrighteous state before God by their sin offering...

And finally notice the refrain that is repeated 5 times in 20 verses....

v. 22 according to the Law

v. 23 as it is written in the Law

v. 24 in the Law of the Lord

v. 27 to carry out the custom of the Law

v. 39 when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord

This baby is the only one who fulfilled all righteousness of the Law of the Lord and the Word of the Lord....And we know that he continued in that throughout his 33 years of life on earth....

Here is my point...How can you recognize Jesus as the one whom fulfills all righteousness when your heart has yet to see its unrighteousness and its need for God's righteousness?

- But, does your lack of recognition reveal that your heart has yet to see its own unrighteousness?

This morning as you encounter Jesus in the text do you even recognize Him as the ONLY one of us who is righteous? If you are struggling to recognize Him, then your heart does not fully comprehend its own unrighteousness....

Your encounter with Jesus this morning reveals your heart.

This morning I know there are people here who do not recognize Jesus

This year I have seen people reject Jesus not only for their salvation but even as professed believers---

Why is that....they have not come recognize their heart and thus their need...

While you are in that blind condition there is no hope for you my friend.

I have also seen people see Jesus so clearly for who and what he represents...because they know without a shadow of a doubt how prone to wander is their heart

They see the problems they have caused in their marriage and weep

They see the problems they have created in the parenting and repent

They see the problems they have cause to their parents and confess

They see the problems they created in their relationships and forsake.

Blessed are those who mourn for you shall be comforted

The second question this text raises is this...

2) Will you embrace the only one of us who brings God's Deliverance

What does the text say that Simeon was looking for—the consolation of Israel..

That phrase comes from Isaiah 40:1-11—Comfort, comfort my people for

Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD's hand Double for all her sins

That concept of consolation is in the context of Israel's enslavement to Babylon, which echoes Israel's enslavement to Egypt in the Exodus and at the time of Simeon, Israel was underneath the enslavement of Rome

It's like "Israel ...what about freedom do you not understand you keep getting back into slavery"—

That's the point on a broader scale that the OT shouts out....

Why is there this subjugation of one nation by another nation?...Why is there this constant clamoring for exaltation and superiority among Kingdoms of this world?

Because of a different type of slavery an**enslavement to the Kingdom of self**....

Notice verse 30...this child Jesus would function as a deliverer not just to Israel who was under the enslavement of the nations... but this child would function as a deliverer to all people...A light of revelation to the Gentiles....

It was not the Gentiles who were enslaved nationally...they were the rulers! Rome Ruled the World!

Why did they need deliverance---because of the personal enslavement to the Kingdom of self....

When Simeon saw the King who would deliver him from himself and the world from themselves...He embraced that child

QUESTION: How can you embrace the only one of us who brings God's Deliverance when your heart has yet to acknowledge your own enslavement?

- Does your lack of embracing reveal that your heart has yet to acknowledge its enslavement?

3) Will you Delight in the only one of us who satisfies our yearnings

In each of these questions I have used the terminology "the ONLY ONE OF US"

--The terminology "The **ONLY ONE**" Comes from that terminology "HOLY TO THE LORD"

--The terminology "OF US" comes from the significance of his circumcision...expressing solidarity with his people!

Now...let's zero in on Anna's encounter with Jesus just for a few minutes.

Anna...is possibly what society would see as a weird old lady who may be a nuance

Nobody knows what why she is doing what she is doing...

She hangs around the temple day and night fasting and praying

She lost her husband when she had only been married for seven years

Then she remained single for the rest of her life until the age of 84 which she saw the redemption of Israel manifested in that baby...

Look at that phrase—SHE NEVER LEFT THE TEMPLE< SERVING NIGHT AND DAY WITH FASTINGS AND PRAYERS....

How many of you are here around this church day and night fasting and praying for 50 years—
Raise your hand....Its not Pastor Viars...Maybe Jerry Jamison...Maybe Doc smith (Have fun here). I really can not relate to this lady...but I hope to grow more and more like her...

This snapshot of Anna gives us this picture

Here is a lady with deep seated yearnings and did not allow those yearnings to be masked/drown out/ medicated away.

- Filling her life with 100 channels of cable TV.....
- Living for her own endless convenience.. (could you image the inconvenience her prayer life had on her schedule? Could you image the impact that her fasting had on her eating
- Seeking a new teaching that says—Your Great, Its just the people around you that don't know it.
- Finding a new relationship in which the person will give me the strokes I want
- Engaging in a fantasy world that has no struggles or consequence (Porn? You are the hero of your dreams, Romance Novels, slow fade of disconnection from this world that does not allow us to engage with the pains that create the thirsts....

We so here in America don't deprive ourselves of anything

So that whenever we have a pain of unmet desire...we seek to meet it.... with other false saviors

How can you delight in the ONLY ONE OF US who brings satisfaction when your heart has yet to thirst?

How can you delight in the only one of us who brings satisfaction when your heart remains satisfied with the love of this world?

And then I have to say REALLY? We really love this world?

I stand before you today and say I struggle to get ANNA because the moment I feel an against of sadness, anxiety, about a broken world....I too am quick to extinguish it, to drown it out by quick fixes (Personal example of yearning)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied...

Pray this year in 2011 for God to

1. help you recognize your unrighteousness
2. See your enslavement
3. To awaken a intense discontentment with the things of this world so that you thirst.

Then I when you are thirsty and see Jesus....Oh you will so Delight in Him that you will tell everyone...That's what Anna did...She told everyone who were also looking (thirsting) about this Jesus child....

The greatest platform for evangelism is a soul that had been thirsting in the desert telling others thirsting in the desert about a delightful oasis...

Do you even know you are in a desert today?

- When you encounter Jesus today and there is not a response of Delight... does your lack of delight reveal that your heart has yet to thirst?

Finally the fourth question that this text raises is this...

4) Will you rest in the only one of us who imparts a quiet soul

But, does your lack of rest reveal that your heart has not ceased to work?

The Irony and pun of that question is fully intended..

If my heart has ceased to labor and work then I'm dead...

Simeon's heart was free to stop laboring at the moment he saw and embrace Jesus.

"Now Lord,...Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace...."

He was free to die and his soul was at peace....

How beautiful of a picture for those of us living in this body of death...the moment we see and embrace Jesus is the moment we are free to die in peace. For there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

But for those who the Lord has not promised that the moment they see and embrace Jesus that they will die...the parallel for the living is the same.

Is your heart noisy from striving to control only that which God controls?

Is your heart noisy from working to perform for God when Christ was the only one of us who performed?

Is your heart noisy from to gain the acceptance of people when God in Christ has already accepted you

Is your heart noisy from clamoring to be exalted in people's eyes when God through Christ will exalt you at the proper time?

Does a heart that has ceased working for these things sound so peaceful....Will you rest in the one who imparts a quiet soul.

Conclusion

Jesus in this passage is clearly portrayed as the object of all of Israel's hopes and dreams.

Simeon and Anna recognized Him and their encounter with Jesus revealed their Heart. They had responses of Embracing, Delighting, and Resting in Him. What will it take to awaken you from blindness to Him for your salvation but also for your daily walk? Pray for God to awaken you now.

For those who see clearly...Blessed are you and pray that God would continue to deepen your awareness this coming year of why you needed Jesus in the first place.

What does your encounter with Jesus this day reveal about your heart?