

No Jesus No Peace – Know Jesus Know Peace
Luke 2.25-40 (KJV)
December 30, 2012

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

No Jesus, no peace – know Jesus, know peace. That's kind of a tricky phrase, but I didn't choose it for today's sermon theme because it is tricky. I chose it because it's true.

Peace could easily be the most valued of all possessions. Peace is something people long for. "All I want is a little peace and quiet." You've heard people say that. You've probably said it yourself more than once. "I just need a little peace." But we don't have peace – why not?

I asked myself that question as I was writing this sermon – why don't we have peace – and the oddest answer popped into my head. I mentally heard the words of an old Hank Williams song. Listen to this:

Your cheatin' heart will make you weep,
You'll cry and cry and try to sleep,
But sleep won't come the whole night through,
Your cheatin' heart, will tell on you

Now that may sound humorous, or even flippant, but I'm quite serious. We don't have peace because we have cheating hearts. Our hearts were made to love God and God

alone. But we cheat on God. Our hearts run after things of this world, temporal things with no lasting value, evil things dangled before us as temptations from Satan, the world, and our flesh.

When we weaken and give in to the temptations, our cheating hearts tell on us, we feel guilty, and there goes our peace. Just to make matters worse, we are powerless to do anything about our situation. On our own, we are capable of nothing but cheating on God. So when we have no Jesus we have no peace.

But that's the bad news. The good news is that God has taken steps to reverse our situation. He has taken steps to give our hearts a new set of values. He has taken it upon himself to establish peace between himself and us. The peace that God restored between himself and us is Jesus. Jesus is the beginning and end of all peace. That's why to know Jesus is to know peace.

Today we are looking at peace by studying the short story of Simeon because Simeon possessed the peace that all humanity longs for. The short song that burst forth from Simeon's heart is the envy of every troubled heart from Adam and Eve to you and me. Simeon knew the secret of peace was two-fold; trusting in the promises of God and recognizing the truth of the Savior when it confronted him.

God promised to send a Savior, who would rescue his people from the bondage of sin, and Simeon trusted that promise. He trusted it so completely and with such faith that the Holy Spirit promised Simeon he would not die until he saw God's Savior with his own eyes.

Can you even imagine the excitement of receiving such a promise? Can you even picture the joy that must have greeted Simeon's heart each and every day when he woke up? Simeon had to walk around with a perpetual smile on his face. He not only knew the answer was coming he knew he was going to live to see it.

So, when Mary and Joseph bring Jesus into the Temple, Simeon breaks into joyous song: *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* What an honor! Simeon actually saw the Savior the Israelites had been waiting on for over 2000 years. Simeon actually held the Savior in his arms. Simeon knew he could live the rest of his life in total peace because he had seen the reason why he could die in peace.

Now, if that makes you feel a little jealousy toward Simeon, don't. Simeon didn't have anything you don't have. Simeon had God's promise of salvation and you have God's promise of salvation. Simeon had God's promise to see the Savior and you have God's promise to see your Savior. In the words of Job: *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

But Simeon physically held the Savior in hands. Have you ever had the chance to hold the Savior in your hands? Sure you have. You've not only had the chance to hold the Savior, you may have actually done it! Do you know when? I'll give you a clue – take and eat, this is the true body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When you come to the Lord's Table, you can hold in your hand the true body of your Savior – in, with, and under the bread. You hold your hands together like a small cradle, or a manger, and in your hands is placed your Savior. When you come to the Lord's Table, you are holding the Savior in your hands.

Lastly, Simeon knew that because of the salvation, which God provides through our Savior, he could die in peace. And you, no less than Simeon, should feel that same peace at the prospect of leaving this world. Paul said: *For me to live is Christ and to die is gain*. Like Simeon, Paul knew that death held no power greater than Christ.

But we haven't covered all of Simeon's song. There is another very important part. You see, God didn't send his Savior into the world in a vacuum. Jesus didn't come covertly, undercover, sneaking around so no one would know he was here. No! Jesus came for all the world and for all the world to see. He came to bring light to a dead, dark world.

In the opening of his Gospel, John says: *The light shines in the darkness ... The true light that gives light to every man*. Simeon said it like this: *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*.

Jesus came to be light. Not just light for the Jews, but also light for the gentiles – light for the world. The peace which Jesus brought into the world he brought for everyone. Christianity isn't some closed country club. God's love isn't reserved for only a select few individuals. It's God's will that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The peace of Jesus, the peace of God, is for everyone. If this weren't true, you and I would be in big trouble. We're not Jewish. We're not part of the ethnic Israelite nation. We're as gentile as gentiles can get. If Jesus hadn't come as a light to lighten the gentiles, we'd be on the outside looking in. Praise God Jesus came to make peace between God and the entire world.

All peace was disrupted when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. All people, and even all of nature, fell under the curse of death and decay. Jesus came to break the curse of death – and he succeeded. All mankind can now have fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. Even nature will one day be restored.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its*

bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Christ's work of reconciliation was so complete that all men, and even nature, have been restored to proper fellowship with God. The only ones who will not benefit from the salvation that Jesus won are the ones who don't know the truth of God.

Those people come in two varieties; those who simply don't know and those who don't want to know. Either way, those people are missing the joy and peace which Christ has earned for everyone. And that is not the way God wants it. God wants everyone to be saved – and that's where you and I come in.

I said that Simeon must have walked around with a perpetual smile on his face because he knew the secret of true peace. Once the Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would live to see the Savior, his joy had to shine out like a beacon. I can almost see people saying, "Yo, Simeon, what's up?" When people asked Simeon how he was doing he had to say things like, "I'm great!" "A+" "Couldn't be better." And when they asked him why he was so happy, I'm sure he told them.

I also said that we have all the same advantages that Simeon had. We have the same Savior, the same salvation, and the same peace. Like Simeon, we can walk around grinning from ear to ear. In fact, we should be grinning from ear to ear. We know the secret of salvation and that's a secret God doesn't want us to keep to ourselves. God wants us to be spreading the good news of his plan of salvation to the whole world. God wants us to take the light that Jesus brought into this dark world and hold it up for all to see.

Without Jesus there is no peace. Without Jesus there is no fellowship with God and that's where ultimate peace resides. To know Jesus is to know peace – true peace, lasting peace, the peace that passes all understanding. I pray that we who know the peace and truth of God will share that peace and truth with those who don't. Not just today or tomorrow, but every day until our Lord returns.