

This Child

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Preacher: Pastor Dave Thompson

[0 : 0 0] You can be turning to the book of Luke, book of Luke chapter 2. If I remember correctly, when we first came to GFC in 2005, Pastor Tripp was preaching through the book of Isaiah. He was over halfway through at that point, and I was amazed.

Now, I'm not lauding him. God's word is good. He is a blessing, so I don't want to make him feel uncomfortable. But I was amazed at how Isaiah talked about us and talked about Christ, and it just floored me. Now, like I say, he was over halfway through, and I'm thankful I was here for the last two-thirds of that book, because the last two-thirds of that book are very different than the first two-thirds of that book. The first two-thirds deal with Israel's sin. This was early. This is in the midst, or just getting to that point where the first part, Israel, goes into the Assyrian captivity. And Isaiah is prophesying because Israel has so turned from God, and they are so filthy before God, and their sin has come up as a stench before God, and his judgment is coming. The judgment that had been promised clear back when the law was given, that if they forsook God's commandment, they would be taken into captivity, and their land would have its rest. And all that's talked about in the book of Isaiah, and how that is coming. But then God, in his great grace and mercy, spends the last two-thirds of the book comforting his people. Now, he's comforting his people before it even begins.

He's speaking comfort to them. They were sinners, and they were going to judgment. But even then, God is going to provide redemption for them. And the redemption would come in the form of the promised Redeemer. And that whole 26 chapters, basically, of Isaiah talk about this one who would comfort Israel. And he's referred to in the New Testament as the consolation of Israel. So as we look today, what we look at today, God is beginning to fulfill the promise those 26 chapters talked about.

And so, come with me to Luke chapter 2, and we're going to start reading in verse 21. We're going to read down through verse 40.

At the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel Abraham. And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice according to the Lord. And the Lord is called holy to the Lord. And the Lord is called holy to the Lord. And the Lord is called holy to the Lord. And the Lord is called holy to the Lord. And the Lord Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Spirit was upon him. 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.

[4 : 3 6] And he came in the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now let you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to marry his mother.

Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is opposed. And a sword will pierce through your own soul also, so that the thoughts from many hearts will be revealed.

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was 84.

[6 : 00] She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour, she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Israel.

And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for this account. I thank you for your power. I thank you for your faithfulness.

I thank you for your grace. Israel waited a long time. For what is transpiring here.

But that time didn't keep you from doing what you're doing. And Father, there are a lot of very dear things in this passage.

[7 : 13] And I pray that you would open our eyes and our hearts to them. And Father, may it not be that we can walk away listing facts. Lord, it is our strong desire that we walk away amazed at God.

Amazed at what he's done, the ways he's widened the tents and stretched out the cords for us. And I pray that you would open your word to us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Could I impose on someone for a cup of water in our busyness this morning with the ice and snow?

I need a cup of water. Thank you. Thank you. We pick up with the account of the birth narrative after he's been born.

Remember last time that I spoke, we talked about how Jesus was born and the angel appeared to the shepherds. And the angel declares, this Savior is born.

[8 : 27] And it wasn't enough that he declared it. All the angels or the heavenly hosts, we'll just say this, we don't know if it was all the angels. But they fill the sky and they praise God to the absolute highest.

Thank you. No, no problem. I asked Paul to do a lot this morning. And so we see Jesus being announced as the Savior.

And it's exciting news. And we marvel at what God has done. They had come to Bethlehem by the means of Caesar Augustus' decree through the trials of a very pregnant woman moving four days travel from where she was to Bethlehem.

But now they're in Bethlehem. And the baby's been born. And they stay there. We don't know where. Probably wasn't still in the manger or cave or stable or spare room.

However you define that. However, they stayed there. They stayed there. And they stayed there for a reason. It was their desire to fulfill God's law.

[9 : 45] They wanted to obey God's law in what they did. And so they stayed there. And as verse 21 begins, they were there at first eight days.

And the baby was to be, according to the law, circumcised on the eighth day. There's a lot we can learn from that. Let's just put a pin in it and say, in that point, Jesus fulfilled the law for us.

There's a lot of questions we can ask and a lot of things we can discuss. But we're just going to put it there. They stayed in Bethlehem for eight days. And the law was fulfilled in relation to Jesus.

He obeyed the law for us. And so he remained there through those eight days and then remained there another 32 days.

Mary and Joseph and Jesus. And so Luke is recounting this for a man named Theophilus. He wants Theophilus to know exactly what God was doing.

[10 : 58] He wanted an accurate representation of the gospel for Theophilus and for those who were beyond it. It was Luke writing for a man and from there the gospel would go out to Gentiles.

Luke was a Gentile. Theophilus was a Gentile. And the people who would hear this would be Gentiles. So Luke wanted everyone to know that Joseph and Mary fulfilled everything that was required by the law.

And so he circumcised. And then came the next requirement. And that was that she be purified. Mary be purified. Levitical law said that once a woman had a child, if it was a boy, she had to wait 40 days and then she would go to the temple and sacrifice a certain sacrifice because of the blood of her impurity and for her to be able to be in fellowship and in service, not in service to the temple, but come into the temple to do the things that are required.

She had to go through purification. So they were doing that. But they were not only doing that, they came for the dedication. We'll talk about that just in a little bit.

Luke, as a Gentile, writing to Gentile, people who would basically normally consider themselves to be the undesirable in relation to God, the people outside of God's blessing and fellowship, Luke wants them to know that Jesus didn't come into this world to wealthy parents, to privileged parents.

[12 : 37] He came into this world to poor parents. And so he makes sure that they know that in bringing this proper sacrifice, Mary and Joseph were not rich enough for them to bring the large animals that could have been brought.

They brought the poor people's sacrifice. Two turtle doves or pigeons. Depends on the time of year, I understand whether it's a turtle dove or a pigeon. But they brought whichever it was.

So they had come with the offering of poor people so that people know that Jesus relates to those who are not well off. And so they are coming.

They have lived in Bethlehem. The day is approached for her purification and they've gotten their turtle doves or their pigeons and they're on their way to the temple. And so they've gone up to Jerusalem and as they approach Jerusalem, approach the temple, they're interrupted.

Now, they do finish what they came to do. You'll see that in verse 39. But they're interrupted. What has happened is as they're approaching the temple, the scene cuts away for just a moment and Luke gives an account of a man named Simeon.

[13 : 58] We don't know. He must have lived somewhere there in Jerusalem around the temple. We don't know where and we don't know that he was always in the temple. It says later that Anna was in the temple all the time.

But we don't know that that was the case with Simeon. But this man, Simeon, comes on the scene. It says of Simeon, Now, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.

This man was righteous and devout. Means he wanted to do what was right. He was very concerned about serving the Lord. And he waited for the consolation of Israel.

Now, I'm hoping bells are going off in your mind because I've used that term already this morning. It goes back to Isaiah. It goes back to those last, basically, those last 26 chapters.

Now, it's not just those 26 chapters that Simeon seems to be a familiar person with. You know, there are people these days, I come from a background where there were lots of people who were experts on Revelation.

[15 : 17] or Daniel. Or there are experts on this gospel or that gospel. It appears that Simeon was a man immersed in Isaiah.

Because he uses phrases from all through, from chapter 8, at least chapter 8, that early, all through the rest of the book. Phrases he knows that now as God is revealing things to him.

He's putting pieces together. The puzzle is falling in place and this man knows Isaiah. And so, this man who knows Isaiah, who's been looking for the consolation of Israel, that one who would bring comfort to Israel, he is all of a sudden led by the Spirit to come to the temple.

and I'm going to use a little bit of sanctified imagination here. I hope not to go beyond Scripture in any way, shape, or form. But here is Mary and Joseph and the baby and they're walking towards the temple and they've got their birds for their sacrifice and they're intending and as they're walking through the door they catch from the corner of their eye this man who now we know is a devout man, a righteous man, who's very well versed in the book of Isaiah and he's been looking for the consolation of Israel and as they're walking through the door maybe this, we don't know how old he is, we picture that he'd be older, but this man kind of scoots around them and stands in their way and this man scoops up this baby every mother's going don't touch my baby but he scoops up this baby let me just back up for a second this man was prepared for this time

I told you it was very well versed in the book of Isaiah the book of Isaiah contained prophecies that were spoken 700 years before this very moment and until Zechariah you remember Zechariah John the Baptist's dad until Zechariah no one had heard a word from the Lord in 400 years and so here's this man and wife carrying her child into the temple and this man scoops up the baby now this man is not a madman as I mentioned this man is a man who's been looking for the consolation of Israel and this man had been given a promise at some point in his life

[18 : 39] God had said to him somehow somewhere Simeon I promise you you're not going to die until you see that one you've been studying about until you see the Lord's Christ until you see the consolation of Israel and so he's been looking how or where we don't know but this day he knows God would have him go to the temple this day as he gets to the temple somehow in some way God says that's the child and so he scoots around in front of Joseph and Mary grabs up the baby and blesses God now I would imagine there's a sense in which Joseph and Mary were just a little careful in their reaction because after all

Mary had been visited by an angel and her cousin or her cousin's husband had been visited by an angel these are days of strange things and so I would imagine they're just a little bit by the way not in the book of Luke but we know from the book of Matthew that Joseph himself had been visited by an angel and so as they hesitate just a little bit this man grabs this baby and blesses God and in verse 29 he utters this four verse stanza that is this blessing he says Lord now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all people people weren't really looking for him they should have been that you have prepared in the presence of all people a light for revelation to the

Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel now we'll get into what he said in just a minute but he'd been promised that he wouldn't die until he saw the Messiah and here he says bless you Lord I'm ready to die he had trusted God's coming provision and now he had seen God's provision God kept his promise and now he's ready to die before we go on I think this is a good opportunity to ask you are you ready to die now Simeon in one sense was ready to die before he seen the child because he's already trusting in the promise of the

Messiah but he had a promise from God and so he was really ready to die not that that added to his salvation he just saw God's goodness but the fact of the matter is if you and I are going to be ready to die we need to be trusting in this consolation of Israel we need to be trusting this one who would come to comfort his people we need to be trusting the one who has come to pay the penalty of our sins and live a life that's perfect that can be given to us are you ready to die have you trusted maybe you've been in this church for years and years and years and you've heard this over and over and over again but you've never given a thought maybe you've heard it and it's passed through your mind but you've never given a thought to the fact am I ready to die you need to be you need to trust in the one God sent for your consolation if you have not trusted

Christ you are not ready to die and judgment still awaits you well as I mentioned Simeon was so well versed if you look at these four verses and I mentioned as I mentioned Simeon quotes from all over in the book of Isaiah but these four verses mainly come from Isaiah 49 and I would love to see you take time this afternoon and read that passage of scripture Isaiah 49 if you'd read it before you looked at this you wouldn't know necessarily all the things that applied to Christ but now that you've looked at this you're going to see God's plan and God's desire from 700 years ago really really from before creation when God set an order before the foundations of the world that he would save for himself a people and so here is

[24 : 33] Simeon blessing God for being able to see this consolation of Israel but there's something particular to the book of Luke that I think is just an amazing blessing to most all of us all of us but because most of us are Gentiles to us sitting here now God said this but the Jews didn't really often see it but God taught Simeon something he says in the end verse 32 he says a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel Simeon said this phrase because it is prophesied in Isaiah in fact if you go to Isaiah 49 again we don't have time so go to it later don't let yourself be distracted you'll get to a point of Isaiah 49 where God is talking about he's talking about being the comfort to Israel he's talking about being the redeemer of Israel and God says it's too small a thing for you to be the redeemer of just

Israel you'll be a light to the nations the world Simeon saw that and as Mary recounted this account to Luke Luke the Gentile said that's good news because here God is saying that he had said 700 years ago actually it said at the fall but he had said 700 years ago that my gospel is not just for the Jews it's for the Gentiles also so as Simeon grabbed his child up and blessed God he was blessing God that there is a redeemer for you and I who lived 2,025 years after this took place thereabouts God has always meant for salvation to reach to the end of the world and here a Gentile man is putting in order the details of the gospel to a

Gentile man and eventually to Gentile readers and points out that God has always intended it to be to the ends of the earth God the gospel to the Gentiles is not God's afterthought he's always intended to offer the gospel to you a light also for your people God's not forsaken the Jews and if you think about Isaiah that's such an important thing Isaiah has been prophesying because they are wicked and they've turned against God and their judgment is taking them into captivity and really even at the point of Luke's writing here they had not fully recovered from that captivity and they were still living under the rule of the Romans which was not their own rule it was not God's king over them and God was going to fix that he has not forsaken his people in their sin he will restore the line of

David as king over Israel let me say it better as king over God's people the new Israel and this one that he holds in his arms is the hope of the Gentiles and the glory of the Jews he will and he has provided a redeemer for them now as we go on there's just an interesting just a very interesting situation that comes up and I'm moved by God's revealing to Simeon how it spreads to the Gentiles and I moved how Luke picks this up and just amazed to tell the other Gentiles look the gospel is for us but I'm also moved by what happens next because God in his mercy doesn't just announce the good news he doesn't forget the people he's in front of and here in this next few verses is

God preparing the one who will see the most for what she will face I would imagine Mary as she began to see or hear the angel was just amazed and thinking this is glorious this is glorious this is amazing and she's she's heard what Zachariah had said and what he prophesied and she having heard what the angel said submits and glorifies the Lord and she goes on and of course she goes back home but Elizabeth has John the Baptist and Zachariah gives his full prophecy and how good God is going to be and it's glorious and it's glorious and it just looks amazing it looks just like sunshine on the horizon and no clouds it's all going to be amazing and now she's given birth and the angel has appeared to shepherds and he's told them this is the savior of the world and the angels fill the sky giving the most praise to God there could be and the angels go and they come and relate these things to Mary and Joseph and Mary ponders them and you could just picture her going it's going to be glorious it's going to be glorious it's going to be amazing

[30 : 41] I can't wait for the day I will so enjoy the days that are coming and yet God in his mercy has Simeon he blesses Joseph and Mary but then he looks just at Mary because the next set of verses that we look at are the last set of verses that Joseph has mentioned and we know from the scene at the foot of the cross when Jesus says to Mary behold your son and he then turns back and says to John John behold your mother and now that's showing that there is no Joseph to take care of Mary now Mary has already been on her own for some time and as the oldest he would have had the responsibility of caring for his mother and so at this moment as God in his mercy is using

Simeon he has Simeon turn right to Mary and he prepares her for what she will see and she will see from that announcement clear through to the cross and the grave and she's got to be ready for what she's going to see because it's not glorious all the way it doesn't look easy and so he turns to her this one who has a front row seat through all of Jesus ministry she doesn't see everything but she sees the most and you'll find we've already seen it I think three times we'll see it again next time it says that Mary ponders these things in her heart she'd seen all this and so as she's thinking of these things

God addresses the heart of a mother that she and we might know that the what the consolation of Israel will go through in God's plan and Simeon says behold this child and the first phrase he uses basically says this child will be polarizing there are people who are going to love him and there are people who are going to hate him there will be some who will believe there will be many who do not believe him though many will not believe him some will believe and follow just so you know where this this is tied polarizing the falling and rising again many will fall many will fall and rise again think about

Peter Peter was all gung ho and then he fell and then he rose again and he trusted the Lord in the end Mary you're going to see all kinds of reactions to this son of yours you're going to see people love him you're going to see people hate him you're going to see people who love him turn against him and repent you're just going to see all of it and through it all what Jesus does will reveal what's truly in their hearts but Mary it's going to be a heartache for you it's going to be like a sword pierces your heart she'll come to the marriage of Canaan to

Galilee we won't deal with it in Luke but she'll come to this wedding and there's not enough wine and she says listen to him and he does this miracle and yet it isn't far but as he's talking to the religious people of his own town they're ready to push him off a cliff at one point in his ministry I hate to say this word in relation but this is the vulgarness of them they called him a bastard your mom was unfaithful and that's the way his life was people believed him but people didn't believe him people loved him and people hated him and what you see will be a heartache to you but God in his mercy let her know so that she could endure what one of us would want to know what our kids will go through no what do you do when suffering affects your hope

[36 : 29] I could just see Mary if she hadn't gotten this and in the midst of it all she could have said I'm not serving anymore I can't do this it started so glorious and it's so painful what do you do when suffering affects your hope now we won't get a Simeon but in the end we have the same because Simeon gave her God's word what do you do when suffering affects your hope do you remember the truths God gives you do you hold on to the promises for 33 years the wildest ride that she can imagine and she had to hold on to promises can't imagine how she felt

I'm not exactly sure she was there I'm just going to say that she is can't imagine what she felt the day she stood at the Mount of Olives watched her son go into glory and know that he would be seated on the right hand of the father for all eternity as we go through suffering we have to be people who come back to the book the truths of the book have to be what we stand on do you hold to the promises of God back up in our little picture I have us at the door of the temple and they have just walked through and Mary and Joseph are still holding their birds but they're not holding their baby and there's this man who said amazing things that would make the

Gentiles rejoice and there's this man who said things that Mary's like oh no what am I in for and Joseph's thinking maybe well I wish I could protect her but at that moment there's still another person to the equation and that's Anna Anna's there now it talks about her age God raised up Anna with the desire for the redemption of Jerusalem we we get that from what she rejoiced in when it was done he raised her up she'd been married as a young woman married for seven years her husband died she's now 84 I know there's all kinds of argument about that but we're just going to go with that doesn't matter in the end whether she's 84 or 106 doesn't matter she's 84 years and she's been praying and fasting in the temple for the redemption of

Israel what is she's looking what is she looking for she's looking for basically the same thing Simeon has been looking for Isaiah talks about the redeemer a redeemer coming the redeemer of Israel and so we are here with this group of four two of them holding or one of them holding birds and she has walked up at the same time now if I'm understanding this passage correctly they converge at one time God in his sovereignty works in Joseph and Mary clear back in Nazareth brings him down to Bethlehem and up to Jerusalem at the right time and God has been working in Simeon and he leads him to the temple at the right time and Anna has been in the temple all this time and brings her within earshot at the right time and now it's time she witnesses all that has just transpired and she reacts and her reaction is oh thank you God thank you the redeemer of Israel is here the redeemer of Jerusalem is here the redemption of Jerusalem is here and what does it say she tells everyone who's been waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem

God brings the young couple and the baby God brings Simeon with words from the Old Testament and then God brings an old woman who's been praying and praying and praying brings them all together she thanks God and she tells everyone she can talk to about it what do you do with the gospel do you bless God like Simeon do you marvel like Joseph and Mary as they've heard what he said do you give thanks like Anna do you tell those who need to hear that's our responsibility well the last little bit ends up seems kind of odd to us

[42 : 23] Luke 22 39 to 40 and when they had performed everything according to the law and just stopping there so we know how do you undo this situation four people well four adults and a baby gathered together one holding birds one holding a baby not his baby baby's giving back Anna's going off rejoicing we're not sure what Simeon does but Mary and Joseph take Jesus in she offers the offering that she was to offer for her purification we didn't talk about this much but they also bring Jesus to present him to the Lord the firstborn male that opens the womb is the Lord's and here is the consolation of Israel presented by

Joseph and Mary here Lord now was the law that five shekels were given to buy back that young one for themselves according to Leviticus scripture doesn't say whether they did that and I'm not going to push for any speculation but regardless if there was ever anyone who presented their baby unto the Lord who was Joseph and Mary and he was God's son but it wasn't time for him to do all the things that he would have to do except live a holy life and it goes on it says they returned into Galilee to their own town of Nazareth and the child grew and became strong filled with wisdom and the favor of

God was upon him I know what about Egypt Luke doesn't include that there's a reason but what happens it's faithful waiting they do what they're supposed to do and they go home and they bring their child up in the fear and admonition of the Lord and they wait in that time the child grows and becomes strong and he's filled with wisdom we'll probably reread this verse next week as we look at the next passage because he's definitely got some wisdom and the Lord was with him and the favor of God was upon him that's our consolation that's how God is working was working to bring

Christ into the world and he widened the tent enough that you and I as Gentiles and if there are any of you here who are Jews you're certainly included also but he's widened the tent enough that the people in Hazleton at Grace Fellowship Church today can be part of those people he died for them and he rose for them and he ascended for them praise God and through it all God has been so merciful to point out the consolations here and to meet the needs of the one who would see everything what a gracious God I'm going to hold you with my righteous right hand and in Mary's case it was enough news to know that what she finally saw was what

God expected to happen he is truly our redeemer let's rest in him let's pray thank you father for your word I thank you that what is recounted here answers prophecies and requests that were back 700 years before even further to the creation of the world and the fall of man even further to before the world was created you have done what you said you would do and we rejoice in the power of God to bring a savior into this world we rejoice that his work though looking at it from Luke now is in the future but from our standpoint it's past it is good enough it is great enough it is wide enough to include us I pray that our lips would be full of joy our mouths would be full of praising and worshipping

[47 : 44] I pray that you would bless that we would be people who react properly and oh father if there are those who don't know you today today would be the day you open their eyes they can't get to heaven without recognizing this Messiah and trusting in him I pray that you would be with us in Jesus name amen