

## **Unwrapping Hope**

I think most of us have unwrapped what we have received in the last few days....

But this morning I want to talk about unwrapping the HOPE we have in Christ Jesus....

The HOPE that gives us a future....

Luke 2:22-40

**When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses,....**

**Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord,....**

**(as it is written in the Law of the Lord,...."Ever firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"),....**

**and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons"**

**Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon,....who was righteous and devout.**

**He was waiting for the consolation of Israel,....and the Holy Spirit was on him....**

**It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah....**

**Moved by the Spirit,....he went into the temple courts....**

**When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him what the custom of the Law required,....Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God,....saying:**

**Sovereign Lord,....as You have promised,....you may now dismiss your servant in peace....**

**For my eyes have seen Your salvation,....which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:....a light of revelation to the Gentiles,....and the glory of Your people Israel."**

**The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about Him.**

**Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, His mother:....**

**"This child is destined to cause the falling and the rising of many in Israel,....**

**and to be a sign that will be spoken against,....**

**so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.....And a sword will pierce your own soul too.....**

**There was also a prophet,....Anna,....the daughter of Penuel,....of the tribe of Asher....**

**She was very old;....she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,....and then a widow until she was eighty-four....**

**She never left the temple but worshiped night and day,....fasting and praying....**

**Coming up to them at that very moment,....she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.....**

**When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord,....they returned to Galilee to their own town Nazareth....**

**And the child grew up and became strong;....He was filled with wisdom,....and the grace of God was on Him.**

**Let's pray....**

**A few years ago, friend told me about one of his favourite books titled **Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption.****

**He recalled one of the stories in the book.... 'on a bright and sunny afternoon in May 1943....an Army Air Force bomber plummeted into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared under the water....leaving a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline and blood.....**

**Suddenly a bobbing figure appeared.... struggling to lift a life raft and haul himself aboard.....**

## **Lt. Louis Zamperini began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of World War II.**

Zamperini had been an incorrigible, delinquent child.....

As a teenager he channelled his defiance into running he became so good at it he entered the Berlin Olympics and within sight of the formidable 4-minute mile.....

As one writer commented, “when war had come, the athlete had become an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight....a tiny raft....and a drift into the unknown.

“Ahead of the Lt.... lay thousands of miles of open ocean....hungry sharks, a floundering life raft....thirst and starvation....enemy aircraft....and beyond....a trial even greater.

Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with....ingenuity; suffering with....hope...”

He survived the ordeal only to end up as a prisoner of war.....He needed hope to make it home.

Years later, at a Billy Graham crusade in Los Angeles, he found his ultimate hope in giving his life to Jesus.....

He died July 2014 and now knows the blessed hope of being with the Lord....

Israel needed hope.....The truth is the whole world needs hope....

And of course, as we know the journey of hope came in the form of a baby, but that was only the beginning!

The confirmation of hope came through people of faith....

### **We Need Hope in the Supernatural Realm of Life**

The Jews desperately wanted to believe the Sovereign God would deliver them from the Romans....so one day they would be masters of the world and lords of all nations!

Many believed a supernatural champion would arrive on the scene to take the nation to the fullest extent of power.... even if force was involved.

They thought the Messiah would lead armies with all the drama that heaven could provide.

They could hear the shouting of hallelujah and amen reverberating throughout the world because their God provided their champion.

By contrast to the hawks of the nation, there were the doves....known as "Quiet of the Land," according to William Barclay.

He observed, "they had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with banners....they believed in a life of constant prayer and quiet watchfulness until God should come.

All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon God." Simeon was one of them. He was a man of prayer, worship, expectation and hope.

When Mary and Joseph walked into the temple with Jesus.... Simeon's heart gave a leap as he recognized this baby was the anointed King sent by God to save Israel and the world....

Do we recognize Him as the supernatural Champion of the world?

### **We Need Hope in the Redemption of Life**

A second person entered the temple...a prophetess named Anna....who....similar to Simeon....had a hope centred in God.

As a widow....she had dedicated herself to fasting, praying and worshipping in the temple for decades.

She patiently waited years to catch a glimpse of the Redeemer....and now He had come!

She rejoiced....knowing the Deliverer of Jerusalem....and the world) had arrived on earth.

Thirty-three years later....He would die on the cross at Calvary to redeem the world!

Is it any wonder a sword would pierce the heart of His mother?

Amy Carmichael said there is something about Calvary that confounds our understanding....and the words about the precious blood never should be read or sung except on the knees of our spirits....

Have we recognized the baby Jesus who would die on the cross for our sins is the anointed King sent by God to save us?

He truly is the Champion of life!

### **We Need Hope in Jesus as Our Hope**

It is good to read about Simeon and Anna and the hope they had in Jesus....

but maybe our experience it is different....

We are all on different paths in our journey with Christ....but may I encourage you to put your hope, trust and life into Jesus.

As the song writer penned,

“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”

He is our Redeemer, and we are His children! Praise be to God!

He is the Champion of our life!

Let us Pray