

Morning Worship

December 31, 2017

Happy New Year!

As you enter for worship, please silence your cell phones.

(CCLI permit # 424692 covers all copyright song lyrics)

Scripture Reading John 1:1-5, 14 Don/People

Hymn # 88 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* Don/People

Worship Prayer Allan Lane

Welcome and Fellowship Allan/People

Chorus # 177 *There's Something About That Name* Don/People

Missions Moment

Hymn # 555 *A Child of the King* Don/People

Hymn # 552 *Jesus Is the Song* Don/People

Offering Prayer John Lewis

Tithes and Offerings People

Offering Music Marcia Hart

Solo Don Beavers

Scripture Reading Luke 2:1-20 Allan/People

Message *Simeon's Song* Allan Lane

Luke 2:21-31

Hymn # 482 *All to Thee* Don/People

Chorus # 427 *For He Alone Is Worthy* Don/People

Simeon's Song

Luke 2:21-35

Though we don't know much about Simeon, through him we learn about the salvation that God is willing to provide for sinners. How does he describe God's salvation?

There is something comforting about the many lives in Scripture of which we know very little. Simeon is one of those characters. We are told his name and address in verse 25. We always think Simeon was an old man, and he may have been. But that is an assumption we draw from his statement that God promised him he would not die until he'd seen the Messiah, and now he is willing to die. We're told he lives in Jerusalem and then Luke gives us a four-fold description of his character.

He is righteous and devout. Righteousness describes his character and devout describes his attitude toward God. In other words, Simeon treated people right. He took God seriously. His commitment to God governed the way he related to people and to God. He was a godly man.

He had been waiting eagerly and expectantly for the "consolation of Israel." One of the names the rabbis had for the Messiah was the consolation of Israel or Comforter. They believed when the Messiah arrived He would comfort Israel after all her suffering.

We're told the Holy Spirit is upon him. This is a tremendous characteristic of Simeon. Before Pentecost and the amazing gift of the Holy Spirit coming to indwell the personality of every believer, the Holy Spirit would come upon certain individuals to empower them to accomplish some task. He did this for the prophets. What the Holy Spirit did for Moses and David, He did for Simeon.

Lastly, we are told that God revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah, the Savior of Israel and the nations. What follows is the perfect synchronization of God's promise. At the very moment that Joseph and Mary bring Jesus to the temple to perform the requirements of the law for a son on the eighth day, the Holy Spirit persuades Simeon he needs to go to the temple at that very moment. How they connected, we don't know. How the Holy Spirit informed Simeon it was this baby boy and not another, we don't know. But we do know what's most important. God kept His promise of the ages and kept His promise to this man, He has remembered to save sinners by sending the Savior.

Though we don't know much about Simeon, we are told more about the salvation that God has now provided through this child. That's what's most important, and Simeon played his part in the story of God's salvation for sinners. What kind of salvation did God provide for sinners?

1. God Points to a Timeless Salvation. (Luke 2:29-31, 34)

This was not an accident; God planned our salvation before the beginning of time. Simeon said in verse 30 that God prepared this salvation. In verse 34, he tells Mary that Jesus was destined to be the Savior of God's salvation. When you think about it many elements of the Christmas story point to God's eternal plan of salvation.

Some of you may have a star that caps your Christmas tree, or maybe you sent out Christmas cards that emphasize the star that led the wise men to Jesus. The star testifies to the timelessness of salvation, and science supports this teaching of Scripture. We shouldn't have a problem if God suddenly created a star and caused its light to travel faster than the speed of light. He is the Creator, and He can do what He wants. But in the normal workings of our solar system, scientists tell us it takes years for light from a star to reach us. The sun is 93 million miles away, and it takes eight minutes for its light to reach earth. But the stars that are farthest from us but still visible take over 4,000 years for the light to reach us.

The Bible does not suggest that God miraculously created this star and sped its light to earth so it would arrive in the first century. It just says a star appears. Isn't it reasonable to assume that the light the Magi saw around the time of Jesus' birth had been speeding toward earth for hundreds or thousands of years? When Isaiah said, 700 years before Jesus' birth, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light (9:2), this light could have been traveling for hundreds or thousands of years in order to arrive right on time for Jesus' birth. After creation in Genesis 3 when God declared that He would provide redemption for mankind's sin, could it be that it was already in the works?

Our salvation was not an accident nor was it Plan B after man sinned. Before there was a beginning, God had a plan of salvation for sinners that would display His amazing glory. Nothing was haphazard.

But what does this mean to us? The gospel is never outdated. The message of salvation was not just for another time or another culture. Twenty-first century Americans need God's timeless salvation as much as first century Jews and Gentiles.

Every generation has declared the Gospel as outdated and needing to be replaced by something more sophisticated. Voltaire, the French author and philosopher of the 1700's, said that Christianity would be dead and thrown on the heap of outdated religions within one hundred years. What actually happened was that in 150 years his home was the office for a society that distributed Bibles.

Thomas Paine was an influential writer at the birth of our nation. He wrote *The Age of Reason*. In his book he called the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross an invention. He claimed his book would replace the reading of the Bible. Of course, you've all read his book, haven't you? How many of you have read *The Age of Reason*? How many of you have read the Bible? Today, the Bible is the most sought after book and year after year is the runaway bestseller.

We hear these same voices today accusing the Christian faith of being hopelessly old-fashioned for our postmodern world. It's heard in the late-night comedian mocking anyone that believes in a satanic snake that talks. Just a few years ago a *Newsweek* article said the Bible's morals on homosexuality were misinterpreted and need updated for our day. They believe the Bible is not to be taken literally. We wonder if people even know what it means to believe in a literal Bible? Do you read the newspaper metaphorically or literally? To read the Bible literally means you read it as the author intended it to be read.

Long after the mocking comedian is a has-been and homosexuality is finally recognized as an unacceptable moral choice and younger, prettier faces have replaced the doubters, people by the tens of thousands will be calling out to Jesus Christ for salvation every Sunday. Why? Because people know there is nothing better that answers the big issues we all struggle with than God's timeless plan of salvation. We all know something is wrong. We all know we can't fix it. We need a rescuer, a superman, somebody who can do what we cannot. The only one that qualifies is Jesus Christ.

If Christ has not returned and my grandkids get to be old men and old women, there are many things today that are going to be outdated. Things like computers, iPods, space shuttles and airplanes, but there is one thing in our world that will still be relevant in their world. It is God's timeless plan of salvation.

2. God Provides an Inclusive Salvation. (Luke 2:30-31).

God's salvation is for everyone. Simeon sings that God has worked in such a way in history that Jews and Gentiles understand that He has provided salvation for all

sinners. There are many examples in the Old Testament like Ruth, the idol worshiping Moabite, who embraces the God of her mother-in-law Naomi. In time she becomes the great grandmother of King David.

It's seen in the New Testament. Luke illustrates this in his second volume, too. In Acts 1:8 it says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts reveals the good news of salvation beginning in the center of Jewish life, Jerusalem. But the book ends with the Gospel being offered to Gentiles at the center of the Gentile world, Rome. God provides salvation for all.

According to verse 32, this baby will be a light to the Gentiles who are living in darkness. He will show them where salvation for sinners is found. He will add to the glory of Israel by completing the work God started with Israel in telling the world that there is a way of escape for sinners from the judgment of God. Christmas reminds us that God loves and wants to forgive all sinners of their sins through Jesus Christ. This is why we are compelled to take this message to everyone. The world misunderstands and resents our efforts.

Many believe all prayers are directed to the same God. The late Chuck Colson told of one young man, who said to him, "You Christians are so arrogant. You think Jesus is the only route to God. It's an insult to anyone who follows another faith." His parting shot was: "It's intolerant religious views like yours that lead to hatred and violence." One Jewish rabbi of our day calls Christian's truth claims "spiritual racism."

We are deeply resented for taking the Gospel to Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Mormons, and seeking to convert them to Christ. We do have a history of acting badly toward these other faiths, but for Christians to take the Gospel to people of other faiths is an act of love not hatred, an act of obedience not arrogance. What we are actually saying by our seeking to reach all people exclusively for Christ is that the Gospel is inclusive. It is for all people. Nobody is outside of the reach of the saving love of Jesus Christ.

We have been insensitive to other's culture. We've been offensive in our manner. Those things need to change, but we must never change the commitment to tell others the gospel of Jesus Christ. He loves all people and wants to set them free from sin.

What amazes me about attacks on Christianity is the failure to understand the nature of truth. All truth claims are, by definition, exclusive. Anytime you say something is true, you're claiming that anything that contradicts it is false. Every major religion does this, not just Christianity.

Let me make a side comment on Christianity's truth claims leading to violence and hatred. When it is honestly reported the violence nearly always comes from the people who resist the message and hate the messenger. It's nearly always them and not us who commit the violence.

Can you name a Christianized nation where your life is in danger because you practice another religious faith? What do you think would have happened to the atheists in Missouri if they lived in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or Iran and they put up attack signs next to some remembrance of Mohammed like they have been known to do with the manger scenes?

The Christmas message has no equal in any other faith. Christmas says God loves all people and wants them to be saved.

3. God Proclaims a Divisive Salvation. (Luke 2:34-35)

Yes, the Gospel is good news but it is also divisive. This child will seal Mary's reputation as being the most blessed mother throughout all generations, but this child will bring great suffering to Mary, too. We can only imagine what Mary must have endured being the mother of baby Jesus and then standing at the cross watching her first born die after being cruelly tortured. That illustrates the clear division this child created in mankind. There are those that worship and receive Him as Savior and Lord, and there are those that scoff and reject Him. Why such opposite response? It's because our response to Jesus exposes what is truly in our heart.

Other religions place their emphasis upon behavior, what people do. The Pharisees were very religious. They gave great effort to obeying religious duties. They hated Jesus because he exposed their real motivations. He said they didn't pray to be heard by God but to be noticed by men. They didn't give tithes and offerings and benevolent gifts to worship God and meet the need of the needy. They did it to receive the praise of men. Jesus described them as white-washed sepulchers full of dead men's bones. He exposed their heart, their true motivations, and they hated him for it.

When people understand the plain message of salvation found in the Savior, Jesus Christ, there are always two results. People either embrace the message or reject it. They either love Christ or they hate Christ. The truth often hits a raw nerve. Not everybody who comes to church wants to hear the honest, plain truth. Sometimes the truth of God is awful news to people.

The truth usually has an edge to it. Despite Americans constant search for some miracle diet that requires no sacrifices, it doesn't exist. If you only make a certain amount of money, you can't possibly own a new car. We are constantly being told the benefits of a new drug, but they gloss over the side effects. Truth usually has an edge to it.

When the truth of the Gospel is told there will be some aspects that are offensive. But that's the way truth is. It exposes and convicts and demands change. Truth has an edge. By the way, it ought to be the truth that offends and not our manner or presentation. "Speak the truth in love," Paul said in Ephesians 4:15.

It's true. God loves you so much He will go to any length to close the separation between Him and you. He will leave the holy atmosphere of heaven and enter this world as a baby born to peasants if that is what it will take. He will live sinlessly in this world of vulgarity and evil. He will even die on a cross for your sins and mine to close the distance between us.

But why is this necessary? You are fundamentally a self-centered person. You're selfish. You love you more than you love God. You consistently chose your way and reject God's authority. This kind of rebellion deserves judgment and eternal hell.

Conclusion:

Truth has an edge. But in this case the truth will save you. It has been saving people for 2,000 years. The only people who are not included in God's family are those who chose to reject Christ rather than receive Him. Don't stumble over Christ. Rise and receive Him in faith.

Don't Stumble Over Christ!

Get Closer to the One Who Loves You Most

I was trying to remember the last time I wrote an article for

Allan. I think it was when Jordan was in kindergarten. That was a long time ago. Today I have another little story I would like to share with you. A couple of months ago Allan and I went to visit my sister, Nella. While we were there her daughter-in-law, Krystal and three year old son, Gunner stopped by for a visit. We see them so rarely that I was super happy to see Gunner. However, as soon as he saw us he quickly and shyly headed to the bedroom to hide. I tried to woo him back to the front room with some sweet words. I told him I could not wait to see him and how adorable he was to me...you get the idea. I continued my kind encouragement and after a few minutes he came to sit with me. We talked and read some books. We had the sweetest time together. Then I went into the kitchen to make lasagna for supper. The last time I was there he has helped me in the kitchen, so he followed me there. His mother, Krystal, came in to keep an eye on her son. Most of the meal required the stove so he could not help me as he had in the past. He asked Krystal to hold him so he could watch what I was doing. Every move I made he wanted to be near to me. He repeatedly asked his mom to stand by me while she held him. He finally said to her, "Closer mom, I want to be closer to her, she loves me." My heart melted. I said, "Yes, Gunner, you are right. I do love you!" And at that moment my love for him grew leaps and bounds. He knew I loved him and that made him want to be closer to me. We both felt blessed by each other... our hearts were full of love for each other.

A few weeks later I read in Jesus Calling...God says to us, "Stay ever so close to me." God desires for his children to be thrilled to be in His presence. He wants us to enjoy His company. Part of glorifying Him is to live close to Him. Allan often says, "God is closer than we think." I began to wonder if God feels like me? When Gunner said that he wanted to be closer to me because I loved him...I was so touched by Gunner's feelings. It was so very sweet. I made me think how I want God to be touched/pleased that I love him enough to want always be closer to Him. Gunner knew I loved him. I hadn't told him prior to him saying it. He knew by my actions toward him that I loved him. I want to show God by my actions toward Him that I truly love Him. That will please Him. I know it will. I will not soon forget how pleased I was to know Gunner wanted to be near me because I loved him. He loved me simply because he knew I loved him.

As I begin a new year, I want to get closer to the One that loves me. There is no better, no sweeter, no safer place to be.

We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19

Happy New Year,

Ellen

Opportunities For Service

Living out Your Spiritual Commitment . . . and Fulfilling Christ's Divine Plan

Sunday, December 31, 2017

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: ? ? ? ?, Ken Nice, Fred Kerns, Don Sharp

Alternate: ? ? ? ?

New Year's Eve Service.....6:30 pm

Wednesday, January 3

Prayer / Bible Study6:30 pm

Worship Team 7:30 pm

Sunday, January 7, 2017

Choir Rehearsal.....9:00 am

Sunday School.....9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: John Lewis, Gary Yarbrough, Joseph Coats, ? ? ? ?

Alternate: Larry McKahan

Evening Service 6:30 pm

Wednesday, January 10

Prayer Warriors10:00 am

Prayer / Bible Study.... 6:30 pm

Worship Team 7:30 pm

Up-Coming Events.....

December 31 — New Year's Eve Service 6:30 pm

January 1, 2018 — Happy New Year!

January 7, 2018 — Celebrate Lord's Supper, all loose monies **in the offering plate will go to benevolence.**

GROW Team

Commit to **GROW! Everyone make a contact!** Invite someone to Bible Study and Worship this week. ☺

Sunday Nights

Please join us tonight, Sunday, December 31, for a New Year's Eve Service at 6:30 pm. See instructions below.

Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study

Come pray for the direction of our church. Also, we will begin a new Bible Study. Please plan to attend and pray at 6:30 pm.

New Year's Eve

We will have an early evening

New Year's Eve celebration this year starting at 6:30 pm. Plan to come and bring some snacks. We'll have some

fellowship while

remembering the past year and ask God's blessing for the year to come.

Lottie Moon

Christmas Offering

This month we will emphasize this offering for International Missions. Our church goal is \$1,700.00. So far to date we have received \$1,440.00.

CHRISTMAS CARD BOXES IN THE HALLWAY

You may exchange Christmas Cards among your church family by placing your cards in the boxes in the hallway. Then contribute the postage you save to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering!

January Bible Study

More details will be coming soon. Begin reading 1 Peter to be prepared for this study.

For the Record-

Attendance: December 17, 2017

Sunday School.....	29
Visitors.....	1
Total.....	30
Contacts Made.....	10
Morning Worship.....	51
Children's Worship.....	N/A
Christmas Eve.....	12
Wednesday Night	4

Financial Record:

Weekly Budget	\$ 2,286.39
Offering Received ...	\$ 758.00

Lottie Moon..... \$ 1,440.00
Long Family-Nov..... \$ 181.00

Offering Received by Mail:

January Counting Team:

John Lewis and Bill Schottel

January Van Driver:

George Burgess

Remember to call 232-3747

before 8 am if you need a ride.

January Member Birthdays:

01... Carol Helean

01... Marcia Hart

19... Juanita Haskins

22....Eric Thompson

24....Aubrey McCamy

27... Gary Yarbrough

28... Donna Dunn

January Anniversaries

Allan and Ellen Lane

Married January 2, 1983

Philip and Kelsey Lane

Married January 3, 2009

Prayer Requests ...

Betty Campbell—pneumonia

Peggy & Gary Fewins—Peggy's health

Rick and Mary Bruntmeyer

Rachael & Erin Molloy and Family

Brigida Winans—heel surgery

Mike Green—knee recovery

Arlette Duty—carpal tunnel

Gina Harr—surgery recovery

Joe Coats—pacemaker

Don Beavers—heart and health

Curtis Conard—surgery in January

Emily Jones & baby

Chad Bradford—heart surgery

Cynthia Burdick—cancer recovery

Karissa and Matt Long and family

The Waters Family—guidance

Stephanie & Jason Terpack

Shawna Hughes—home isolation

Gary and Sharon Yarbrough

Larry Danner—cancer

Rosella Davis—Flo Conard's sister

Mary Sharp's brother-in-law Jim

Bill Clinton—Don and Mae's son

Troy Griswold—cancer treatment

Lisa Bowers—Jack and Flo's daughter

LoLeta Middleton—strength

Elvera's daughter & daughter-in-law
Zella Davis —Doris Richardson's sister
Rev. A. B. Brown Betty Campbell
George Ferbert Kevin Duty
Ellen Blanton Lois Ulmer
Jim Winans Nellie Reynolds
Madeline Swink Ann Riddle
Kathryn Beavers Keon McKahan
Louanne Laurence Leona Reynolds
Jozy Winans Kenny Duty
Pat Means Buddy Means
Bill & Juanita Debbie Sands
Pat Puckett Judy Anderson
Brenda Burgess Roscoe Lane
Carolyn Houts Tim Izer
Nickolay Nazaruk, Peski 2 Church
David and Deborah Grace
Our Nation and Leaders
Our Military Service people
Today's Prayer Requests ...

Our Nation and our Leaders ...

Five More New Families...
