

Luke 2:22-40

After Christmas, what next?

Seeking to fulfil the requirements of the law after the birth of a child, Joseph and Mary go to the Temple. There they encounter two older people who have been anticipating this moment for years, but share disturbing insights for what the future will bring.



Pray 

Think about someone in a different generation to you, younger or older. Spend some time praying for them, their needs, their hopes and their contribution to your community. You might want to send them a card or a text to let them know you care and that you're praying for them.

REFLECT

What was the most amazing thing that happened for you in 2023? Have you spoken about this, and if so to whom, and how often? Are we good at celebrating the amazing like Simeon and Anna? Who could you share your grateful reflections with?

Sing

Dance around your kitchen as you sing along to some upbeat praise music, giving thanks praise to God, as Simeon and Anna did.

Bible notes



First, who are Simeon and Anna? After all, they don't appear anywhere else in the Bible. The simple answer is that they are witnesses who recognise and acknowledge the child Jesus. Simeon speaks of salvation for all people, not just Israel (vv.30-31), and speaking to Mary, his words echo the story of Hannah and Samuel, albeit with a more ominous tone (v.35). Anna does not make any pronouncements like those of Simeon; rather, in her role as a witness, she tells what she has seen and heard and spreads the word.

Second, Simeon recognises the infant Jesus is the fulfilment of the promise made by God to God's people. Promises are big throughout the Bible, beginning with the story of Noah and continuing with Abraham and Moses. They tell us that the relationship between God and creation is founded upon the truth that God's word can be relied upon.

Third, the faithfulness of Joseph and Mary underlies, indeed is critical to, the Christmas story. They are faithful to God's promise that is reflected in their keeping of the Law (vv.22a,23a,24a,39a).

In this passage, the certainty of the past is the sure foundation for going forward into a new age in the overarching story of God and creation.

First impressions

- How long do you keep your Christmas crib/decorations going?
- What can you take from your Christmas into the new year?
- Most people know about 'baby Jesus'; how might you help them know the grown-up Jesus?



A prayer of thanksgiving

Creator God,
when we don't see you, forgive us and open our eyes.
When we don't hear you, teach us to listen.
When we don't trust you, deepen our faith.
When we don't follow you, speak to our hearts,
that like we might have the peace of Simeon.
Amen.



LISTEN



Play 'Love Came Down', Kari Jobe on *Where I Find You*.
<https://open.spotify.com/track/4sJvXfAwAJiftnK14Invjp?si=92493577d3464585>
Think of situations that need the wisdom of Christ in the new year. Light a tealight and pray for God's wisdom in each situation.