

**READY TO LIVE, READY TO DIE**  
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LK 2:25 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 upon him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

LK 2:29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

LK 2:30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

LK 2:31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,

LK 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

LK 2:33 The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

One of the great ironies of life is that when we are ready to live, truly ready to live, we are also ready to die. The Apostle Paul said the same, "For for me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Now the same words are spoken by the mouth of a righteous and devout saint of God named Simeon, who believed the promises of the prophets and patiently waited for the promises of God to be fulfilled. Moreover the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen for himself the Lord's Christ, the Messiah, about whom the holy prophets of Israel had spoken.

Now, sure enough, eight days after the Messiah was born Joseph and Mary brought him to Jerusalem for the purification ceremony required by the Law. Something happened to Simeon. Like a magnet draws iron, Simeon was drawn to the temple courts. He knew that this was God drawing him to some great event. Then he knew! The Spirit of God reached through him and he took the little baby boy of Mary and Joseph and raised up toward heaven and blessed God and said, "Now I am ready to die, I am ready to be dismissed from this world to heaven for my eyes have seen the Messiah, 'a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.'"

Then, from Simeon came a strange word, a chilling word to Mary: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." Again we have that word of dying and living side by side. while many will reject the Messiah and their fall will be great. Jesus will be popular with some but will be spoken against and crucified by the authorities and the mob. Moreover

Mary's joy will be tempered with a sword piercing her own soul in His suffering and death.

The interesting thing about this Song of Simeon is that the church has named it by the Latin name of *nunc dimittis*. The *Zondervan Reference Bible* says: Simeon's psalm begins with the word *nun* ("now"), emphasizing the fact that the Messiah has indeed come (hence the Latin title *Nunc Dimittis* ["Now Dismiss"]). "Dismiss" (*apolyo*) here means allow to die (BAG, s.v.; cf. Num 20:29 Simeon who was ready to live because he was ready to die, and ready to die because he was ready to live).

**SIMEON WAS READY TO LIVE AND READY TO DIE BECAUSE OF THE HOLINESS IN HIS LIFE.** <sup>LK 2:25</sup> 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 upon him. The *Zondervan Reference Bible* says of Simeon, "Luke neither associates Simeon with a leading sect or party nor calls him a priest. The important thing is that he is "righteous and devout" (cf. Zechariah and Elizabeth, 1:6). He could be described as one of the believing remnant of Judaism, looking forward to the Messianic."

Like the parents of John the Baptist, this man Simeon believed the prophets and lived a life consistent with his belief. He wanted to be Holy because God was holy. He wanted to be ready for the Messiah when the Messiah came. No doubt he remembered the Psalm which said, "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity or sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord and the righteousness of the God of his salvation."

Simeon wanted clean hands, clean garments, and a pure heart when Messiah came. The *Bible* calls Simeon righteous. He was just a simple man who believed God. He lived a life consistent with his faith. He was not a perfect man, but he sought to be as perfect in his moral life as he could be. His works were equal to his words. He was no hypocrite. His upright life was lived out daily in his relations with other human beings. He loved others and was good to them. No man can be called righteous unless he loves his fellow man. No man can be called righteous who is mean and unkind to his fellow man. Simeon was a righteous man.

Further, Simeon was ready to live or die because he was a devout man. He was absolutely sincere in his relationship with the Eternal. He realized that to love others he needed to have a relationship with God. He realized that mortal man cannot be a moral man unless he has his focus upon the Immortal and All Moral God. From the description by Dr. Luke we can infer that Simeon spent much time in prayer and found joy and strength in fellowship with the God of Israel.

It is also obvious that he spent much time in searching the Scriptures, proving Jesus' later word, "Search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they that testify of me." He had a love for the Word of God because it was the Word of Life. Simeon must have found Jesus in the Torah where Moses promised that

one like him would arise and that Israel should listen to Him in all things. He must have wept to find Jesus in Isaiah who would die for his sins. And reading the promises of Scripture, Simeon must have rejoiced that Messiah would rule all the world as Eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords, sitting upon the eternal throne of the everlasting Kingdom of David.

Simeon was read to live and ready to die because he was a righteous and a devout man. HE WAS READY TO DIE AND READY TO LIVE BECAUSE OF THE HOLINESS IN HIS LIFE.

SIMEON WAS READY TO DIE AND READY TO LIVE BECAUSE OF THE HOPE THAT WAS WITHIN HIS HEART. <sup>25</sup> “He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

MT 12:21 In his name the nations will put their hope.

RO 4:18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Rom5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Rom 8:24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Here we find three truths about Hope: Hope is based upon the Word of God; hope is confirmed by the Holy Spirit of God; and hope becomes reality by the patience of the believer.

Simeon’s study of Scriptures told him that the Messiah would come. Paul found the same thing. Before King Agrippa he says: <sup>Acts 26:6</sup> And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. <sup>7</sup> This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me.”

Simon Peter found the same thing in the *Bible* and preached it on the Day of Pentecost, quoting from Psalm 16 and Psalm 110:

Acts 2: 25 David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

AC 2:26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will live in hope,

AC 2:27 because you will not abandon me to the grave,

nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”

In Romans 10, the *Bible* says that ‘faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.’ I must also tell you that ‘hope comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.’

But the second truth of hope is – that hope has to be confirmed by the Holy Spirit. I hope in the Word when I allow the Holy Spirit to appropriate the truth of the Word to my heart. Old Simeon had read the Word of God that the Messiah would come. He allowed the Spirit of God to work through that Word and the Spirit of God told him that he would not die until this very word came true in his own sight. He would be an eyewitness to the coming Messiah. He would see God in the flesh, the Great I AM!

No doubt Simeon doubted his worth, but he did not doubt God’s Word and the strong confirmation of the Holy Spirit. There was but one thing for him to do: he must wait! Simeon was ‘Waiting for the consolation of Israel.’

This is the third great truth we find about his hope – he was willing to wait. Faith is immediate; hope is faith in the future. The results of faith can be seen, but hope lies in the distance. As the Hebrew writer said, “Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross despising the shame is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”<sup>KJV</sup>

<sup>HEB 12:1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. <sup>2</sup> Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>NIV</sup>

Above anything in the New Testament, these words in Hebrews teach us that Hope requires the third great virtue that Simeon had, PATIENCE.

The *Bible* tells us, “For you have need of patience that after you have believed you might receive the Promise. Simeon’s patience allowed him to hold the PROMISE in his arms.

**SIMEON WAS READY TO LIVE OR TO DIE BECAUSE OF THE HOPE THAT WAS IN HIS HEART!**

**BUT SIMEON WAS READY TO DIE OR READY TO LIVE BECAUSE HE MET THE MESSIAH.** When the old eyes of Simeon looked upon baby Jesus, when Simeon’s old arms lifted the Son of God above toward His real father, Simeon felt born-again. He touched the Son of God, but above all, the Son of God touched Him. He met the Master, and what an interesting thing, the Master was in the form of a tiny baby boy! But then he cried out, “Lord, you can now dismiss me from this earthly life, for my eyes have seen your salvation, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people

Israel.” Simeon was confessing a great truth, Jesus is the Messiah of all mankind, not just the Jews. The covenants apply to all true believers; and although He is the ‘glory’ of Israel, he is the Savior of the World. In that sense Paul was right: We are Jews inwardly.

But think of the Messiah that Simeon met. He was just a baby. He was eight days old. He needed the three rites that every Jewish boy had to undergo – circumcision, the redemption of the firstborn, and the purification after childbirth. Simon saw them offer two pigeons instead of a lamb and knew that Jesus was very poor, for this was called ‘the offering of the poor.’ But Simeon knew too that Jesus was rich. He was the High King of Heaven who humbled Himself to become a lowly baby boy. He owned the streets of gold in the New Jerusalem, but here he was in old Jerusalem where his parents make an offering for the poor.

There is an interesting contrast here too between a baby boy and an old man. But this baby boy who had just been given birth by Mary, gave birth to an old man. It was through faith in the Messiah that Simeon was justified. Simeon sang the Nunc Dimittis for he said:

LK 2:29 “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.  
LK 2:30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
LK 2:31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,  
LK 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Old Simeon was really saying, “Lord, now that I have experienced Real Life I am ready to die.”

But isn’t that true for us all – before we can live with joy or die with hope we must see God’s Salvation. That is why the Spirit bade Simeon sing, “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,<sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.”

There are many people today who refuse to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. They refuse to believe that Jesus is the true Messiah of God. They refuse to accept Him as Lord of lords and King of kings. But they are wrong. And they are not ready to die, for they have not seen God’s salvation and the Lord’s Christ.

William Barclay, the New Testament Scholar, writes, “Towards Jesus Christ there can be no neutrality. We either surrender to Him or are at war with Him. And it is the tragedy of life that the pride of man keeps us from making that surrender wherein is victory.” You see, like Simeon, we are not ready to die until we are ready to live. Let this old man be your teacher. There are many salvations in the world in many different philosophies and religions. But God’s Salvation is in His Son. When you turn your eyes upon Jesus, you will have God’s salvation and be ready to live or die. And when you die Jesus will be holding you in His strong arms. Are you ready to die today? If you are, you’re ready to live.