Advent is about our “coming/future hope”… more than just the hope that we’ll get what we want Christmas this year…

Although I’m sure we’ll gladly and thankfully receive gifts, until our real hope arrives…

Prayer: Father

* Thank you for always keeping the promises you make to us.
* Thank you that we can always count on you for what is best for us.
* Thank you for the first gift of hope that you sent, He is the reason we celebrate at Christmas.
* Prepare our hearts now for the Second gift that You have promised.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with renewed hope of the Second Coming of your Son Jesus.

Please open your Bibles this morning to Luke 2:25-35… The context of this passage… is Jesus, the Son of God, had just willingly left His glorious home in heaven, to obey His Father, arrive in Bethlehem and put on a robe of flesh for us…

As God had promised 700 years earlier, Jesus entered our world thru the womb of a virgin named Mary.

Jesus had already been circumcised and named on the 8th day (V21) according to the Law that God had given to Moses for His people to follow.

Now, on the 40th day after Jesus’ birth, (V22-24) tell us that Mary & Joseph’s love & devotion to God brought them back to the Temple for Mary’s purification/atonement (again as the Law prescribed (Lev 12)…

They also went to the Temple to consecrate (dedicate) their first born child to the Lord (Ex 13:2, V12, V15 & Num 3:13).

Because they were poor and couldn’t afford a year old lamb, they brought two doves or pigeons with them. One to atone for sin and the other was a burnt offering… which I excel at…

They now enter the Temple courts…

V25

* righteous = Lived a hope-filled life based on his belief that God had given Israel in the past (thru Prophecy).
* Devout = Devoted to faithfully worshipping & serving God in the present, while…
* waiting = Actively looking for the consolation of Israel (promised sometime in the future); and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Consolation = paraklēsis = comfort of Israel

Holy Spirit = paraklete = comforter/counselor

* God, the Holy Spirit was with Simeon everyday as he waited faithfully.

If we could have asked Israel what was causing their distress they probably would have said… The Romans, who have their boots on our necks… If we asked them today… they would likely say the Palestinians/Syrians/Iranians… God would say it’s sin…

Like Israel, we all have pains/problems, anxiety/stress, distress/discomfort… sometimes self inflected…

Like Israel, We like to blame certain people, places and things for our troubles…, But God would say it’s sin. So we need to learn to be better haters of sin, while loving the one who commits the sin…

Simeon’s hope was rooted in a prophecy given more than 700 years earlier…

Isaiah 7:14

At the time of this Prophecy, most (if not all) of Israel’s distress had been “self-inflicted” due to their disobedience to the Commands of God (sin)… their life was a bigger mess than we can imagine!

What does that say about God?

No matter how “bad” a person or nation of people is… Yahweh (God) is infinite love, acceptance, and forgiveness. There is always hope with God.

His love, acceptance & forgiveness goes beyond just saving a person from hell…

God’s love transforms and makes us brand new people, living life like we have never lived it before. Lives we had never thought possible...

Luke 2:26 “And it had been revealed to him (Simeon) by the (still small voice of the) Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ (The Messiah).

When did the Holy Spirit reveal this to him? When he was 20, 50, 80?

We aren’t told…

Why? Because He offers the hope of Christ to every age…

How could Simeon believe a centuries old promises from God, that He would somehow see the Son God born of a virgin before he died?

Because God’s Word both then and now is filled with accounts, proving over & over that our God has a PERFECT track record of doing exactly what He says He will do…

I.e. Bringing Israel into the Promised Land under Joshua’s leadership, God.

But also remember the process of faith that God had to take His people through to fulfill His promise?

40 years of wilderness wandering (because of their self inflicted pride & self-centered disobedience), until the unbelieving, discouraging, disobedient, hopeless people older than 20, had all died off.

The one’s who experienced the promise were the young people who followed Joshua, living hopeful, righteous, devoted, obedient lives before God.

Do you think that as Simeon attended Hebrew school was taught that lesson, that it might have effected his faith, hope, devotion & lifestyle choices as he waited for the promise of the Messiah to be fulfilled?

In school & church he would have been constantly reminded that:

Joshua 21:45 : *“Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”*

* Psalm 37:4-5
* Psalm 91:14-16

Choosing to believe in God, worship, serve and obey His Word is a choice that you will never regret… There is hope in the ONE TRUE GOD who has a PERFECT track record of keeping the promises. Not Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius…,

Acts 2:38 promises us that when a person turns away from sin and turns to God (repents) and is baptized, they are filled with the same Holy Spirit that was on Simeon.

The Consolation / comfort of Israel now becomes your promise of comfort…

Holy Spirit / comforter walks with you everyday as you faithfully obey God’s Word & serve Him out of the heart of love and devotion He gives.

Following the still small voice as He speaks…, great things happen (as we see in V27)!

This is a beautiful moment in V28-32 when Simeon’s hope moves from past to present! Read

That’s great but what future hope is there for followers of Christ today?

Jesus already came! We’re celebrating Christmas!

Revelation 22:12-14: *“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. (Incentive to do better for the Kingdom?)*

*13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

1. *Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”*

How did Jesus tell His followers to actively wait?

Acts 1:8

Matthew 28:19-20 (which is where our mission statement comes from)

Titus 2:13–14 tells us: *“while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*

Setting ourselves apart (Sanctifying ourselves) devoting ourselves to the Lord and His work makes Jesus (our hope) real to others…

Why is that important? V33-35a

What one thinks about Jesus in their hearts will either reveal a “tosis”… falling (fatal crash) in their life (a mess that no one will want)

or it will reveal “rising”… resurrected hope!! Resurrected living!!

Why did he say that a sword pierce Mary’s soul? V35b

Simeon had been given prophetic truth from the Holy Spirit as to what would happen to Jesus by those who chose to fall…, denying/rejecting Jesus, their long awaited Messiah…

What they did to Jesus would certainly pierce Mary’s soul as it would any mothers…

That was the first note of sorrow in Luke’s Gospel…

But there is another option… rise in hope.

John 11:24-25

Your decision here today plays a major part in not only your hope for this Christmas, but for the rest of your life and all of eternity.

Do you need to receive Christ as your Savior and devote your life to making Him Lord?

If so, come to an altar and pray… God will love, accept & forgive you…

The Holy Spirit is waiting to lead you into a holiness lifestyle of VICTORIOUS Christian living. Will you let Him? Come as we sing…