Simeon

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[0:00] Let us now consider that we are unable to what we have in the portion of scripture that we have just read. The gospel according to Luke chapter 2, and we might again read at verse 26, and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Particularly these words in verses 28 to 30.

The scripture does not tell us very much about this man, Simeon. But what we do have in scripture concerning him, it tells us quite a lot on the other hand about this man's character.
Where we are told that he was a just man and devout, a good man, a man of sincerity of heart, a man who attended to the duties of his religion, and moreover, a man who was, who had the Holy Ghost upon him as we're here.
He was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now, we read that the same Holy Ghost revealed to him that he should not die until he had seen the Lord Christ, until he had seen the Messiah in the flesh.
And this, of course, the great thing, the great desire of the Old Testament church down through the generations.
[2:28] They expected the consolation of Israel. And they were full of this expectancy because God himself had promised that he should send his son in the coolness of time to redeem a people for himself.

And time and time and time and time again, we noticed that they felt that the light was just about to break upon them.
For example, think of the prophet Isaiah. He is writing as if he were writing at the foot of the cross and saying, Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?
He saw from afar, but on the other hand, very distinctly, the suffering and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Now, it is noticeable that the revelation given to Simeon is put into words that that's very, very significant for each one of us.
[3:43] That he should not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ. It is certainly true concerning Simeon that he was to see Christ in the flesh ere he passed out of this world.

But there is a sense in which each one of us must see both the Lord Jesus Christ and death.
It is appointed unto men once to die. And on the other hand, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, every eye shall see him.
And this is the point to which we ought to give very close attention. Whether we shall see Christ first before we see death, or whether we shall see death before we shall see Christ.
Because not only our peace here depends on it, but our very eternity depends upon it.
[4:53] If we see Christ first, if we see Christ first, if we meet Christ before we encounter death, Christ shall see to us that death shall never come too near us, near enough to destroy us.

But on the other hand, if we meet death before we meet Christ, death will separate us from Christ through all eternity. So it is a very important question to inquire as to whether we ourselves have this hope, or whether we have had this experience.
Have we met Christ? Obviously, none of us here this evening have as yet met death. But there are also those perhaps who have not met Christ either.
And remember, your eternity depends absolutely on whether you meet Christ first. Or whether you shall meet death first.

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Well, it was indicated to this man by none other than the Holy Ghost, the third session of the Trinity, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ.
[6:17] And my friends, it should not be without significance for us, but in these three consecutive verses, the presence of the Holy Spirit to this man, and the guidance, the revelation given to him by the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the three consecutive verses.

It was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. And then he came by the Spirit into the temple. Perhaps there are those who would be inclined to say that, surely, if he had the promise of the Holy Spirit, that he should see the Lord's Christ, that he had little need of going to the temple.
Why, you say, why go to the temple? Why bother attending the means of grace, if he has had a revelation of the Holy Spirit? Oh, but, my friends, in the experience of the believer, it is hard otherwise.
There is nothing at all that will make us use every means that God has said about the portal, like the presence and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.
No one who is really taught by the Spirit of the Lord shall dispense to the means of God's appointment. Remember, our salvation and the glory of God is the great and grand end that God has appointed means to that end, and to this presumption on our part if we don't make use of those means.
[8:11] And certainly, this, every means is important, but this is one of the great means God himself said to Israel, concerning the temple and concerning the temple services, there I will meet with you.

It was the temple of meeting. Not only the temple of meeting of the congregation together, but the temple of the meeting of the congregation with God and of God with the congregation.
And so, he came by the Spirit into the temple. and probably, he went there day after day with heart full of expectancy.
His spirit ever desires of seeing the Lord Jesus Christ saying, no doubt, what the psalmist was saying in the very words that we sang a minute ago, one thing I of the Lord desire that was to be in his holy place in the sanctuary that he might behold the beauty of the Lord.
And how blessed it is to come to the house of God with this expectancy in our hearts. With this longing after communion and fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.
[9:41] Now, we notice that when Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus to the temple to do for him after the custom of the law, it is very significant that Jesus being made under the law had to submit and to be submitted to every law, the moral as well as the ceremonial law.

he became like unto his brethren in that respect as in other respects yet without sin. Now, think of the one who was himself the Lord made of a woman, made under the law, brought as an infant of days to the temple in order to do for him after the custom of the law.
And we read that when Simeon saw him, then took him up in his arms. and surely this speaks to us very eloquently of this man's attitude of heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ.
And to begin with, you feel that here is a Christ raw miracle. For we must bear in mind that most infants are very much alike.
No, does Simeon have seen many infants coming to the temple. Many infants being brought to the temple for the same purpose and at the same age and yet not only did he see this child in the arms of his mother but there was here the recognition on his heart that this was the Lord Christ.
[11:57] The Messiah promised by the Lord from the very first gleam of revelation for this was the burden and the heart of every revelation given by God from the very first promise that the seed of the woman should come to destroy and crush the head of the serpent and now here we have Simeon taking this child up in his arms and you will notice that it shows how much he welcomed the coming of this child Jesus no woman ever took her own child to her heart with more affection with a greater depth of love and affection than Simeon took this child

Jesus in his arms this is what faith always does with Jesus true faith wherever there is faith in the heart it must do this it cannot do less than this this is the worst of faith to close in with the Lord Jesus Christ to take him to heart as it were to see him at a distance is not enough to have some notional knowledge of something about Jesus is not enough to believe about him is not enough we must believe in him and so Simeon took him up in his arms and perhaps one might be ready to object that Simeon perhaps had no right to take this child in his arms oh but

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Simeon knew better Simeon knew better because we have a right to Jesus Christ if we wish to lay hold of him more than we have to any other child no parent ever had a right to his own child like the right Simeon had to the child Jesus why well any child can be torn from the arms of the parent a child an infant can be taken from the mother's breast but the child Jesus cannot be taken from the breast and the bosom of the believer he has a covenant right to the child Simeon could say to Mary he is not your child according to the flesh as much as he is my child and your child by virtue of his being our savior this is the gift of
God love to us the gift of the everlasting love of the father God so loved the world and he loved those individuals whom he purposed to save and so there is a response to that love in the breath of Simeon he takes the child in his arms yes he has a covenant right to it he has a title to the Lord Jesus Christ such as he could never have to any child that he may have had of his own it is not a short lease we have of this blessing it is out for time and out for eternity and hours for the taking and hours for the taking now years for the taking now he came to seek and to save that which was lost and if any man will let him take whosoever will let him take he took him in his arms and moreover we notice that he blessed
God this is always the reaction to our receiving of Jesus Christ the cause and the effect we cannot receive Christ without being moved to say extol the Lord with me let us extol his name together you remember how David during a time of trial in the day of conflict someone heard him uttering the desire that he might have a drink out of the well beside Jerusalem gate well at Bethlehem and there were those who broke through the enemy line to procure that drink for him but when
[17:41] David tasted that drink out of the fountain what did he do he poured it out as a thanks offering before the Lord and this is always what happens if we receive something just as soon as he bestows the gift upon us we respond willingly and spontaneously by pouring out our hearts in blessing of the Lord he blessed God yes this is always what happens and moreover not only does he bless God but he bore witness to the blessing that had come his way he said Lord now let us thy servant depart in peace according to thy word now in passing there are two words here that show very clearly the relationship that

Simeon sustained to the Lord Jesus Christ for example he uses a word here Lord a word that we do not often have in the New Testament mentioned it is used in one of two places but it is the word from which we get a word that we have more or less taken over into English and it sometimes has a harsh connotation for us death word and when we use the word despot we think of another expression by which we tend to interpret that word slave driver a despot was the Lord or the master of slaves and in our eyes and in our ears the word tends to have a very harsh and severe connotation but
Simeon uses it why because he goes on to say Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace here you have the despot the master and the slave and Simeon is saying in effect master thou lettest thy slave depart in peace is it not strange oh yes it wonderful that not only does Simeon take the child Jesus into his arms and save by his embracing of Jesus save in no uncertain manner he is mine mine for time and for eternity mine by covenant right forever more yes but at the same time he is careful to stress the other side of the matter
I am his Lord love let us thy servant Lord I am thy slave and so this should be a lesson to us have we received the Lord Jesus Christ as our own portion do we know him as our own savior have we a covenant right do we believe that we have a covenant right to the gift that is offered to us by the father and the gift who offers himself well in the measures in which we believe we have taken him to our heart surely we ought to give ourselves to him Paul very often in the opening words of his letters uses the expression a servant of Jesus Christ and he uses a stronger word than we normally use by the word servant he means a slave what was the difference between a slave and a servant well normally when a person is merely a servant he offers his service he sells his service his service belongs to his master but when a person is a slave not only his service but all that he is as surely as all that he does belongs to his master he is saying
I am thine not merely what I do but what I am you should do with me according to thy will without any reservation so that as the word used here Lord implies mastery and lordship and sovereignty the word that he uses for servant implies submission and obedience comply with the will of Christ in all that he wants him to do and he goes on now let us thou servant depart in peace and sometimes we tend to think of these words as implying that Simeon was a very very old man

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[23:56] Alexander McLaren in speaking of these words referred to Simeon as the aged Simeon who took up the child in his withered arms now I don't know that the scripture shows us that this was so as far as we can see there is no indication as to whether he was an old man or a man in the prime of life or a youngish man I suppose we tend to draw the inference from this fact that he is saying now let us thou thy servant depart in peace as if Simeon were thinking of death as coming that very day or the following day there is nothing to indicate that this was so as far as we can glean from the sacred trichote and indeed the word that

Luke uses is the word that was used very commonly when a century was placed and we all know how at that time not well as nowadays sentries were placed around the army post and the sentries were there and sometimes they were there during the hours of darkness and when daylight came sometimes the sentry was dismissed as if one should say to them you can come off watch now daylight has come and the sentry is waiting he is on the alert he is looking for something and he is above all when he expects to come off watch with the breaking of day he is looking for the dawn and looking in the direction of the sun rising now this is what
Simeon is saying you are telling me to come off watch the light of day has broken the light has come he had been waiting hitherto as they that for morning watch my soul waits for the Lord Simeon could say that and he was waiting in the right attitude and in the right place in the temple and now he says Lord thou hast given me thou hast fulfilled thy promise thou hast relieved me the light has come the promise has been fulfilled to my soul Jesus has come in the flesh this was the great promise to which the Old Testament church waited and now
Simeon is saying now let us thou thy servant depart in peace depart in peace and that peace had broken in upon his soul because the God of peace had revealed himself to him he had received the prince of peace and therefore he had the experience of peace in his own soul you see the believer of peace and the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the promise are so bound up together that you cannot have the one without the other the believer can say of Christ he is our peace and we cannot have peace our peace cannot be present with us while he is absent nor can our peace be absent when he is present he is our peace
Jesus Christ filled in such a satisfactory manner the empty void in the believer's heart that his heart is full to overflowing he can say that his cup overflows and so Simeon could say now let us thy servant depart in peace now not only did he have the fulfillment of the promise but he now had his peace of conscience Christ in the arms of the soul is sufficient to cover our every unworthiness how can ask me how can my native nakedness be covered it can be covered only by him who is the righteousness of the believing soul he is made into us wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption love let us do love let us do love and depart in peace what could he last now that he had
[30:01] Jesus Christ Jesus Christ and holding him to his heart embracing him in the arms of his faith as surely as in his physical arms because faith cannot do less with Christ he has to be not only close to our hearts but that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith yes for the believer Christ is the centre of everything just as the scripture speaks of the heart as in many respects the centre of our personality and there is where Christ dwells if he is with us at all that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith and you can look at the church in any way you like where the least the fewest are gathered together two or three are gathered together

I am there in the midst of them in the heart of the church as it were and then when the church shall be gathered without one soul missing there Jesus shall be in the midst of the church in the heart of the church because he is the heart of the church as surely as he is the head of the church and so he could say thou let us thy servant depart in peace the god of peace had come so near to Simeon and think my friends for a minute of the wonder of the incarnation he who was now in the arms of Simeon where had he been before Simeon had him in his arms before he was in Simeon's bosom he dwelt from all eternity in the bosom of the father and think of the amazement of
Simeon's heart as he said to himself and think of the wonder of our hearts if we are unable to say to oh the amazing grace of God that he who dwell from all eternity in the bosom of the father should condescend to come so near as to dwell in my bosom and he belongs here as surely as he belongs in the bosom of the father it is his delight to dwell with me as surely as it is his delight to dwell with the father oh the amazing grace of God yes thou letst thy servant depart in peace according to thy word according to thy word and how blessed it is that God never does anything by any other rule certainly there are other rules spoken of his scripture according to which he works but not one rule

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of his is inconsistent with another we have to work according to the rules laid down for us by others but
God works according to the rule that he has with himself the rule that he himself is for example we read there in the new testament according to his mercy he saved us according to the riches of his grace my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory not according to the measure of your asking or according to the measure of your consciousness of need or anything like that no not any yardstick that belongs or pertains to us but according to his own eternal infallible rule that he himself is he is the God of truth the God of mercy the God of justice the holy God and here he opens
Simeon's eyes and reveals himself to us and he says according to thy word how blessed it is that we know the rule whereby God works the rule by which he saves yes by which he stores the blessings of redemption but at the same time the rule by which he exercises or shall exercise his judgment he shall not go beyond his word in dealing with either the believer or the unbeliever not one iota of the truth shall fail his threatenings against the unbeliever and his promises to the believer and the wonderful thing is that the promises to the believer shall be fulfilled and the fulfillment of the promise shall meet the desire of the believer heart some of you may remember that the great geometrician
[35:53] Euclid maintained that parallel lines meet in infinity well there are parallel lines here God's redemptive purpose in Jesus Christ and the soul hunger of the believing heart the desire of the believer shall they meet yes they converge until they come together where the promise is fulfilled and there the desire shall be fulfilled too nothing less will suffice nothing more can be required or looked for thou let us thy servant depart in peace according to thy word how was that mine eyes have seen thy salvation thy salvation and his eyes saw the salvation of

God the salvation that God had purposed and the salvation that Christ himself came into the world to work out and God had come so near in that small infant of days that holy child Jesus this truth is fulfilled God was in Christ and because God was in Christ his name is Emmanuel God with us God dwelling with us he received gifts for men that God the Lord might dwell among them his coming his suffering his death his resurrection his ascension everything that he did as the mediator of the church is done in order to the fulfillment of the redemptive purpose of
God and so Simeon could say mine eyes have seen thy salvation and think of the measure of certainty here how the language of the believing heart puts it into the common language of the common man when we think of a thing that we know for certain exists or has happened we say I have seen it with my own eyes there cannot be greater certainty than that we even use that homely expression seeing is believing but here there was not merely the seeing of the eyes but there was the recognition of the believing heart the eye of faith had been opened the eyes of your mind enlightened as Paul says to the Ephesians yes mine eyes have seen thy salvation and salvation and
Christ are bound up together there is no salvation in any other no salvation in any name given under heaven among men this is the only name and you remember that Jesus himself said this concerning Saul of Tarshish the time of his conversion he's a chosen vessel unto him to bear my name before kings and Gentiles there is only that one remedy for a sin ruined world or for sin ruined individuals the name of Jesus Christ the whole fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in him he is our salvation and we cannot no man cometh unto God but by me he says well if we have taken Jesus up in our arms and if we have done so surely we know that we have done so surely we can say with Peter Lord thou knowest all things thou knowest that I love thee thou knowest that I love thee have we a place in our hearts that can be filled only by the Lord Jesus Christ does he all our desire well if he is surely it becomes to comes us to say Lord with reverence to him and to speak of ourselves as servants for his service is perfect freedom the psalmist in psalm 116 uses words that seem so paradoxical he says thy servant the son of thy handmaid because my bands thou didst entide
[41:24] I am thy slave because thou hast set me free thy servant because thou hast entied my bands thou hast liberated me and to be free in very truth in sincerity is to be free to serve the Lord Jesus Christ whose service is perfect freedom all all then let us hear the voice of the master of our benefactor our saviour our friend saying to us this do in remembrance of me this do it becomes us to remember that we are under obligation to him every moment of the day for all that we have and all that we are we are his he are bought not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with

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the blood of the lamb of

God as of a lamb without blemish and without spot without fault or flaw or shortcoming or imperfection and come to think of it this is a duty but every duty concerning your faith if you shoulder it in the right spirit becomes a privilege every duty and you feel that there is a sense in which every law laid down for us in the Old Testament becomes gospel to us under the new for example think of this at the very first Passover it was said to the children of Israel to the heads of the households to procure for themselves a lamb and by way of command they were told your lamb shall be without blemish you will find a lamb on the flocks of
Israel that is a perfect lamb of its kind it was a law to lay down for them but when we are told in the word of truth your lamb shall be without blemish it is gospel to us for our lamb is without blemish and we didn't even have to go and find the lamb God has provided for himself a lamb and he is certainly without blemish is his death worth commemorating does your faith look back to an act that took place in the history of this world and forward to something that shall have its completion in a coming eternity showing the Lord's death on the one hand something that took place until he come and the Lord's people delight and look forward to his appearing

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