

Be Amazed – At God’s Son . . . Luke 2:25-35

Glad you’re with us this morning

Working through the book of Luke in the Bible, focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus, God’s Son

In Luke 2 we get to see him from the perspective of several people who were *amazed* at him – people like Anna, his parents, Simeon

Especially important for us this morning is *Simeon*’s perspective because of what he says about Jesus, and the salvation he offers us

It’s my desire for you this morning is that you would walk out of here amazed at God’s Son because you embraced that salvation for the very first time

Read Lk 2:25-35

It’s no wonder that Joseph and Mary marveled at what was said about him

His list of titles now included –

Son of the Most High (1:32)

The Lord’s Christ (26) – God’s Messiah, the promised one, the anointed one

Savior (11) and *God’s salvation* (30)

The important issue is not that you know those things in your *head*, but that you know *him* in your heart – that Jesus is *your* Savior this morning

If he’s not, what I’m about to say could change your life – now and for eternity

One of the first truths about Jesus from Simeon’s example is that . . .

If you seek him, you will find him (v25-28)

Can you imagine Simeon?

Here he was, longing for the relief of his people (*the consolation of Israel*; 25b), fully aware that God had promised a deliverer

And then God somehow reveals to him that he won’t die until he sees him (26)

If his friends didn’t think he was crazy for saying so, they must have thought he was a little strange for hovering over every baby boy who was brought into the temple

These days we’d call him a stalker

Point is – Simeon was *actively* seeking Jesus, looking for him, longing for him

And God didn’t disappoint him – he found him

The same is true for you – if you seek him, you will find him

God says it this way in **Jer 29:12-14** – Having a plan for your life, a plan that includes a future and a hope, he says . . .

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the Lord.

If you seek him, you will find him

- Remember a spelunking/caving trip that Becky and I took on our honeymoon, to the San Andreas caves in CA

This was no ordinary tour with built-in stairs, well-lit walk ways, plenty of headroom

This was show up at the end of some gravel road somewhere in the middle of nowhere CA, put on somebody’s worn out overalls, strap on a miners helmet and light, and crawl through a rabbit hole to enter the cave

It was just the two of us and the guide for 4 hours underground

It certainly wasn’t the most romantic time of our honeymoon

At one point as we were crawling and working our way through the cave, the guide said

he wanted us to try something

He showed us two holes near the floor to our left, each about 3 feet in diameter, and then told us to turn off our headlamps – we did, and so did he; Pitch black 2 holes open into two different “rooms”

Drop into the holes, move forward about 10 feet, turn around 3x’s, then find your way back to me with no light and no talking, only feeling your way along

We lost all sense of distance, space, time; We were literally groping in the dark blind, looking for a way out

Our question to the guide was – What if we can’t find you?

His response? You will

And we did, despite our frustration and desperation at times

That’s exactly what God promises you concerning Jesus – if you seek him, you *will* find him; *When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the Lord.*

A half-hearted response to him won’t cut it – you’ll still be groping in the dark, practicing a *form* of religion, but lacking a genuine *relationship* with him

If that’s you this morning, if you’ve been practicing a form of religion . . .

I’ve been praying that you would become increasingly frustrated with your life, and frustrated with the emptiness of your beliefs

And that you would start looking and longing for more, just like Simeon

If you seek him, you will find him

And when you do . . .

If you ask him, he will forgive you (v29-31)

Here finally was the answer to God’s promise, the desire of Simeon’s heart . . .

To actually *see* the Messiah, the promised one, before he died

The phrase I want to zero in on is in v30 – *my eyes have seen your salvation*

He’s speaking to God in heaven and saying – I’ve seen the one through whom you’re going to save the world, Jews and Gentiles alike

I’ve seen the *Savior*, the one the angels spoke of a few days back (2:11)

But Savior of what? Savior for who? What’s the big deal?

The big deal is that the Bible says . . .

God is holy and man is sinful – that divides us

The only way that divide can be crossed is through the forgiveness of our sins

The only way our sins can be forgiven once and for all, is through the death of a perfect sacrifice, a Savior

Simeon knew all too well the imperfect nature of the OT animal sacrifices

And contrary to many Jews at the time, he was looking for a *spiritual* Savior who would forgive sins, as opposed to a *political* one who would crush opponents

He was saying that this is the one who would save us by forgiving our sins

While that’s a big deal, it’s not automatic – just because Jesus died for your sins on the cross, paying the penalty you deserved, doesn’t mean you’re *automatically* forgiven

If that were the case, the whole world would be saved and this book, as well as our faith, would be a moot point

You have to ask him to forgive you, believing that his death was for you

If you do, he will forgive you – 1 John 1:9 – *If we confess our sins, he is . . .*

I'm not talking about a trite little prayer because you know you're supposed to
Not talking about a fire insurance prayer offered just in case you might need it
Just in case it's all true
Not talking about a half-hearted plea because you're feeling bad or in trouble
Talking about genuine repentance here

- Genuine repentance (asking God to forgive you of your sins) means 4 things . . .
 1. *Seeing your sin as God sees it* – rebellious, wicked, contrary to his holiness, wrong
That's called confession; It often requires a change of mind on your part
You no longer rationalize your sin; You call it what it is – sin
 2. *Grieving over your sin because it grieves God*
That's called godly sorrow – it leads to repentance
As opposed to worldly sorrow – feeling bad because you got caught or don't like the consequences
 3. *Turning from your sinful ways*
No longer will you care about indulging yourself or your friends
All you'll care about is honoring the God who saved you, with your whole life
 4. *Making restitution* – wherever and whenever possible, making right your wrongs
with those you offended
Apologizing, repaying, reconciling relationships, living at peace with others as far as it depends on you

Your prayer of forgiveness may be as simple as this –
God, I believe that Jesus died in my place for my sin, and I'm sorry for it
I see it as you see it, and it's wrong; I'm grieved because you're grieved
I've been living a rebellious life apart from you and contrary to your holiness
I commit that wherever possible, I will make right my wrongs
Please forgive me

Jesus is God's means of salvation
He came and died to save you from your sins
If you ask him, he will; If you don't, he won't

If you seek him you will find him; If you ask him, he will forgive you . . .

If you trust him, he will save you (v32-35)

Three things about Jesus in these verses that we need to see –

With Jesus comes truth

32 – Simeon said that Jesus is *a light for revelation to the Gentiles*
Light reveals things that were previously unseen
Jesus came to reveal the truth of salvation that was previously unseen – salvation
through faith in him

Bible says that it's *by grace you are saved, through faith* (Eph 2:8-9)
With Jesus comes the truth of salvation – salvation by grace (God's unmerited favor
toward you), available to you through faith (simple trust in who he is, what he's done)

With Jesus comes consequences

34 – *this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel*
Because of Jesus, many will fall – suffer judgment, now and for eternity, because they
reject him
Others will be raised – saved unto everlasting life because they trusted him

While *Israel* was Simeon's immediate context, we can be certain this principle applies
to everyone because it's reiterated time and again throughout the NT (Mt 25)
Some will live because they trust him; Others will perish because they don't
Jesus came to make very clear the consequences of our choices

With Jesus comes exposure

34 – he was *appointed for a sign that [was] opposed*
Jesus is God's sign, signal, that salvation has come
His *arrival* means that our wait is over – that's the easy part
The hard part is that his *presence* exposes/reveals the true nature of our hearts (35b)
You can run but you can't hide
In between in v35 is this parenthetical statement about Mary – that just as Jesus would
suffer and die for our sins, Mary would suffer because of that suffering
Because of what her son went through

But the main point in v34-35 is that with Jesus comes exposure
The presence of Christ reveals the true nature of your heart
You can't pull one over on God; You can't fake it
You can't hide behind a façade of religious rituals
Heb 4:13 – *No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes
of him to whom we must give account.*
Talking the talk may fool your family and friends, but it doesn't fool Jesus
One way or another, sooner or later, he *will* reveal the true nature of your heart

So each of us has a decision to make –
Accept the truth of salvation that he has revealed, or reject it
Trust the promises of forgiveness/eternal life, or suffer the consequences of sin/death
Live his way, or *die* trying to live yours

- A year or so ago Discovery Channel aired an episode of "I Shouldn't Be Alive"
True stories of survival, against all odds
This particular episode was about a group of people on a sail boat that sank in the
middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and ended up on a life raft, circled by sharks, with no
food, no water, and no way to call for help
Slowly, they began to die of dehydration and exposure, and after 5 days, only 2 of the 5
were left, barely alive
It just so happened that on that 5th day, a Russian cargo ship passed within eyesight
It was an amazing story of rescue in the midst of desperation

Do you think the Russians had to convince them to accept their help?
Do you think they refused their help and told them they'd rather stay on the raft and
wallow in their own delusions and slow death? Of course not!
But that's exactly what many of you are doing these days –

You're refusing to trust the rescue/salvation Jesus offers, in the midst of your desperation
You're refusing to get on the ship that is safe and secure in the midst of life's storms . . .
The ship that will eventually carry you safely to the shores of heaven/eternity w/ God
You'd rather take your chances on your miserable, sinking life raft because you've
convinced yourself that you don't *need* to be rescued or that there *is* no ship of salvation

Worse yet, you may be so self-sufficient and self-absorbed that you're cruising through the oceans of life in a yacht, with all the money, all the friends, and all the happiness you'd ever want (or so you think)
Meanwhile, there's an iceberg up ahead waiting to take your life, leaving you no chance of being rescued/saved
Either way, you're flirtin' with disaster – there's no escaping it
And you're missing out on an awesome ride called "life in Christ"

Invitation

Jesus is waiting – he's waiting for you to . . .
Recognize the futility of your life and the direction you're headed
If you seek him, you will find him
Be broken over your sin, and repent of it
If you ask him, he will forgive you
Cry out for help and get on board
If you trust him, he will save you
If you're ready, you pray with me right now

Prayer of salvation

Admit sinner; Believe Jesus died for me; Sorry for my sins – please forgive me
Trust you and want to know you personally; Come into my life and save me
Commit to live for you the rest of my days
With heads still bowed and eyes still closed . . .
If you just prayed with me to receive Christ for the very first time, I'd like for you to do something . . .
Stand up, slip out of your row, come down and sit here in the front row
We're going to share communion together in just a minute, and I'd love to have privilege of serving you communion for the first time as a child of God
So as everyone else continues to pray, you come right now
One of our staff or leaders will come and sit next to you, and pray with you if you'd like

If doesn't matter if you're a . . .
Proud businessman who just gave your life to Christ – come
Failing husband – come; Broken wife – come
Wayward YA – come; Rebellious student – come
Doesn't matter if everyone thought you were a believer – if you just got it for the first time, there's no shame in that – you come, just as you are
And mark this day as *your* day of *salvation*
Finish praying for bread and cup – God, thank you for Christ's broken body, shed blood
(Get bread and tray)

As we're being served, I want to encourage you to think about the words of this old hymn – Just As I Am; Make them your prayer
If you've accepted Jesus as your Savior, join us
If haven't – let the bread and cup pass
Reflect on what's preventing you from doing so
Otherwise, you risk bringing judgment on yourself
After everyone is served, we'll eat and drink together
Serve the new believers

Communion

Communion/Lord's Table is something we observe regularly because Jesus told us to
It's one of the main ways to remember his death for our sin, and thank him from the overflow of our heart
So we eat the bread which symbolizes the suffering of his broken body on the cross
We drink the cup which symbolizes his shed blood, the life that he gave to save ours
Jesus said to eat in remembrance of him
And drink in remembrance of him as well

Close

Building model and photos

Next Week – Luke 3