

Luke 2:22-32 ‘Living Under the Certainty of a Promise’

Tonight is Superbowl Sunday. How many think the Denver Broncos are going to win? How many think the Seattle Seahawks are going to win? How many never heard of the Broncos or the Seahawks? The Superbowl has become a national institution. Even if you don't care about the game, you may watch for the half time show or for the famous commercials that are aired only for that game. Sports shows and magazines and newspapers are filled with big talk about who will win the Superbowl. Experts make bold predictions. Analysts have stat sheets worked up on every player factoring in how this year's performance level, their injuries and their personal lives will affect their performance. Players who are interviewed are absolutely certain that their team is going to win. Fans love to hear big talk and the analysis and the predictions made from people 'in the know'. With all this information blasted across the media you would think that a certain prediction could be made. So who is going to win the Superbowl? The bottom line is this; No one knows who will win the Superbowl. The excitement of watching the game is in the fact that no one knows. All the predictions and trash talk do nothing except fire up the excitement. But until the game is played the winner cannot be known.

Many of the promises made to us in our lives are nothing more than hot air and big talk. We understand the entertainment value of all this hype when it comes to the Superbowl and all of sports. The speculation and big talk is all part of the fun. But what if a financial expert promises that you will double your money in a year if you invest in his plan; or a doctor promises that a particular diet will

increase your life span by 50 years; or a politician promises that the government will take care of you for the rest of your life?.. We can easily be carried away by such bold promises, and if they are not fulfilled we may hold the professional who made them libel for representing a false guarantee. But in life, like the Superbowl, no one can guarantee a particular outcome for your life. No one but the Lord God Almighty.

Forty days after Jesus was born Mary and Joseph traveled to the temple to offer the sacrifices of purification according to Jewish law. When Joseph and Mary entered the temple courts they were surprised by an elderly man who approached them to make over their baby. Elderly Simeon had been living under a promise from the Lord that he would not die until he had seen the promised Messiah. Guided by the Holy Spirit Simeon immediately recognized the baby Jesus as the Messiah and he praised God with these inspired words, ***“Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to your word. For mine eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all Israel; A light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.”*** God made a promise to Simeon that was much more secure than the big talk about who will win the Superbowl. God promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the promised Messiah.

God’s certain promise impacted Simeon’s life in several profound ways. First, God’s promise moved Simeon to go to the temple every day to worship God waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. Secondly, God’s promise kept Simeon alert and focused on the revealed will of the Lord. Simeon’s faith was honed and sharpened with anticipation as he waited for the arrival of the Lord. For Simeon it was not a matter of ‘if’ Jesus would come but ‘when’.

Simeon lived in the certainty that God's promise was true. Thirdly, the Lord's promise allowed Simeon to live out his days with confidence and joy. Simeon's hidden joy rang out when the baby Jesus came through the temple doors as he sang a beautiful song of praise celebrating Jesus as the light of the world.

As Christians you and I live under the certain promises of God just as elderly Simeon. On the day we were baptized God made the certain promise that we are His beloved children and He is our eternal Savior. God made the certain promise that Christ has paid for our sin by means of His cross. He promised that we are saved by His grace through faith in Jesus' name. He promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He promised that as Jesus rose from the dead we also will live a new life. We are sealed with the promises of God through baptism. The world disdains these promises as just more 'big talk' that can't be proven. But God has sealed these promises in the blood of His Son. There is bible verse in 2 Corinthians which declares, "All the promises of God find their 'YES' in Jesus." We live in the certainty that God's promises are true.

God's promises to Simeon changed His life and God's baptismal promises to us change our lives. Just as Simeon went to the temple every day confident that one day he would see the Messiah so we worship the Lord every week with the same hope and confidence. Going to Church is not like going to a restaurant or to a store which we choose according to our preference and fancy. We go to church to hear the message of salvation and wait for the fulfillment of the promises of God. We gather weekly in worship to celebrate our joy in the coming of the Lord.

Secondly, as the Lord's promise to Simeon kept him focused on the Lord's will, so also God's baptismal promise keeps us focused and alert to God's will in our lives. God has inspired and preserves His holy Word so that we may be anchored in the certain knowledge of His will. God's Word challenges us to examine our own hearts, to recognize the guilt of our sin. It calls us to repent of our sin, and take comfort in the Good News of Jesus' love and grace. The Word keeps us focused on the promises of God so that we may recognize God at work in us and all around us.

Thirdly, as Simeon was filled with the certain hope that he would see the Messiah so we are filled with the same certainty that we will see the Lord in His glory. We know Jesus is coming again. By faith in God's promise we are certain that we are saved by God's grace fulfilled through the sacrifice of His Son upon the cross. We live in the certainty of Christ's bodily resurrection from the grave. We live in the certainty that because Christ is risen His promise to pay for the sin of the world upon the cross is fulfilled. We live in the certainty that Jesus is coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead. We live in the certainty that we are saved by His grace through faith in Jesus' name.

God's promise to Simeon changed his life. And God's promises change our lives as well. By His promises we worship the Lord, study His Word, rejoice in His gifts, and love as he has loved. No one of us knows who will win the Superbowl, but every one of us can be certain of God's promises completed through His Son.

Go out with joy and confidence in the promises of God. God has promised that in Christ you are going to win. That is a prediction that cannot be undone. Amen.