

Expecting to Meet Jesus

Message 2 of 4 in the series "Eagerly Expecting"

Expectation = a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future

A. After Jesus was born, He was presented at the temple in Jerusalem, and a sacrifice was offered to cleanse His mother, Mary, of ceremonial impurity.

"Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived. Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. The law of the Lord says, 'If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord.' So **they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—'either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'**"

Luke 2:21-24 (NLT) (See also Exodus 13:2 & Leviticus 12:8)

Note: Joseph and Mary fulfilled all the requirements of the Old Covenant, as expected, because Jesus had not yet established a New Covenant between God and people.

"Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why **he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people**, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant." Hebrews 9:13-15 (NLT) (see also Matthew 5:17)

Life Application: "God has united you with Christ Jesus... Christ made us right with God; **he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.**" 1 Corinthians 1:30 (NLT)

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place." Hebrews 10:19-20 (NLT)

B. On the day Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple, the Holy Spirit led an old man, who was expecting to meet the Messiah before he died, to meet them.

"At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. **That day the Spirit led him to the Temple.** So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God..." Luke 2:25-28 (NLT)

Life Application: We can expect the Holy Spirit to guide us too!

"When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all truth.**" John 16:13a (NLT)

"Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, '**This is the way you should go,**' whether to the right or to the left." Isaiah 30:21 (NLT)

1. Simeon prophesied that Jesus was expected to reveal God to all nations. "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. **He is a light to reveal God to the nations,** and he is the glory of your people Israel!" Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him." Luke 2:29-33 (NLT)

Life Application: Jesus expects to reveal God to all the nations on earth through us.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **to the ends of the earth.**" Acts 1:8 (NIV)

2. Simeon prophesied that Jesus was expected to cause division. "Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, '**This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise.** He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.'" Luke 2:34-35a (NLT)

Life Application: We should expect that living for Jesus will cause some people to rejoice with us and others to turn against us.

“Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume.”
2 Corinthians 2:15-16a (NLT)

3. Simeon prophesied that Mary could expect to suffer greatly because of her relationship with Jesus. “And a sword will pierce your very soul.” Luke 2:35b (NLT)

Life Application: “...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”
2 Timothy 3:12 (NLT)

Life Application: “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven.” Matthew 5:11-12a (NLT)

C. An old woman named Anna, who had also been eagerly expecting the Messiah, started praising God and telling everyone about Jesus.

“Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.” Luke 2:36-38 (NLT)

Note: The greatest thing to ever happen in the lives of Simeon and Anna was meeting Jesus.

Life Application: The greatest thing to ever happen to us is meeting Jesus!

“...everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.” Philippians 3:8-9a (NLT)

Note: People who expect things act/talk/think/plan differently. “So everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen, warning them and teaching them as well as we know how. We want to be able to present each one to God, perfect because of what Christ has done for each of them.” Colossians 1:28 (TLB)

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Connect Group Questions

Read Luke 2:21-40 and then discuss the following questions:

1. How would you respond if, one day, an old man whom you'd never met grabbed your new baby from your arms and began to tell you all about his/her future?
2. Share a time when you were certain the Holy Spirit was guiding you to do/say/stay away from something.
3. Discuss the following prophecies Simeon gave Mary regarding baby Jesus:
 - “He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!” (Luke 2:32, John 8:12)
 - “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.” (Luke 2:34b-35a, Luke 10:16, John 1:11, 2 Corinthians 2:15-16)
 - “And a sword will pierce your very soul.” (Luke 2:35b, John 19:25-27)
4. Anna the prophetess spent her entire adult life fasting and praying in the Temple asking God to send the Messiah. She waited many decades before she saw the answer to her prayers. Share something with your group that you've been praying about for a long time. Spend some time praying for each other. (Luke 11:5-13)
5. React to the following statement. “Meeting Jesus is the greatest thing that ever happened to me!” Share how you met Jesus. What difference has Christ made in your life? (Philippians 3:8-9, Colossians 1:28)