

What are you waiting for? That’s a question we often ask others. Maybe young people ask that question to one another, “What are you waiting for? You’re not getting any younger, go ahead and marry your girlfriend!” “What are you waiting for? The sale is only going to last one more day!” “What are you waiting for? The light turned green!”

What are you waiting for? The Christmas presents have been opened. The family gatherings have been had, and we’re getting ready to say hello to the new year and put in another twelve months of hard work. What’s the point? What is there to hope in?

Waiting was on the minds of those in our Gospel lesson. Joseph and Mary had to wait forty days before going to the temple to make the required sacrifices of the Law of Moses. We read of Simeon, **“Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”** Likewise, we read of the prophetess Anna, **“And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”** Others were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. Jesus fulfilled the hopes and dreams of many in Israel.

Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms and he said he could die in peace. We learn from the likes of Simeon and Anna: **YOU CAN DIE IN PEACE BECAUSE JESUS IS THE MESSIAH WORTH THE WAIT.**

I. We wait for things that ultimately don't satisfy. What are you waiting for? Maybe you got the Christmas you were waiting for. Maybe it was the right presents under the Christmas tree. Maybe it was the right company coming to visit: kids, relatives, and friends you have seen in ages. Maybe it was a break from work and the stresses it contains.

Whatever you were hoping for this Christmas, it won’t ultimately satisfy you. The presents you received will get lost, break, or will lose their appeal. The company packs up and you start to miss them, or even worse, you might even start getting sick of them, to quote Benjamin Franklin, company, like fish, starts to stink after three days. Even though we get tomorrow off, work starts up again on Tuesday, sorry to say.

What are you waiting for? Maybe you’re waiting for bigger, better things. You want to see your kids grow up or your grandkids get married. If you’re on the younger side you’re waiting for graduation. You’re looking to get married. Maybe you’re waiting to save up a bit of money to go on that trip you’ve always wanted to go on.

How often we fill our lives with “If only.” If only the kids were all in school so we’d get some time alone. If only the kids graduated, we’d have some time

alone. If only my disease were healed, I could get back to the way things used to be. If only I had a bit more in retirement, then I could finally quit my job!

Many of these good things in life don't satisfy. We go to the wedding, then life continues on as normal. We get married, and then life has a new set of challenges. You kids go to school, then you long for the days when they were cute and cuddly. You go on the trip, but then you unpack your bags and life goes back to normal. There are many things in our lives that we wait for that ultimately don't satisfy.

But from our Gospel text we see that Jesus was worth the wait. II. The arrival of the Messiah was worth a believer's wait. What are you waiting for? Sometimes people will talk to a pastor and say, "Pastor, I don't know what I'm waiting for. All my friends are dead. I'm cooped up in this room, and I can't do any of the hobbies I used to enjoy doing. My kids and grandkids rarely visit. What is the Lord keeping me around for?"

"Pastor, I don't know what I'm waiting for, work is boring. I'm lonely. I don't have anything to look forward to." "Pastor, I don't know what I'm waiting for, school is hard, and I'm really not looking forward to graduating and working my entire lifetime."

Simeon had a wonderful promise. **"It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."** Simeon would see the Messiah. God's people had been waiting for millennia for the birth of the savior, and to think he would see Him with his own eyes! Anna, we also read, **"She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day."** Don't you think Simeon told others about what the Lord had promised to him? Friends and family must have also been hoping for the same thing as he. If I outlive Simeon, I too will see the Messiah! Anna must have been waiting with that same hope.

As Christians, we live on the other side of Christmas. We live in a post birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ world. We can be thankful that Jesus is **"[the] light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."** By Christ's light we see more clearly, and we can be thankful that Christianity is the rising tide that has lifted western culture and made life better. In this way we rejoice. What are you waiting for? The wait is over. The Christ has come. Merry Christmas!

And yet there is still a sense in which we wait. Simeon proclaims, **"for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,"** There is a sense in which our eyes have not seen the salvation in the same way that Simeon did. Have you held baby Jesus in your hands? Have you shaken hands with the Messiah? Has the Lord spoken to you directly with His own voice?

Paul writes, **“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”** We await eternal life with Christ as we die and go to heaven, and then ultimately as Christ comes again to raise us up to life eternal. There will come a day when we will no longer suffer. There will come a day when we no longer sin. There will come a day when the disappointments, pains, and sorrows of this life will give way to satisfaction, comfort, and joy. That is our Christmas hope. That is what we’re waiting for.

Finally, III. The arrival of the Messiah means a believer can die in peace. Simeon says these words, **“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;”** Simeon says, “Lord, now that you have fulfilled your promises to me, I can die in peace. There’s nothing left to do. All has been completed!

And so it is that we sing this song many Sundays after communion. We do behold Jesus’ flesh and blood in the bread and wine of communion. Through the eyes of faith we see His salvation which is for people of every nation, ethnicity, and language as millions of Christians partook of this most holy meal all throughout the world even today. As we depart from this hour or so of our time together, your grandkid’s wedding, your wedding, your kid’s graduation, all of those can wait. All is complete. You are ready to die to be with the Lord and your hopes won’t be disappointed when you come into His nearer presence.

And so it is, that as Simeon and Anna were waiting in the temple day after day, month after month. Anna we know waited years. The Bible never tells us how old Simeon was. He could have been 100. He could have been 20. As those two and many others waited, the Lord was forming them to be the kind of people who would rejoice and celebrate at the arrival of God’s promises.

So too, we don’t gather at a temple, but we gather week after week waiting for the abundant and glorious promises delivered to us in Word and Sacrament. Something amazing is happening every week here at Faith, and you don’t want to miss it for sports, brunch, or an extra hour of sleep. Join us as we build one another up and as we receive the forgiveness of sins from the Christ child Himself.

What’s more, if we’re at peace to die, the rest of our lives can be spent in service to others. For those who are homebound and frail, we still need your prayers, and your smile can brighten someone’s day. Married couples are great, but if this congregation didn’t have faithful single men and women to act as volunteers, we would be severely limited in our ability to get projects done around this church. No matter your stage in life because you have seen the Messiah and believe in Him, you can die in peace. In the between, however, we can serve others. Amen!