

Finding Faith in Christmas

*The Bells Still Ring for
All Who Truly Believe*





2025 *Vision*



A night scene with a bright star in the sky and a manger in the foreground. The star is a bright yellow and orange orb with long, thin rays extending outwards, set against a dark blue and black sky. Below the star, a manger is visible, with several figures and animals gathered around it. The scene is illuminated by the star's light, creating a dramatic and atmospheric effect.

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:22-24



Life Goes On!

We are about a week after Jesus has been born

By now I am sure they have move from the stable

**The Shepherds have come and went and the crowd for
tax time is headed home**

**It is quite possible the Wisemen are still on
the road somewhere**

Policies and Procedures



Policies and Procedures

There were some normal things that had to be done for Jesus

He had to receive his name officially

He also had to be circumcised

Being a first-born son he had to be presented (Exodus 13:11-13)

A sacrifice had to be offered for Mary (Leviticus 12:6-8)





The Bells of Belief

Luke 2:25-38



Anna the Prophetess

A person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God.

She was advanced in years (84)

She was a widow

She was a worshipper that seemed to live at the temple

She was a prayer and a faster

She acknowledge Jesus and spoke of his mission



Simeon

Like Anna he was elderly

He was Righteous and Devout

He had received a promise from God

***He would not die before he had seen
the Lord's Messiah***

He allowed God to move him





Simeon – Took Hold of Jesus & Praised God

***“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in
peace. For my eyes have seen your
salvation, which you have prepared in
the sight of all nations: a light
for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”***



Simeon – Offered Encouragement

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them

Can you even imagine what this event did for Mary and Joseph

They were two kids just starting out in their marriage, young but strong in their faith, and had a newborn baby to take care of, and by the way he was the son of God





Simeon – Spoke of Jesus’ Mission

“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”



*Why Stop here to close a year
& start a new?*

**As we look out across our congregation,
we are what most call a "doughnut" church**



**We spent 12 weeks this year discussing disciple making
and proper church growth. The thing is the calling never
ends and growth can never stop**





The Story is not Complete!

Today's message is for you because like characters of Simeon and Anna you sort of feel like an afterthought

The main story has been told

These are just two old people sitting in a temple waiting to die

However, nothing could be further from the truth

They are as much a part of the Christmas Story as the Shepherds, and Wisemen





The Story is not Complete!

They represent not those that just found out about Jesus, but those that knew of his coming and were looking forward to it

Rejoiced!





What am I asking from you?

Prophecy: Speak clear about who God is in your life

Worship God being persistent and consistent

Pray and fast not for the next generation but with the next generation

Live lives that are righteous and devout being the example and demonstration to those behind you





What am I asking from you?

Hold tight to Jesus, and the promises God has given but at the same time allow God's spirit to still move you to action

Offer encouragement not just advice

But most importantly speak often of Jesus' mission to all you encounter



A young boy in a blue jacket is holding a silver bell, looking at it intently. A girl in a green dress with a white collar and a pink headband is looking at him. They are in a living room decorated for Christmas, with a fireplace mantel in the background adorned with garlands and stockings. A window to the right shows a view of the outdoors.

*Don't let the bells go silent
for the next generation*