

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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FINDING HOPE IN OUR UNCERTAINTIES

LUKE 2:22-38

We're kicking off a new series this Sunday for Advent called, "ReDiscover Christmas: Good News in Troubling Times." Here's where we're headed.

December 5 - Finding Hope in our Uncertainties
December 12 - Finding Love in our Differences
December 19 - Finding Peace in our Struggles
December 26 - Finding Faith in our Darkness

Now: How has 2021 been going for you? It's been quite a year: a global pandemic, economic recession, unemployment, political division, cultural upheaval, racial tension, record wildfires, floods and strong winds. On top of all this, some have relapsed, and many are struggling with depression, grief, fear and hopelessness which has led to and all time high of alcohol and drug addictions.

Do you feel like you've hit an emotional wall this year? According to a recent survey, 3 in 4 Americans report the constant stream of bad news has taken a tremendous toll on their lives. Not surprisingly, 80% are desperate to be cheered up. If ever there's a year we need the hope of Christmas, this is it. Today our focus is on "Finding Hope in our Uncertainties." Some of you have lost hope because you are filled with ANXIETY by COVID and decimated by disappointment.

The word "hope" is used 52 times in the New Testament and is always grounded in God; that's enough hope for every week of the year! Let's turn now to **Luke 2:22-38** so we can find hope in our uncertainties. The setting of this passage takes place after the birth of Jesus when Joseph and Mary bring Him to the temple to present Him for dedication in obedience to **Exodus 13:2**. We're introduced to two characters who make their appearance in the final acts of the Christmas drama. One is a man named Simeon; the other is a woman named Anna. We are going to see two lessons and truths this morning:

1. Simeon was hoping for rest.
2. Anna was hoping for redemption.

I. SIMEON: HOPING FOR REST

Simeon was likely an older man, though we can't be certain. **Verse 25** describes his character. The name Simeon means, "*one who hears and obeys.*" We're told three things about him.

- **He was righteous (just).** His life lined up with God's Word.
- **He was reverent (devout).** He took his faith seriously.
- **He was receptive (waiting).** He longed for God to bring consolation in the midst of chaos. I'm reminded of **Isaiah 40:1**: "*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.*"

Verse 26 tells us the Holy Spirit made it clear to Simeon "*that he would not taste death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*" This no doubt filled him with hope. In **verse 27**, the Holy Spirit prompted Simeon to go to the temple courts at just the right time, on just the right day that Joseph and Mary were bringing their infant to the Temple. **Verse 28** says Simeon abruptly reached down and took Jesus out of Mary's arms and began to praise God. Simeon's song is found in **verses 29-32**. Now that Simeon has seen the Savior, he is ready to die. **Verse 33** tells us how Mary and Joseph responded to the song of Simeon. The mood shifts from admiration to agony as the shadow of the cross appears in **verse 34**. Simeon has one last word for Mary in **verse 35** - Simeon speaks of a stone, a sign, and a sword.

II. ANNA: HOPING FOR REDEMPTION

Vs. 36-37 - Luke often pairs a man and a woman. We're introduced to Anna. The name Anna is the Greek version of Hannah (**Grace**). Instead of looking for rest, Anna was looking for redemption as we see in **verse 38**. **Redemption requires - A ransom** which is something that is paid to provide for the release of someone who is held captive. Jesus paid our ransom to redeem us from sin, death, and Hell. The Old Testament Passover and the release of Israel from Egyptian slavery stood in Anna's day as the ultimate example of redemption and the symbol of God's power to release captives. It's important to keep three things in mind when thinking about redemption:

- **Redemption implies bondage.** Every person is born enslaved to sin.
 - **Redemption implies cost.** A price has to be paid to buy the slave out of bondage.
 - **Redemption implies the ownership of that which is redeemed.**
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**: "*You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*"

How to Hold on to Hope: Worship, Witness, and Wait.

Action Steps:

- (1) Give hope to those who are hurting
- (2) Read the Scriptures to find hope
- (3) Force yourself to remember God's faithfulness
Lamentations 3: 18-23)
- (4) Repent and receive Christ (**Colossians 1:27**)