

Sermon Title: ***“Do You See What I See?”***

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead*

Speaker: Pastor Damian Mericka

Text: Luke 2:21-38

## Introduction

*“Stand firm, and you will win life.” -Luke 21:19*

We began this year with a look at what Kingdom endurance is. ***Standing Firm*** here means *Endurance* and is a very rich word embodying an ***upward, consistent, contagious, and outward*** motion that goes against the current. *It is swimming upstream after Jesus.* We saw this is the work the Spirit of God does in our lives, just as He did in Jesus’ - He leads us upward to higher ground and a higher life in Him.

We also looked at some of the outward challenges we face when going upward with the Spirit, including the spiritual forces of darkness which our on their way downward. As they are being cast out of God’s Kingdom, we are being brought in. This is the nature of our Spiritual Battle. Unlike the generations that came before Jesus since His Ascension the Spirit has now come upon us to take the battle to where it truly is at.

What does this look like lived out in or lives? Following Jesus as His Disciples.



*“Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.”*

**-Matthew 4:19**

This series is set to be a journey answering this question- *what does it mean to follow Jesus?* How do we today answer His invitation and see this journey with Him unfold as it did for the first-generation followers of Jesus? Together we will discover anew what it means to follow Jesus- *to be a disciple making disciples culture that **learns, lives, and leads!***

### **I. What Mary & Joseph Saw (2:21-24)**

*And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” -Luke 2:21-24*

I think at times we forget that not all the Nation of Israel believed in God, even though they followed the customs and Law's passed on for generations. Similar to here in our context today. We as a Nation celebrate Christmas, but not everyone who celebrates this season believes in Jesus. As time goes on, the customs and traditions can lose sight of their reason for existing. This is the challenge to the Jewish community in Jesus' day.

From the time God gives a promise to its actual fulfillment many years, decades, even centuries can come in between a word given and a word fulfilled. As time continues there is the sense of losing sight, losing hope even. Did the events of the Old Testament really happen as they were written? Did God really mean what we think He meant when He gave promises? Further, even if it's all true- that was so long ago. Yet here we are today, under Roman bondage, continue to follow the customs and Law of our people- with or without God.

Yet, for Mary and Joseph there was nothing about Jesus' arrival that was as things were before He came. From a virgin conception and birth, a divine angelic announcement, and the unfolding of other prophecies coming to a literal fulfillment, these parents believed in the God behind the custom, tradition, and Law. *He has spoken to them!*

One such custom was that of custom was **Circumcision**. This act reached way back into Israel's past beginning with their Patriarch, Abraham.

*“And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” -Genesis 17:9-14*

This would have been a family gathering event for Mary & Joseph. Keep in mind, the virgin conception and birth surrounding them. Whether extended family understood, or even believed this or not, Mary and Joseph did. In obedience to the Law, the child is circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. In obedience to the Angel, they named Him Jesus.

Then, Mary enters a time of **purification**. This too is in accord to the Law God gave Israel through Moses,

*The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are*

*completed. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days. "And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, and he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."*

**-Leviticus 12:1-8**

While we do not necessarily understand why the period of time was longer for girls than boys, the faith both of Jesus' parents have is illustrated out as they obey God. Purification was not a means to show superiority of the man over the woman, but what I believe is God's way of protecting the mother to have the time her body needs to heal. The responsibilities the wife would have to the husband, the mother to other children, and anything beyond- all was put on hold for this time of healing of the body, and the bonding of the child born 9 months in the womb now held in their mother's arms. This was really a very beautiful way God looked out for and carved a place for rest and healing.

The sacrifice these parents offered for Mary's purification illustrates that this couple was poor. We looked at this a few weeks back. Again, understanding the manner in which Jesus came into this world is in stark contrast to the pomp and celebration one would expect of a newborn king. *God is very fond of moving and acting in ways that baffle humanity!* One final act about to happen with Mary, Joseph, and Jesus at the Temple is Jesus' **dedication**. It is here an incredible prophecy is fulfilled that was not seen necessarily as a prophecy.

*"When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord's. Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."* **-Exodus 13:11-16**

As God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, God was about to bring an even greater deliverance for humanity from the bondage of sin, the judgment of death, and the wrath and eternal punishment of hell. What was celebrated with the birth of the firstborn male in every family was the delivering power of God from Egyptian slavery. Mary and Joseph were

beginning to see that they were holding someone greater than Moses in their arms- Moses as Israel's deliverer. *Jesus is humanity's Savior!*

## **II. What Simeon Saw (2:36-38)**

*“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. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”*

**-Luke 2:25-235**

Imagine being known as a righteous and devout man? Such was Simeon. The next two people Mary and Joseph would encounter are by far unique. **Simeon**, whose name means *to hearken* was **righteous**, meaning *observing the Law of Moses to a T- out of love and devotion to God*. He was in a relationship with the God who gave the Law! **Devout** means he was *intentional in how he lived-* he wrestled his life circumstances to bring himself in obedience to God's perfect will for his life! Simeon, in his love and devotion to God, saw God in the Scriptures and understood the Messiah was coming. **Consolation of Israel** means comfort- for Rachel's tears, for the need sin creates- for the very need to bridge God's promises to us in Yes and Amen! His presence would mean his preaching in the Temple reminding everyone of God's promises- the Messiah is coming! In Today's context it would be a preacher proclaiming *Jesus is Coming Again!*

The **Holy Spirit upon him** means he was *guided by the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit had revealed that he would see the Messiah- revealed means to show and affirm continually. As the years passed on, and death approached, Simeon experience the same as Abraham who had the promise of a son in his old age, *Simeon the promise to see **The Son** in his old age!* It is in this rhythm Simeon hearkened to the Holy Spirit living his life in devout righteousness to the Lord until His timing came to pass.

Coming to the Temple *in the Spirit* Simeon beholds Jesus as the infant and finds fulfillment to God's perfect plan for his life- the hold and dedicate Jesus as Humanity's deliverer! In the same breath of Eve holding and declaring a man child from the Lord, in the same embrace of the thicket cradling Moses in the Nile and drawn out by Pharaoh's daughter, Jesus was held up as the Messiah in declaration and affirmation by Simeon! Even before John the Baptist would declare Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, *Simeon declares His Messianic role!*



A light to the Gentiles heralds back to the prophet Isaiah, whose shoulders Simeon stands upon.

*“But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” -Isaiah 9:1-7*

As Simeon blesses Jesus in His dedication, he now turns to speak blessings unto them as they marvel in the greater revelation of who their Son is. Marveled means to stand in awe of- like Joseph’s dream where all the sheaves, including his parents, bowed down to worship him this child is greater than they. In his blessing, he reveals to Mary that as a mother her heart will experience pain unlike any other that knows Jesus- a mothers bond with their child is unlike anything in this world. Jesus will reveal, at the mere mention of His Name, the hearts with or opposed to God. Not all under sin want to be delivered from sin. *But for Simeon, he behold a faithful God begin to fulfill His Promises in Jesus- where every promise would find it’s Yes and Amen to us!*

### **III. What Anna Saw (2:36-38)**

*And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 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.*

**-Luke 2:36-38**

**Anna** whose name means **grace**, was the daughter of **Phanuel**, which means **face of God**. A prophetess who evidently didn’t get the memo that God only uses men to minister (lol) is also in the Temple at this moment and points to Jesus in the prophetic gifting affirming the Messiah has come!

Through Anna, the promise God gave to Moses to speak over Aaron is fulfilled,

*“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and*

give you peace. *“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”*

**-Numbers 6:22-27**

Anna saw Jesus as the face of God come to bring Grace to all of Israel- and the world!

#### **IV. What Peter Saw (2 Peter 1:15-21)**

*“And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” **-2 Peter 1:15-21***

As the promise of Jesus's first coming came centuries before it's fulfillment, it seems His Second Coming is the same. Peter, like the other Disciples called and having walked with Jesus in His earthly ministry, believed Jesus was coming back in their lifetime. This fueled their passion, commitment, and energy to serve Him and His Kingdom seeing the Gospel fruit out into the world one heart at a time.

Yet, as Peter grows older and is facing martyrdom, other Disciples already killed for Jesus, he is facing the reality that Jesus may not come back in his lifetime. At the same time, he is seeing the distance between Jesus' coming back *promised and happening* creating opportunity for the enemy to distract, discourage, and detour followers of Jesus. Peter's second Epistle is meant to encourage followers of Jesus that His arrival was very real and powerful- His Return will be even more so!

Peter's words are both an encouragement and warning- the Gospel is not a myth. From His Birth to His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension- all is attested to by eyewitness accounts- himself included! I imagine at times Peter needs to remind himself of this- especially while imprisoned facing martyrdom. This moment he recounts, the transfiguration, is captured by Mark whom it is believed wrote down his Gospel from Peter's witness,

*“And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my*

*beloved Son; listen to him.” And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.”* **-Mark 9:1-10**

Peter, James, and John had a glimpse of Jesus at His Second Coming- and only a glimpse. The Father’s words were to listen to His Son. This is what Peter gives to his spiritual children- listen to Jesus. If the distance between a promise given and a promise fulfilled seems long, do not allow it to cause you to lose sight of Him who will Return and the Hope He gives us.

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* **-2 Peter 3:9**

*Mary and Joseph saw Jesus as the Deliverer of Humanity from sin.*

*Simeon saw Jesus as the Messiah God had promised and affirmed through the Prophets as Humanity’s Messiah.*

*Anna saw Jesus as the Face of God, bringing Grace to all of us.*

*Peter saw Jesus as the Returning Messiah.*

*In this season of Christmas, where many celebrate the customs and traditions, may we shine as the reason for this season and the invitation to know Jesus now before He Returns.*

*Jesus did not come only to reveal God, but to lead us home to Him to enjoy Him and be enjoyed by Him for all of eternity.*

***Do you see what I see?***