**Christmas Eve - Waiting for Christmas**

**Tonight / tomorrow – many will be gathering to celebrate the birth of Jesus. For kids... it is a grand finale of the year.**

* **What are your traditions - for us...**

**Christmas Card Fails – Some old and new ones… (verbal que)**

**Whatever your Christmas tradition looks like the wait is over.**

**Months of excitement is here... What are you looking forward to?**

**Waiting for Christmas can be hard... what if you had to wait - a lifetime... 1500 years? For many, that’s exactly what happened.**

**Luke - 2 people seldom heard about at Jesus Birth. Simeon & Anna You won't see them on cards or in nativities, but they held baby Jesus. They had been waiting their whole life - for that day.**

**2000 yrs ago - the infinite became an infant – the creator walked among his creation - the breath giver, breathed air – born in a manger.**

**Tomorrow morning before you unwrap gifts read Luke 2:1-21**

**Then following- Luke 2:21 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. (Name at his circumcision, a reminder we are all born in sin. Jesus could have been excused because He was not born in sin. Yet, even as a baby, identifying with sinners, as He also later did at His baptism and on the cross.)**

**22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Leviticus – 66 days after birth a sacrifice for your first-born son - boom the story jumps 3 months) 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”**

**Why a sacrifice? Points to the Passover. Sacrifice on door posts - Lord passed over. (explain) But your first born still belongs to me (type of tithe) So, from this day forward - instead of leaving him at the temple – offer a sacrifice and buy / redeem him back. Reclaim him. The price is a lamb (purchase) and pigeon or dove (for sins)**

**Where is the lamb in Luke 2? They gave 2 birds. That is because God had an exception clause – that if anyone was determined to be too poor, they could sacrifice two birds.**

**This is what was happening! They were dead broke.**

**We see the sacrificial lamb all thru the story of Jesus.**

**25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.**

**1. SIMEON**

**What was he waiting for? Israel like today - was in political conflict, poverty, violence, looking for peace. They were waiting for the ONE - the Messiah / the Christ – to consul (comfort) them**

**Simeon had good reason for his anticipation - 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.**

**God told Simeon he would see the Messiah - in his lifetime / This promise was a comfort - Simeon would not miss it.**

**\*\* Are you restless tonight? Do you seek comfort?**

**Are you worried you've missed that chance, that life, that opportunity - you are here... you haven't missed it.**

**27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.**

**God moved on him to get up and go to church... God had something life changing for him there - and for you here.**

**If he had decided to stay home - he might have missed Jesus**

**V27b When the parents (Mary and Joseph) brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, (He knew what he was looking at - he was holding Immanuel - the ONE.) saying: 29 “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, (Almighty God who is always in control) you may now dismiss your servant in peace. (I can die now in contentment) 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”**

**God not only fulfills the promises of the prophets and the promises for the world... but also the individual promise**

**\*\* Simeon reminds us - God always keeps His promises**

**God is faithful to his word and can be trusted! God can be trusted!**

**All fear, rejection, loneliness, egret, and hopelessness erased from Simeon's mind when he met Jesus- the rescuer has come**

**33 The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him.**

**You can imagine Mary & Joseph might have been freaked out. A total stranger picks up your child & breaks into praise. How would you feel if you were told this about your kids?**

**34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, (lit. a target to be shot at) 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (It's going to hard for you too, will break your heart and painful to see what happens)**

**These are not your typical Christmas song lyrics.**

**36 There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. (Anna had a tough life – married young - widowed young - never remarried. But she had the LORD!) She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.**

**2. ANNA**

**Single for roughly 62 years. Alone - but a woman of faith and hope.**

**(She just happened to be there when they came in... Jesus) 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to (waiting for) the redemption of Jerusalem.**

**She started running around telling people she saw the ONE**

**Anna is a great reminder that God takes care of His kids. He provides what we need - even when it seems no one is there**

**\*\* Anna reminds us - God says - I have not forgot you.**

**God has not forgot about – YOU either!**

**Maybe you can identify with Simeon or Anna - lonely, empty, afraid, maxed out... waiting, wondering, when will this be over?**

**For Simon and Anna, the Christmas wait was over.**

**They both saw Him and they held Him**

**Like Simeon - You have not missed it**

**Like Anna - You are not forgotten**

**The wait is over - Christmas is here.**

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come - Let earth receive her King!**

**Let every heart prepare Him room - And heaven and nature sing!**

**Joy to the world! That song reminds us of two things**

**1. The Lord has come**

**You can have joy because God has come to you**

**Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (For who? All)**

**This joy is for all people the wait of over - white, black, brown, red, green, poka dot - rich, poor, popular, nobodies... This hope and joy is for everyone who believes in Him.**

**The 2 things - the next line of that song...**

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come - Let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him room.**

**2. Prepare Him Room**

**Have you received the king – has your heart prepared him room?**

**John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**

**Christmas Homing device - gets tripped every year at this time - We’ll do anything to get home (planes, trains, auto, Jet Ski)**

**In a real way – Jesus, himself, was not home - He left the glory and the splendor of heaven to be born and laid on simple farm furniture.**

**Jesus willingly left home to provide for us a way to get home - to Him.**

**That aching, gnawing restlessness... that continued pursuit for happiness... is the hole in your soul - only Jesus can fill.**

**God came to us… Christmas. He loved us - gave His life for us.**

**For Simon and Anna the Christmas wait was over - They met…**

* **Jesus the burden bearer**
* **Jesus the miraculous guide and counselor**
* **Jesus the mighty creator God in the flesh**
* **Jesus the perfect father our heart longs for**
* **The great giver of peace and forgiver of Sins**

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come - Let earth receive her King!**

**Let every heart prepare Him room - And heaven and nature sing!**

**Jesus has come… will you prepare him room in your heart?**

**Will you receive the king?**