

## CHRISTMAS SPIRITS, 4 “Expectancy”

1. Review series... Looking at the attitudes that were prevalent among those of the first Christmas story who embraced Christ and exalted Him and even in some way expressed Him to others...

a. In so doing they produced a culture within a culture... An atmosphere far different than the very secular one that Jesus was born into... And that is lesson for the church, which is the main reason I am preaching this series; God wants us to be a church that provides a very different environment than the one around us, so that people can encounter Christ in a real way... And environment characterized by Christmas spirits...

b. The spirit of gratefulness, especially for the people God has placed in our lives as exemplified in Joseph receiving Mary as his wife... The spirit of worship, which is throughout the Christmas story [wise men worshipped... shepherds... angels... Mary...

Zachariah...] The spirit of generosity, which is revealed in the many ways giving occurs in the Christmas story... Ultimate example of that is God Himself Who gave to this world Jesus, His very best, to be our Savior... You shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins...

c. Generosity reflects God's attitude... Generosity is passing the divine assessment... [Material things are not just blessings but they are tests that God uses to evaluate our hearts...] Generosity shows God's love... [My appreciation to the overwhelming response for PTP, 19 children sponsored...]

2. In a very general sense Christmas is also about expectancy, anticipation, hope for something better...

a. My memories of childhood when it seemed that Christmas would never arrive... We would get up so early in the morning because of the anticipation of Christmas coming... [I enjoyed listening

to Alvin and the Chipmunks sing, “Christmas, Don’t Be Late”... “We can hardly stand the wait, please Christmas don’t be late...” Had it so bad that we would even find where presents were hidden...]

b. A similar spirit existed within the hearts of those involved in the first Christmas... A spirit of expectancy... Jesus was what they were looking for and because He came, their longing was fulfilled and they faced the future with greater confidence... They were assured that because He had come somehow life would be better...

3. There are several examples where this is illustrated...

a. Shepherds excitedly left their flocks looking for what the angel had promised... Joseph and Mary together waited for the arrival of the Baby Jesus... Wise men traveled for months anticipating their finding the King...

b. But I am most impressed by the righteous man Simeon, who met the Holy

Family in the temple a few weeks after Jesus was born... [Luke 2:25-32]

<sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup>

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. <sup>27</sup> So he came by 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, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

c. Simeon had the spirit of expectancy... for a long time he had held to it... Shepherds only waited for a brief time before finding Christ; Mary and Joseph’s wait was for 9 months; Wise men travelled for 18-24 months carrying that expectancy... But Simeon had waited for the greater part of his long life for

the “Consolation of Israel” (another way of describing Messiah’s coming)...

d. [How it hit me] Day after day, month after month, year after year this righteous man kept on waiting for Jesus to show up... Some days may have been more difficult to do that than others... The majority of those around him had no such anticipation; even the religious crowd wasn’t looking for Messiah... But Simeon kept on expecting that someday, somewhere, somehow, some way, Jesus would show up... A spirit of expectancy...

e. Anybody know what it is to keep waiting for Jesus to show up? Waiting on that prayer to be answered... Waiting on that loved one to get saved and delivered... Waiting on that healing to come... Waiting on that night to end... Waiting on that blessing to come... Waiting for that trial to be over... Waiting for that promise to come to pass... Waiting for those dreams to be fulfilled... Waiting for God to show up... It gets hard sometimes; we get impatient; we get our hopes dashed... Therefore, we need this spirit of expectancy like Simeon had... Some things to notice about it as conveyed from Simeon’s life...

#### 4. The Assistance of the Holy Spirit

a. Simeon waited and hung on to this spirit of expectancy because the HS was upon him... The Spirit revealed things to him and even led him to be in the temple that day so that he would not miss Jesus being there... This old man knew that Jesus would eventually show up; that his personal promise would be met because he walked in the fullness of the Spirit...

b. An unusual trait for one in that day because of the limited work of the Spirit... It appears that Simeon enjoyed the work of the Spirit in much the same way as the OT prophets did; they experienced special anointing and help from the HG...

c. But we are under the new covenant... This is a different dispensation, the last days when the Lord said that He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh... There is no Divine limitation on the work of the Spirit... Only limitation on the ministry of the Spirit is what you and I put on Him... We can grieve Him and we can quench His fire, but understand that He wants to help you in the waiting...

d. As we wait we need expectancy and hope... And most often we consider hope as an action that has to be self-initiated, an act of my will alone, and that is not a totally incorrect perspective... We hope for certain things to happen... Maybe you are hoping to receive a certain gift this Christmas [such references to hope are actions on your part]... But there is also a hope that comes from the HS...

[Romans 15:13] we abound in hope by the power of the HS... [Show gift... May be that the most necessary gift you receive this Christmas is the gift of hope...] My encouragement to you as you wait for Jesus to show up is to be filled and empowered by the HS... His power functions on many levels... To help us be a witness... To help us operate in His gifts... To anoint us to serve in ministry... To even do the miraculous... But there is also an intimate and personal reason for the power of the Spirit; it is that I may abound in hope... I don't have to lose hope; be overwhelmed by discouragement because of the help of the HG...

## 5. The Anticipation of the Lord's Coming

a. Simeon had this spirit of expectancy because he believed that Messiah was coming at anytime, and he did not want to miss it... This is really the main substance of this attitude... But for our relevance we need to grasp that Simeon was able to endure the long waiting because of his focus on the coming of the Lord...

b. The attitude of expectancy revolves around anticipating the Lord's coming... [Titus 2:13] His glorious appearing is our blessed hope... No matter what happens in my specific situation, I am confident that one day Jesus will come again... One day life as we know it will cease... One day He is coming back... One day He will take me home... One day all things will be made new... I may not get my prayer answered like I expected... May not get the breakthrough I had hoped for... May not see all that I longed for... But I do know that one day I shall see Him as He is and I will be like Him when He comes again...

c. Are you looking for His coming? Some believe 2012 is the year [a series next year, Apocalypse 2012?].... 41% of Americans believe that Jesus will come before the year 2050... He could come before 2011 is over... Before this day is over... I hope you're not like some patients of the Huddinge Hospital in Stockholm Sweden, who have complained so much about a nurse whose name is Jesus that administrators have asked him to change his name. Some patients have been concerned after they were told "Jesus will be coming soon." Some people thought they were being told they were going to die. The promise of Jesus coming bothered them... How does it affect you?

d. Looking for His coming will give you an attitude of expectancy in other areas as well... The fact that He could come again at anytime is indicator that He could show up in other ways at anytime... Today could be the day of breakthrough... Of miracles... Of provision... Might just get that phone call today... Your healing could happen today... As I keep my eyes on His Second Coming I

keep my faith focused on His coming in others ways...

## 6. The Assurance of Life's Fulfillment

a. Simeon understood there was blessing even in the waiting... Phrase that settled in me in a different way: "he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ [Messiah]"... I realize this was a special word of hope for Simeon, but the way it hit me for us is that he did not die in the waiting... That period of time before his seeing the Messiah was the waiting period and in it he kept living a full life... That action of waiting is not passive; it doesn't mean he just sat around... Word also means to welcome and receive... Simeon's spirit of expectancy positioned him to be receptive to anything God had for his life... And therefore he refused to die before Jesus showed up...

b. And really this is where I see the spirit of expectancy being most crucial, because I have seen Christians die in the waiting... Their faith die... Their joy die... Their praise die... Their commitment dry up... Their usefulness diminish because they lost their hope that Jesus

would ever show up... Refuse to die in the waiting...

c. In the waiting Simeon remained righteous and Spirit filled... He stayed faithful to God's house and in tune to what the Lord was up to... His commitment was to find blessing even in the waiting...

d. [Lamentations 3:25-26] The Lord is good to those who wait on Him... It is good for one to do that... For those who wait on the Lord there is renewed strength... There is a new level of spiritual growth [mount up with wings as eagles]... There is a new vitality [run and not be weary, walk and not faint...]

e. How is the waiting affecting you? Let God work on you while you wait on Him...

Give you a spirit of expectancy... HS will empower you to have it...