**Hoping and Waiting at Christmas—Luke 2.22-35**

**Context:** Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple after His circumcision so that He could be consecrated and so that sacrifice could be made. Mary and Joseph’s poverty is clear from their sacrifice—two turtledoves. Leviticus 12.6 stipulates that a lamb be offered with the exception that someone very poor can offer two turtle doves (v. 8). When they enter the outer court with Jesus, a man named Simeon immediately approaches and seemingly grabs Jesus from His parents. He then proceeds to offer both a blessing and a prophecy. We see that Simeon has been hoping waiting for years and years for God’s anointed, the Christ to enter history and save His people, and that the Spirit has prepared this moment.

1. What are the desires, emotions, and longings come through the Christmas season? What is the ethos of Christmas? What excites you about this season and when have you been disappointed?
2. What does the text tell us that Simeon is waiting for (v. 25, 38)? Why Simeon? Do we know of others who were hoping and waiting? Why these things? What are ***we*** looking for this Xmas? How should their hoping and waiting for the 1st advent mirror ours for the 2nd advent (Heb. 9.28, 2 Tim. 4.8, 1 Pt. 1.13)?
3. How does Simeon describe Jesus in his blessing (v. 28-32)? What is Jesus to those ‘in here’ (Israel) and those ‘out there’ (Gentiles)? What does this mean for our church (how do we know that Jesus is more than a sentimental feeling to us?) and our neighbors? What is the practical result seeing Jesus?
4. In his prophecy Simeon says Jesus has been “appointed” for the “rise and fall” of many in Israel, as a “sign that is opposed,” and as a “sword that will pierce your own soul.” How do these divisive images relate to Him being the “Prince of Peace.” (Matt. 10.34). Can you think of other things in life where it takes conflict to get peace? What aspects of discipleship are like this?
5. Jesus divided, was opposed, and pierced because of His crazy bold claims. To many this was revolting (falling, opposed) but to many others this was undeniably attractive (rise). Why was this so clear during Jesus’ ministry then but today so many can have just generally sentimental views of Him?