

What are you looking forward to this Christmas
Luke 2:21-32

Intro:

Vox Pop

Did you recognize some people there.

So what have are you looking forward to this Christmas?

I'm sure that many of the answers given by people in that video are very similar to you.

This morning we are going to go back 2000 years to the first Christmas and see what someone back then was looking forward too.

Read Luke 2:21-32

Here is a guy, a very old guy, Simeon, and he is looking forward to a baby.

A very special baby. A baby that is going to change the world.

Back in Dec 2003 Australia was on edge also waiting for a baby.

Waiting for a baby to be the 20 millionth Australian.

It was Thursday the 4th of December 2003 and sometime that day when some 700 babies were born, one of them became the 20 millionth Australian.

It could have been Lillian Jenkins, or Andrew Rutherford or maybe it was Benjamin William Wong.

Those babies were plastered all over the Sydney Morning Herald that day.

A great milestone for our country but only our country.

Didn't impact China or America.

The children born that day are all miracles but they are no different to any other child born on any other day in Australia

But listen to what Simeon says about this baby Jesus.

Jesus has been brought to the temple to be circumcised on the 8th day of his birth which was the custom of the time.

And at this temple is a Godly old bloke who has been waiting expectantly.

Read v25-26

LK 2:25 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 upon him.

26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ

Simeon was there waiting, not for the 20 millionth Jew.

But for the Christ.

This was to be no ordinary baby.

This was the Christ, the Messiah.

As he says in v30

LK 2:30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

The one to bring salvation to the world.

This was the most influential son in history.

The one that will hold eternity in His hands.

Illust:

Time magazine ran a story recently on some children of the biggest business people in the world. "Called Stepping out of the Shadows"

Some of those listed were Aerin Lauder grand daughter of Estee Lauder

James and Lachlan Murdoch the sons of Rupert who owns News Corp

John Elkann the grandson of Fiat Chief Gianni Agnelli

Lu Weiding the son of the Lu Guanqiu who owns the biggest privately run company in China

These children were tipped to be the global business influentials for the next few years and onwards

Children who are taking the world by storm.

But none of these have or will come close to influencing the world the way that the baby Simeon was waiting for and met, influenced the world forever.

This Baby was going to do the amazing, stunning the extra-ordinary.

Look at v30-33

LK 2:30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

LK 2:31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,

LK 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

LK 2:33 The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

Salvation for all.

What does salvation mean.

Salvation means to be saved from something.

You might be sitting here this morning and be saying what do I need saving from.

I'm definitely not looking for that this Christmas.

But at the risk of offending you.

You do need saving

Illust: Sherlock Holmes and Watson

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson go on a camping trip, set up their tent and fall asleep. Some hours later Holmes awakes his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replies, "I see millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?"

Watson ponders for a minute and says, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially, billions of planets.

Astrologically speaking, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo.

Time wise it appears to be approximately a quarter past three.

Theologically, it's all evident that the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant.

Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"

Holmes is silent for a moment then speaks. "Watson, you idiot, someone has stolen our tent."

We may not realise it and we may be able to rationalise it away with rhetoric or jargon or try to baffle ourselves with science. But when it comes down to it the tent is still missing.

We are still sinners, we disobey God, He does not rule our lives and that separates us from God, on our own we are lost from God.

The reason we don't realise it is because we tend to think that the word sin only refers to really really bad stuff, like murder or rape or grand theft or something.

But in God's eyes we are all sinners because none of us follow God to the extent that he deserves. That includes the small things.

Most of us wake up in the morning and don't give two hoots what God thinks.

We think we are the boss of our own lives.

So we go through each day doing our own thing, making our own decisions.

Now we may turn out to be nice people, respectable people not as bad as Joe Blow who lives down the street, But we still have ignored God.

This dismissive attitude to God is called Sin and the consequence of sin is a life with out God for eternity, Hell, instead of heaven, Which puts us in a real mess, where we all need to be saved from

Simeon new this and he was waiting for, he was looking forward to God's provision so that he could live forever.

To be saved from his sin.

Saved from seperation from God for eternity. Death

We are in the same boat as Simeon we need saving.

And Jesus the baby that Simeon is holding is going to do this

And the way Jesus does this is by taking on death.

Death is the punishment we deserve for ignoring God and Jesus takes our punishment for us.

He did that when he was crucified.

Jesus birth, death and resurection can not be separated.

Because when Jesus died on the cross he took our place and took God's anger for our ignoring Him on himself instead of us having to bare it.

He took our place.

In His resurrection we have the gaurentee that he did what he said he was going to do, he defeated death and took all our sin.

Jesus stepped into our place, this baby grows up and stands where we should stand so that we don't have to.

I read recently that a number of retail centres over Christmas have been trialing a new service.

They provide surrogate boyfriends for female shoppers.

The Braehead Shopping centre in Glasgow is testing a scheme which lets women drop off their partners at a kind of boyfriend crèche and borrow a fresh new shopping friendly specimen for a few hours.

" The Shopping boyfriend is the ultimate retail therapist: enthusiastic, attentive, admiring and complimentary," said Carol -ann Stewart from drinks company Lucozade Energy, which is behind the scheme. " He will browse with the girlfriend, for hours on end. He'll even say her backside looks small in that dress". Stewart said in a national poll the most dreaded words for young British men were "Shopping" and "babies".

Freed from the rigors of shopping with their loved ones, the men can relax with video games and a selection of mens magazines until they get picked up and taken home.

Blokes saved from shopping by another bloke who takes their place, a substitute. What a wonderful scheme.

Jesus is our substitute, he stands in for both men and women, at death, taking the punishment we deserve so that we don't have to face that punishment.

But just like the shopping stand in you need to take advantage of it, you need to actually go and put your hand up for it, we need to put our hand up for Jesus we need to say yes to him taking your spot.

Simeon was looking forward to meeting Jesus. His salvation.

And after meeting him he could die in peace.

At peace with his maker for eternity.

What are you looking forward to this Christmas?

You may not have been thinking about meeting your saviour.

About getting peace with God.

But just like Simeon you too can be at peace this Christmas if you meet Jesus, if you give yourself completely to him.

Be like Simeon this Christmas, not only looking out for a saviour,

But find Jesus and give your life to him and peace will be yours.

If you do it will be the best Christmas you will ever have.