

## Rediscovering the Joy of Being with God and His People—Week Nine

### Practicing the spiritual discipline of prayer during Advent

The season of Advent is **steeped in prayer**. There are prayers for **deliverance, salvation** and **healing** in the Old Testament which point to the coming Messiah—our Deliverer, Savior and Healer. Zachariah and Elizabeth **petition** the Lord for a child, John, destined to announce the coming of the Messiah. They then prayed prayers of **praise** and **thanksgiving** when God heard and answered their prayers. There is the **thanksgiving** of Anna the prophetess at the arrival of the Messiah, who been praying day and night at the temple for many years. And of course, Mary's **jubilant prayer of rejoicing** when, pregnant with the Messiah, she meets her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist. But Advent is not only about the coming of Jesus to Bethlehem as a baby, it's also about his **coming again in glory** when he will restore all things to himself and complete the bringing in of his kingdom. We find many prayers about that in both Old and New Testaments, culminating in the final words of John in Revelation—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

### Consider

This Advent, how can we allow our remembrance of Christ's first coming to shape our prayers as we also anticipate his second coming?

Remember Simeon? Max Lucado refers to him as **the man who knew how to wait for the arrival of Christ. The way he waited for the first coming is a model for how he waited for the second coming.**

Like Simeon we too are waiting for Christ's coming. We can rejoice with him that salvation has come to us in Jesus and we can learn from him how to live in expectation that Christ will come again:

**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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:**

**"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.**

**For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.**

Luke 2: 25-32

### Pray

- Praise God for fulfilling his promise to send the Messiah as our salvation.
- Thank God that like Simeon we can have peace knowing that just as God fulfilled his promise of the Messiah, so we can trust him to fulfill his promise to come again.
- Ask God to open the eyes of our unbelieving relatives and friends this Advent and Christmas to the light of his revelation in Jesus.
- Ask God to give us the ability to wait patiently but expectantly and longingly for Jesus's coming again.
- Ask God to help you wait actively for Jesus' coming, responsive and receptive to the work of the Holy Spirit as he refines you to reflect his glory.

We are praying for you to experience a joy like Simeon's as you pray about and wait for the coming of Jesus.

