

Family TableTalk

Conversation 101

What Do You See?

read

Luke 2:22-35

think

If you find yourself anywhere near where “holiday music” is played in the weeks leading up to Christmas, you’ve no doubt heard the classic old 1963 recording of Andy Williams belting out the lyrics to “It’s The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” If you’re to believe the song, what makes Christmas “wonderful” are things like holiday gatherings with family and friends, caroling out in the snow, toasting marshmallows, and “much mistletoeing.” Sure, all of these things make Christmas fun. But there’s one line in the song that takes us a bit closer to what really makes Christmas “wonderful”: There’ll be “tales of the glories of Christmases long, long ago.”

The dictionary defines *wonderful* as “inspiring delight, pleasure, or admiration; extremely good; marvelous.” The Gospel of Luke recounts the first Christmas of “long, long ago” and includes a story about a righteous and devout man of God named Simeon who was able to hold and cradle the baby Jesus in a *wonderful* and *wonder-filled* moment. He had been waiting for “the consolation of Israel” (v. 25), which is another way to say he was waiting for the coming of the Messiah and the comfort and redemption the Messiah would bring. Simeon knew that all humanity was under the bondage of sin, and that salvation would only come as a grace-filled gift from God.

What does Simeon see when he looks at baby Jesus in his arms? He blesses God and pronounces with unimaginable joy, “My eyes have seen your salvation!” Simeon confesses that he is now ready to die in peace, using language denoting a release from slavery into freedom. Simeon knew that God had acted decisively in history through the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. At that moment, nothing else mattered to Simeon! What Simeon saw and experienced needs to be our experience in ways that dim all the distractions of Christmas by putting them in their place, while putting Jesus rightfully in His place!

apply

- Think about all the Christmas commercials you’ve seen and heard over the last several weeks. If those commercials had their way, what would they lead you to believe is *most wonderful* at this time of year?
- Describe a time in your life when a Christmas gift you asked for and received very quickly didn’t live up to the *wonderful* potential you thought it had, leaving you feeling empty and once again yearning for more.
- What are some ways that we can shift our focus away from the distractions of this world so that we might be able to share in Simeon’s joy at the coming of Jesus?

pray

Dear Jesus, give us eyes that focus not on the distractions of this world, but which focus on the same glorious wonder that Simeon saw and knew when he took your infant self into his arms. Help us to look beyond the temporary wonder that comes with the good things you allow us to experience this time of year. . . good things that never can fill us or save us. May our eyes see and treasure the wonder of your coming for our eternal and lasting salvation. In your name, Amen.

by **Walt Mueller**

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