

Sunday 28th December



Family Service

Part 1

I'm sure everyone here knows what it's like to 'wait for something. We have a long wait for Christmas now. Did you know that on average in the UK we spend around 6.7 years sitting around waiting for stuff to happen. That's nearly 7 years; 47 days just waiting in traffic queues. The Bible is full of God's promises and the first and oldest promise God makes in the Bible was that he was going to send Jesus into the world to die on a cross and mend our broken friendship with him. Have you ever broken a friendship with someone? It is very sad when that happens isn't it? When that happens, we need to go to the other person and forgive them! That helps fix the friendship again. We have broken our friendship with God. When he created the world it was a happy place. When God finished making the world, trees, mountains, seas, birds, fish, and other animals, and people, he looked at everything and said to himself 'WOW! Isn't all this very good!' The people were very good friends with God. In fact, the Bible tells us that Adam and Eve, the first people who God made walked in the Garden of Eden with God and were able to speak to him like you can speak to me now! But now things are very different. The world is a scary and sad place. Adam and Eve decided not to listen to God. The Bible calls that sin. Sin is a very little word, but it's a serious one! I think I've used this before to help us think about sin but I'm going to use it again because I think it helps us.

S = Shove off God I = I'm in charge N = No to your ways

The Bible tells us that everyone lives like this. We do what we want to do, and not what God wants us to do! But even though this is how we treat God, he loves us and wants to fix that broken friendship. And on the same day that Adam and Eve broke their friendship with God, God promised to fix it himself by sending someone special into the world. That promise is found in Genesis 3:15, where God tells the snake that someone will be born in the future who will defeat him. So, for thousands of years, the people who truly loved God waited, and waited for this person to be born! We know that this person is Jesus! The Bible tells us about two of the people who loved God and were waiting for Jesus to be born around this time. One was a man named Simeon and the other was a very old Lady called Anna. We're going to think about Simeon after our next song

Part 2

Simeon was a very special man. Most people think that Simeon was quite old, but the truth is the Bible doesn't tell us how old he was. But the Bible does tell us that he lived in Jerusalem, and that he was righteous and devout. That means he was a good man. It's not because he never did anything wrong. He was good because he loved and trusted God. That's the only way anyone can be seen as good in God's eyes. He showed that he loved and trusted God by waiting patiently for Jesus to be born. In other words, Simeon believed what God said was true it was true so he trusted that God would keep his promise. I wonder if anyone here has ever made a promise: to clean my room, not to lie, to stop buying stuff I don't need, to eat healthier this year, to the gym. We aren't good at keeping our promises, even little ones. Either we're too lazy or weak to keep them. Or something happens out of our control which isn't our fault. And it hurts when someone breaks their promise to us. But God has never broken a single promise and can't. The biggest promise he made was to send Jesus into the world and he did! So, we can still trust him today, just like Simeon did. God even made a special promise to Simeon! God had told Simeon, by the Holy Spirit, that he would one day meet Jesus and see him with his own eyes before he died. Many people believed God would send Jesus into the world but didn't see it happen. Abraham, David, Ruth, Esther... But they still died trusting it would happen one day! And Simeon on this very special day woke up and went to the

Temple in Jerusalem. It just so happened that this was the day that Joseph and Mary went to make sacrifices at the Temple just like the Old Testament command. And it was while Simeon was there that Jesus arrived. He looked up and walking towards him were Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus. Jesus was only about 40 days old at this time. And Simeon took him in his arms, and he knew that he was holding Jesus. What a special feeling that must have been! It's a wonderful feeling to hold a baby but imagine how Simeon must have felt as he held the baby Jesus, the Son of God in his arms. Well Simeon was very happy. Seeing the baby Jesus was the one thing that Simeon wanted to do more than anything else in the world.

I wonder whether you got everything you wanted this Christmas! Sometimes the things we wanted and get aren't as good as we hoped they would be. A long time ago, I really wanted a DVD for Christmas, which my mum and dad bought me, only to discover it was a foreign language film, which I hadn't realised. I was so disappointed. Ruined Christmas, 2007! But Jesus will never leave us disappointed. In fact, Simeon saw Jesus as such a special gift that he says or maybe even sings, "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." There was nothing more that heaven and earth could offer him. And so, he was ready to leave and be with God in heaven. Next, we turn to Anna.

Part 3

Well, there is another very special person in this story. Her name was Anna. she was a prophet. Her job was to talk to people about God. She was very old, and a widow who had spent many years living in the Temple, (that would be like living in church), worshipping God by fasting and praying. She, like Simeon, spent her whole life waiting for Jesus to be born, trusting that God would keep his promise and send Jesus to fix our broken friendship with God. And like Simeon, God brought her into the courts of the Temple just as Jesus was there. And like Simeon she was very happy. The Bible tells us that when she looked at the baby Jesus she gave thanks to God. She knew that he was the answer to all of God's promises. There was nothing better for her to do in that moment than to say thank you. I wonder whether you have said thankyou to everyone who gave you presents and gifts this Christmas. It's good manners to do that, even if you're older too. But that's not all she did. She went and found everyone she knew who was waiting for Jesus to be born and told them about it because it was such good news that she couldn't keep it to herself. And if we today know God's friendship, because we trust that Jesus has fixed our broken friendship with him on the cross, we must tell everyone about him too. It's important we do that because trusting in Jesus is the only way our broken friendship with God can be fixed. But for people to know that, they must be told. And who better to do it than the people who already Love and trust Jesus. That's why as a church we say it's one of our most important jobs, Anna, in her very old age shows us that no one is too young or too old to make Jesus known.

If God was happy to keep his promise to send Jesus into the world, we can trust that he will keep all his other promises too. If we trust in Jesus, God has promised that he will always love us. He will always be with us. He will always hear us when we pray to him. He will give us peace and joy. He will give us wisdom and strength. He will always forgive us. And maybe the biggest one: He will give us eternal life. Maybe the biggest promise God has made is that one day Jesus will come back to this earth. And he will come back to take us to be with him forever. If God kept his promise to send Jesus a first time, it means he will keep his promise to send him a second time. And that means we can still trust him today! AMEN