

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF JESUS

A Harmony Of the Gospels

A Daily Devotional Study Guide - Book 1



“The Magnificent”

Study: Luke 1:46-56

Reading: James 4:1-10, Psalm 98:1-9

Memory: Psalm 51:9

There is a city in Israel that was less than 15 miles away from where Jesus grew up that has recently been excavated. The Old Testament name of the city is Beth-shan, but during the time of Jesus it would have been called Seythopolis. This city was a massive modern city that had the latest and best of everything that the Roman world had to offer. This would have been a center of sophistication and wealth in the days of Jesus, yet nothing is mentioned about this city in the New Testament. Almost everyone traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem would have passed by this city since it was on the route around Samaria, yet God used no one from that city to accomplish His plan. Instead, God chose poor people from poor towns to bring the riches of His good news into the world.

As we will read today, this is clearly a sign and example to us about who and what God chooses to use. I Corinthians 1:27 says, “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.”

What Does the Bible Say?

The trip from Nazareth to Judea would have taken Mary a few days and during that time she must have been deep in thought about what the angel had told her. When she arrived and Elizabeth confirmed in her heart that she was the mother of the Messiah, Mary began to declare the joy that had been stored up in her heart. She realized how unworthy she was to bear the Son of God, but magnified God who had chosen her to be the privileged woman. Mary knew that there was nothing significant or special about herself, but that God chose to use her, a young girl from an insignificant town in Galilee, to now be honored and called “blessed” by generations to come (vs 46-48).

All the praise belonged to God because it was He who had done great and mighty things by allowing her as a virgin to become pregnant. He was the one who was to be honored and respected. Truly what was written in the Old Testament was now coming true and she was experiencing how

God's mercy was and will be on those who fear Him from generation to generation. It was not the mighty or the proud which were chosen, but with His power and wisdom He chose the weak and lowly to carry out the great task of raising His child. Mary quoted a variety of Old Testament passages which reveal that God was going to be exalted over and above every power of the earth and God honored those who lived in humility (vs 49-52).

God had filled and would continue to fill those who were spiritually hungry with good things, and at the same time, reject those who trusted in their own righteousness. Her child was going to be the great Helper of Israel and would be the fulfillment to the promise given to Abraham thousands of years before. The Jewish nation would continue to be blessed and would be blessed in a greater way because the Messiah had now come and would accomplish what was predicted of Him (53-55).

The "Magnificat" revealed the humble character of Mary and also revealed the great anticipation that all of Israel had for the Messiah. The next three months must have been very exciting. It appears she stayed with Elizabeth until Elizabeth gave birth to John. I would have to think that the excitement she had must have started to wear off as she would now be getting ready to go home and face Joseph. At three months, she was probably not showing yet, but by then she could tell that there was a baby inside of her and clearly understood that He was the Son of God (vs 56).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize how much God desires humility? So often we can get a warped perspective about God because we view things from the eyes of men. We think that it is the mighty and rich that God can use in a great way, not the poor and the weak. After all, the rich and powerful are the ones with the most influence and the most earthly power to make a change, right? Biblically, we know that this thinking is wrong, though practically it is still hard to comprehend. Mary understood some of this as she realized that she was nothing special. She knew that she was just a poor girl from a little town that had no right or privilege to be used by God, but God chose to use her and He used her in a great way. The same humility and praise that Mary expressed is what God desires of you today. God wants to use you to accomplish His plan and can use you no matter how unusable you think you are. Submit yourself today and let Him produce miracles through your life. Choose to follow the example of Mary and humble yourself before God to be a tool used by Him for His glory.

What did Mary exclaim (vs 46)?

What do you think she meant by this?

What did her spirit rejoice in (vs 47)?

What did Mary express about herself (vs 48)?

What would all generations do (vs 48)?

Why is it important to have a proper view of Mary?

****Though some religions over exalt Mary, it is also easy to undervalue the example she set for us. Her humility and choice to submit to God's incredible plan should be honored and respected, while she herself was simply human and should be viewed as human.*

What did Mary declare about God in verse 49?

Who does God choose to show His mercy on (vs 50)?

What does God do for the proud (vs 51)?

Why do you think Mary declared this about the proud (vs 51-52)?

What does God do for the poor and rich (vs 53)?

****This doesn't mean that all rich people are void of God's help and all poor people are helped by God. It is a contradiction to the religious culture of that day that viewed wealth as a sign of God's blessings and poverty as a sign of God's judgement.*

What did God remember (vs 54)?

What promise was God keeping (vs 55)?

Why is the view that Mary had of herself and God so important?

How long was Mary with Elizabeth? Why do you think this was important?

“John”

Study: Luke 1:57-79

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7, 42:1-9

Memory: Psalm 51:9

The naming of our children was always an interesting choice and decision between my wife and I. Whenever she would want to get serious about picking out a name, she would start listing names and I would end up throwing out funny names or joking names. It seemed like many of the names that she liked reminded me of people that I didn't like and many of the names I liked reminded her of people she didn't like. Our picking of names would normally turn into laughing sessions as we started to goof around with names and often had a hard time settling on a name. For one of our children, we hadn't even settled on a name when that child was born. When the nurses asked us for a name, we looked at each other, then asked if we had to give them a name right away. It took us a little while to make that final decision.

Today, we are going to see how significant names of children were in Bible days and how Zechariah and Elizabeth's choice to name their child John made an incredible impact on all those around them.

What Does the Bible Say?

The narrative switched back from a focus on Mary in order to finish the story about Zechariah and Elizabeth. The time came for Elizabeth to give birth and everything went just as planned. She gave birth to a son, just as the angel said would happen, and there was great rejoicing among her friends and relatives. They did not give the child a name immediately, but as was customary in that time, they took him to the temple on the eighth day to be circumcised and it was there that Elizabeth declared his name would be John. This was a shock to all who heard because everyone was expecting that they would call the baby Zechariah after his father. They didn't believe Elizabeth so they turned to Zechariah and asked him to confirm what his wife had said. He, still being unable to talk, asked for something to write with and he wrote that the name of the child should be called John. When he did this, he was immediately able to speak and the first thing he did was praise God for what God had done. This greatly

amazed all those who were around and they began to realize that John was not going to be an ordinary child (vs 57-66).

At that time, the Holy Spirit overcame Zechariah and he began to prophesy about John and what was going to take place. He declared that God was going to redeem Israel by raising up a “horn of salvation.” This was symbolic language that pictured strength and power. God was going to powerfully step into the lives of men and provide salvation to them. This was just as He predicted in the Old Testament and was all part of His master plan to deliver Israel from those who hated them and to set them free. He was going to show the mercy that He promised to them and remember the covenant He has made with them (vs 67-73).

God was bringing them a deliverer who set them free from those who oppressed them, which would allow them to worship Him openly and freely with no one to prohibit them. They would be able to live in holiness and righteousness because of this promise that was being fulfilled. Zechariah is simply declaring the prophecies about the Messiah that the Old Testament predicted were now going to come true, but he, along with most of the others, did not realize the full plan of God for the first advent of Jesus (vs 74-75).

Zechariah understood that his child was not the Messiah, but that his child was the prophet who was to come before the Messiah. He would prepare the way for the Messiah and would help the people see their sin and their need to turn back to God. Following John would come the Messiah who would give hope and light to the children of Israel and help guide them to the way of peace (vs 76-79).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize how significant Jesus is? Do you understand that He is the central figure of all time and that His coming was so important that it changed the history of the whole world. Imagine a world without Jesus. This would not only be a world with no hope, but would be totally different than we know it today. If Jesus is that significant for all time, He should be greatly significant in your life today. You need to make Him the central focus of your life and why you do what you do. You need to make Him your priority and realize what you have because of Jesus. Don't allow the world around you and all the insignificant events of the day to drown out the great significance of Jesus and what He should be in your life.

What happened when it was time for Elizabeth to give birth (vs 57)?

****The significance of this verse can easily be overlooked. The fact that the baby was a boy is important because it was a fulfillment of Gabriel's declaration, but what is more important is that this woman who was well past the years of child bearing gave birth. With no complications or problems. This was a miracle from God.*

How did this birth show the mercy of God (vs 58)?

What did most people assume (vs 59)?

What did Elizabeth declare (vs 60)?

Why were the people surprised about this (vs 61)?

What did Zechariah declare (vs 62-63)?

Why do you think it is significant that he was unable to speak for the previous 9 months?

What happened once he confirmed the child's name (vs 64)?

What did Zechariah do as soon as he was able to speak (vs 64)?

Why do you think this was significant?

How did this event have a profound effect on their neighbors (vs 65)?

Why do you think news of this spread and became such an important event (vs 65)?

What do you think it means that the people who heard these things "laid them up in their hearts" (vs 66 - ESV)?

Why do you think God chose to help introduce His son into the world by allowing John to be born first?

What does this reveal about God?

"The Christ"

Study: Matthew 1:18-25

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11, Daniel 9:20-27

Memory: Psalm 51:9

I remember talking with a man who was divorced by his wife, which caused great heartache, though through the whole process he grew spiritually. He was relating to me how it was his great desire to help others who had gone through or are going through similar trials. He had a desire to help because he could understand what many others couldn't fully understand. As a pastor, this was music to my ears. I fully love it when people who suffer come out on the other side with a greater love for God and a greater desire to help others who are suffering. There is nothing like having a person to talk to who knows how you are feeling and has gone through what you are going through.

Today, we are going to see that Jesus was the Christ and knows what we experience as humans because He was human once. He knows the limitations, the pain, the heartaches and the gamut of emotions that we as humans battle with on a regular basis.

What Does the Bible Say?

Since Matthew is writing mainly to a Jewish audience, he made sure he began his book by helping his readers understand that Jesus was more than just a normal man. He was a descendant of Abraham, and He was also the Christ. John establishes this from the beginning since an understanding of God's full plan requires that the reader knows that Jesus was the Christ. The word "Christ" is the Greek version of the Old Testament word "Messiah." The words mean "Anointed One" and specifically declares that Jesus was the Son of God, the One that had been promised for hundreds of years.

While Luke did not mention the appearance of the angel to Joseph, and we are not given a time table of when Mary told Joseph, I would suspect that it was shortly after Mary's return from Judea. All Matthew says is that Mary was found to be with child. Obviously, this news was very disturbing. The only way for a woman to become pregnant was to have sexual relations with a man. Joseph was very distraught when he found out Mary was pregnant and decided that he would not publicly declare her

unfaithfulness, which could have resulted in Mary being stoned, and decided that he would not have her publicly humiliated (vs 18-19). This reveals that either Joseph had developed a deep love for Mary or that He was an extremely kind and caring man. (Remember most marriages were arranged so it is uncertain how much love was involved.) He was going to divorce her because of the supposed infidelity. Their engagement was a legally binding contract and he was making plans to dissolve the contract when he was approached by an angel in a dream. The angel told him not to be afraid to go through with his plans to marry Mary because Mary had been telling the truth and the child inside of her was the Son of God. It is interesting to note that Matthew stated that the angel addressed Joseph as the “son of David” as further proof that Jesus was the Christ since the Christ would come from a descendant of David. Joseph, like Mary, was told to name the child Jesus specifically because He was going to save men from their sin (vs 20-21).

Matthew again emphasized that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament by quoting Isaiah 7:14 which stated that it would be a virgin that would give birth to the son. His name would also be called “Immanuel” which meant, “God with us.” Again, this is clearly stating that Jesus was God in the flesh (vs 22-23).

When Joseph woke up from the vision that he had, he trusted what the angel had said and took great care not to have any sexual relations with Mary until Jesus was born (vs 24-25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize how significant the incarnation of Christ is? Jesus was not just a man who was filled with great power and became the Christ, He was the Christ. He was the long awaited Messiah. The God of the universe in the flesh who had come for one purpose and that purpose was to save all men from their sin. To grasp the full truth of this is very difficult, yet it should give every man a reason for praise and rejoicing. Not only did Jesus come as an example of how you should live, but He came specifically to unite you in a relationship with God the Father. By placing your faith and trust in the Christ, you now have access to the throne of God and have the ability to call Him your Father. You can also joy in and rejoice in the fact that Jesus knows what it was like to be human. He cried as a baby, played as a child, learned as a young man and died as a criminal. He experienced life and wants you to experience your life with Him at your side. You have so much in life as a child of God all because Jesus humbled Himself to become Immanuel.

What did Matthew want to describe (vs 18)?

What was found out about Mary (vs 18)?

Take a moment to ponder how Joseph found out about this and how you think he would have reacted?

Why does Matthew emphasize that the child in Mary was from the Holy Spirit and not from man?

What does Matthew skip? Why do you think he skipped this?

How is Joseph describes (vs 19)? What did he want to do (vs 19)?

Why do you think he was “considering” these things (vs 20)?

What happened while Joseph was preparing for a divorce (vs 20)?

What was Joseph told not to fear (vs 20)?

What did the angel make clear about the baby (vs 20)?

Who was this baby going to be (vs 21)?

Why were they to name the baby Jesus (vs 21)?

****The name “Jesus” is actually the Hebrew name “Joshua” which meant “The Lord is Salvation.” God was very purposeful when He named His Son because He wanted to make very clear what His purpose was for His Son coming into the world.*

Why had this taken place (vs 22)?

Why is Matthew emphasizing that this was a fulfillment of the Old Testament (vs 23)?

How did Joseph respond to this (vs 24)?

What is emphasized in verse 25?

“Insignificant Places”

Study: Luke 2:1-7

Reading: Micah 5:1-6, Mark 2:13-17

Memory: Psalm 51:9



Stone manger in Israel

What Does the Bible Say?

Joseph had decided to go through with the marriage, though according to Luke, they were not married yet when Jesus was born. They most likely were waiting to get married until after Jesus was born. Joseph and Mary were now anticipating the birth of Jesus when some very difficult news came their way. Caesar Augustus decided that it was time for all of those in his kingdom to be counted so he could get an accurate representation of how many people were in his kingdom. There has been some debate and speculation as to why Joseph would have to go to Bethlehem to be counted when he and his family were living in Nazareth and why they had to go right when Mary was about to give birth, but there is no concrete answer. From Scripture we do know that He was a descendant of David and that played a role in the whole situation, but the exact reasoning is not known to us. Though we don't know all the details, what we do know is what Scripture tells us and we understand that God caused this to happen at this

certain time so that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Joseph had to go to Bethlehem since his he was a descendant of David and that was were he needed to register (vs1-5).

Joseph and Mary traveled down to Bethlehem while she was about to give birth. Much speculation and folklore has been made out of verses 6 & 7 through thousands of Christmas plays, but the text simply tells us that there was no room for them in the inn, so Mary was forced to lay Jesus in a manger when He was first born. Where exactly this manger was is speculative. Some say it would have been on the first floor of a house, possibly the house of a relative, where many animals were kept in Bible days. Others say it was probably in some type of cave in one of the Bethlehem hills where animals were kept. Others say it would have been some type of lean-to attached to the side of house. Whatever the exact case, we do know he was first laid in a manger or feeding trough (most likely made of stone) that was used for feeding animals. He was wrapped in strips of cloths, “swaddling clothes.” Though some commentators say that it was customary to wrap children in these strips of cloths, from the mention of it here and then later in the angel’s announcement, it seems that there was something unique about this to help the shepherds identify that this was Jesus (vs 6-7).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Though we can't know the exact surroundings of the birth of Jesus, nor can we know the exact circumstances of their travels and having no room in the inn, it is made clear that God had a master plan for the birth of His Son. Joseph and Mary certainly wouldn't have traveled there when she was about to give birth if it was their choice. In those days, many children and mothers died in childbirth and great precaution was normally taken to help spare the child and mother. Yet, God planned this all out to fulfill the prophecy that was given in Micah 5:2 which declared that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. At that time, Bethlehem would have been a small, little known town that was insignificant in the social society of that day. So we have an insignificant couple, from an insignificant town in Galilee, travel to an insignificant little city named Bethlehem and were forced to stay in an insignificant place where animals lived. It was there that she gave birth to the most significant child that was ever born. All of this was revealing the humility of Jesus and the fact that Jesus came to be the Savior of all men. Not just the rich or religious, but also the poor and the outcast.

What decree came when it was about time for Jesus to be born (vs 1)?

How does this help give an approximate date for the birth of Jesus (vs 1-2)?

****The general thought is that Jesus was born around 4 B.C. based on historic records from the time when putting together the fact that Caesar Augustus was ruling in Rome and Quirinius was governor of Syria. Most likely Luke mentioned these things because he was writing to a Roman audience who would have been familiar with these Roman rulers.*

Where did each person need to go register (vs 3)?

What does this reveal about Joseph's family (vs 4)?

****Verse 3 seems to indicate that Joseph was actually from Bethlehem, but verse 4 seems to give the idea that he only descended from family who was originally from Bethlehem. The idea that there was no room in the inn seems to indicate that he did not have immediate family living in the area, but there could be several reasons they first tried going to the inn rather than going to a relative's home. (Number one being that he was traveling with a pregnant woman who was not yet his wife.) The emphasis of verse 4 focuses on the fact that he was a descendant of David. Perhaps Joseph was from Bethlehem and was spending time in Nazareth getting to know his future wife. (There is no clear answer so go ahead and let your "Christmas story imagination" create whatever scenario you like.)*

Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem (vs 5)?

What happened while they were there (vs 6)?

Why do you think verse 7 states that this was Mary's first born son?

****The narratives make it very clear that Jesus was born from a virgin.*

Why do you think it emphasized that she wrapped him in swaddling cloths (vs 7)?

Where was Jesus laid (vs 7)? Why were they in a place where there was a manger (vs 7)?

“Appearing to the Lowly”

Study: Luke 2:8-20

Reading: I Corinthians 1:1-31

Memory: Psalm 51:9



Shepherd with his sheep in Israel - Pictorial Library of Bible Lands

What Does the Bible Say?

Around the city of Bethlehem, there were some shepherds who were in the fields watching over their sheep. Shepherds weren't necessarily despised by others, but they were one of the lowest classes of people in New Testament times. They were smelly and dirty much of the time since they traveled with their animals and spent a great deal of time with them. Since Jerusalem was just a few miles from Bethlehem, it is possible that many sheep were raised in this region to be used as sacrifices in the temple. Some say that the reason the shepherds were in the field at night was because it was birthing time for the sheep, concluding that it was spring time, but other commentators say that the shepherds worked continually throughout the year in the fields, both day and night (vs 8).

Whatever the exact case is not important. What is important is that

while these shepherd were in their fields an angel appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone brightly around the angel. As with almost every appearance of an angel or the presence of God, this struck fear into the hearts of the shepherds. The angel attempted to calm their fears by telling them not to be afraid because he was there to tell them great news. This news was not just for them, but was for all men. The fact that this announcement was made to shepherds, some of the lowliest of people, revealed that Jesus came for all men. This good news was that the Christ, the Savior of the world, had been born that night (vs 9-11).

The shepherds were not commanded to go see Jesus, but the angels described how they could identify him if they wanted to go see Him. The baby would be lying in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. We know that it was not normal for a baby to be lying in a manger, and from this comment, it appears that it might not have been natural for a baby to be in swaddling clothes (though many commentators believe this was common). Following this announcement, the angel was joined by many other angels declaring great praise to God and how this child was going to bring peace on earth and be good for all men (vs 12-14).

Once the angels were gone, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to find Jesus. They found Jesus just as the angel had told them and they began to spread the news to those who they came in contact with. Their hearts were lifted up with praise towards God for all that they had seen and heard that night, and their hearts were filled with great gladness (vs 15-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you think you are not special to God? There are many people who think they are too poor for God to care about them. There are others who think they have no abilities that God can use. Others think physically they are too ugly or odd looking to make any impact in the lives of others, but the angels appearance to the shepherds tells a powerful story. God is not just the God of the rich and good looking, but the God of the dirtiest and smelliest of people. It was the lowly shepherds who first heard of the birth of Jesus and these lowly shepherds in simplicity worshiped and praised God. People who are wealthy, good looking or talented often let those things get in the way of truly living for God and letting Him shine through them. No matter who you are, Jesus came to save you and wants His Spirit to work through you. You have the ability to be used greatly by God by humbly submitting yourself to Him.

Where were the shepherds (vs 8)?

What time was it (vs 8)?

What happened when the angel appeared (vs 9)? What does this reveal about the presence of God?

What was the first thing the angel said to them (vs 10)?

What message was the angel delivering (vs 10)?

Why do you think this news was for “all people” (vs 10)?

Why do you think the angel said “unto you” in verse 11?

****This indicates the direct reason that Jesus was born. He was born for all people, including the shepherds. His birth was not a normal birth but he came into the world to be the Savior of all men.*

How did the angels describe Jesus (vs 11)? Why did they describe him this way?

How would the shepherds know the angels were telling the truth (vs 12)?

Why would it be unique that a baby would be in a manger (vs 12)?

****This could possibly have made it easier for the shepherds to know where Jesus was because they would have been familiar with where many of the mangers would have been in Bethlehem.*

What happened after the angel delivered his message (vs 13)? What message did they deliver (vs 14)?

What did the shepherds decide to do (vs 15)?

What did they do once they found Jesus (vs 17)?

What was the response of Mary and others who heard (vs 18-19)?

What impact did this have on the shepherds (vs 20)?

“The Consolation of Israel”

Study: Luke 2:21-32

Reading: Isaiah 66:1-11, Exodus 13:12-15

Memory: Psalm 51:9

There was a time where I was invited to participate in a wedding that was taking place down in the state of Mississippi and the man getting married had rented a cabin in a nearby state park for some of us who were in the wedding to stay in. On the night before the wedding, there was a large thunderstorm that came through and caused the electricity to go out. This caused the cabin to be pitch dark and when I woke up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, I had a hard time finding my way (this was before cell phones with built in flashlights). I stumbled around in the darkness trying to find the bathroom and eventually made my way without seriously injuring myself. Being without lights, especially in a foreign place, made me realize how thankful I am for light and the help that light is to my regular life.

Today, we are going to see how Jesus came to be a light to a dark and dismal world.

What Does the Bible Say?

Just as Zechariah and Elizabeth did with John, Mary and Joseph did not officially name their baby until they went to the temple on the eighth day. It was Jewish custom to have a male child circumcised and to offer an offering as required by the Law. It was on that day that they obeyed what the angel had told them and gave their child the name “Jesus” (vs 21).

Luke then moved ahead 40 days after the birth of Jesus to another visit of Joseph and Mary to the temple. This time, it was after the days of purification, which, according to the Law, was the time a woman needed to wait after a male son was born. At this time, she would offer an offering to God which could be a lamb if she was wealthy or two pigeons or two turtle doves if she was poor. The fact that Mary offered two birds indicated that neither she nor Joseph were wealthy. This offering was also a time where the first born child would be dedicated unto the Lord and Mary and Joseph carefully followed the Law and customs of those days (vs 22-24).

There was a man named Simeon who spent a great deal of time in the temple worshipping God and longing to see the Comforter of Israel that had

been promised in the book of Isaiah. This man was a devout follower of God and the Holy Spirit was on his life as he continually served God. Because of his commitment to God, God had chosen to reveal to him that he would not die until he had seen the Comforter that he had been waiting for (vs 25-26).

While serving in the temple, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that Jesus was the Messiah that he had been waiting for. It was shown to him that the child of Mary and Joseph was the Christ. When he saw Jesus, he took Jesus in his arms and began to bless Him. He declared to God that he would now be able to die in peace because he had seen the salvation of Israel. This baby was going to be a light for the Gentiles to show them their way to God and would bring great glory to Israel as all the world would be saved through the nation of Israel (vs 27-32).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Is Jesus your consolation? Simeon had been waiting for the consolation of Israel and Jesus was that consolation, but are you allowing Him to be the consolation in your life? The idea of Jesus being the consolation meant that Jesus was the hope of Israel. He was the one who had come to deliver the Israelites from the despair they were in and to give light to the Gentiles in a dark and dying world. This is not always an outward hope with extra blessings and a life of ease, but it is an inward hope that can lighten even the darkest of days. Jesus came to give you hope and rest. He came not so that you will live a more burdened life, living continually with the weight of sin and guilt, but came to set you free and so that you can live abundantly. This abundant life isn't the result of outward circumstances, but the moving of the Holy Spirit in your life as a child of God. If you are not living in comfort, hope and joy today, it means you are not fully abiding in Him. He wants to be your consolation, help and hope, but you must look to Him and let Him be what He desires to be in your life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for being your consolation.*
- * *Ask God to help you abide in Him daily.*

Thought for the day

Why do you think Luke gave the additional details in verse 23?

****Luke was writing to a Roman audience. They were most likely not familiar with all the customs of the Jewish culture. This would help his readers understand why Joseph and Mary went to the temple and why he was recording it.*

What does the sacrifice of Joseph and Mary indicated about their social status (vs 24)?

How is Simeon described (vs 25)?

What had been revealed to him (vs 26)?

What do you think it means that he “came in the Spirit” (vs 27)?

****Most likely the Holy Spirit had led him to go to the temple at that time so that he would be able to see Jesus.*

What did Simeon do when he saw Jesus (vs 28)?

What did he declare in verse 29?

What had his eyes seen (vs 30)?

Why do you think he mentioned “all peoples” (vs 31-ESV)?

What two things did he say Jesus would be (vs 32)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think this event was important?

MEMORY VERSES

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.