

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes things happen that we aren't expecting. A while back I heard a funny story about a pastor and a little kitten. His kitten had climbed up a tree in his backyard and was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, called, and yelled – all to no avail; the kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he looped a rope around the top of the sapling and tied the other end to his car and drove away so that the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten. He did all this, checking his progress in the car frequently, then figured if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved a little further forward, the rope broke. The tree went BOING! and the kitten instantly sailed through the air, out of sight. The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighborhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, "Lord, I just commit this kitten to Your keeping," and went on about his business.

A few days later while at the grocery store, he met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. Now this woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?" She replied, "You won't believe this," and told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat; but she kept refusing her. Then a few days before, the child begged again, so the Mom finally told her little girl, "Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." She told the pastor, "I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws spread out, and landed right in front of her."

That was certainly unexpected! This morning we are going to examine an event in the life of Jesus when we are introduced to two individuals who were *expecting* the Messiah to come, and when they saw Him, even though He is still an infant, they recognized Him for who He was. Let's read about it in Luke 2:21-40:

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 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 now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

As we examine this passage, I want us to discover three things about Jesus. First,

I. THE DEDICATION OF THE PARENTS

Now, when I refer to the parents of Jesus, I am talking about Joseph and Mary. Mary was the biological mother of Jesus, but Joseph was like a stepfather, because the *real* Father of Jesus was the Lord God.

I appreciate the way the Joseph stepped in and assumed the role of earthly father of the Lord Jesus. We see that Mary and Joseph were good parents because

Like good parents, Joseph and Mary gave Him the right:

1. Name - JESUS

It was customary for a Jewish boy to be named at the time of his circumcision when he was eight days old. The circumcision of Jesus probably took place in Bethlehem because every Jewish community had rabbis who performed this rite. You will recall that circumcision was the mark of the covenant between God and Abraham. Every Jewish boy who was circumcised was renewing that covenant God had made with the people of Israel.

His parents gave Him the right name: Jesus. The angel Gabriel told Mary nine months earlier that she was to call his name "Jesus" because He would save his people from their sins. The Old Testament version of the name is Joshua. It was pronounced "Yashua" which means "Yahweh saves."

In our culture, names are only identifiers. We might as well be known as a taxpayer I.D. number, or a driver's license number. But in Bible times, names were given to develop the character of the individual. Today, names take on value after we have lived long enough for our character to

be judged by others. That’s why few people in America would name their child “Adolph” or “Nero” because those names carry the baggage of evil men.

Parents, one of the best things you can give your children is a good name. I’m not talking about what you call them but the character you attach to your name. It may be a good family name that you give them. Proverbs 22:1 says, “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver and gold.”

Second, like good parents, they gave Him the right

2. Start: They Presented Him to God

By this time, Jesus was about 40 days old, and his parents took Him to the temple for the first time. What a beautiful sight it is to see this family or any family attending church together. The purpose of this visit was to present this firstborn son to the Lord. In other words, it was to acknowledge that God was the One who gave them this child, so they were admitting that God owned the child and they consecrated Him to the Lord.

We see that Mary and Joseph were careful to obey the Law of the Lord. They joyfully took their infant son to the temple and dedicated Him to God. Good parents still do the same thing. Whenever you are blessed with a child, you must acknowledge that, “children are a heritage from the Lord.” (Psalm 127:3) That means you realize God has given this child to you – so you should be so grateful that you dedicate that child to the Lord. In other words, you acknowledge your child is a gift from God and the Lord is the creator and the owner of your child.

Here at our church it begins with a Parent-Child Dedication ceremony, like the two we have scheduled today. But it involves so much more than that. It involves teaching your child every day at home that God loves him or her and it involves bringing that child to church every Lord’s Day so he or she can experience the benefits of the Body of Christ.

Twenty-three years ago I was pastor of a little church in Tallassee, Alabama. There was a family in our church who had six children ranging from ages nine through birth. Every single one of those children had a perfect attendance record in Sunday School from the day they were born. The first Sunday the child was home from the hospital, the nursery department would have Sunday School at their house but on the very next Sunday and every Sunday after, this mother would bring her children to Sunday School. I was always amazed to see her and her husband pull up in the parking lot (we gave them their own parking place) and unload and lug those children into the various Sunday School classes. They weren’t always on time, but can you blame them? When I returned to that church a couple of summers ago to preach at the ground-breaking of a new Family Life Center, that mother reported that all her children were growing and faithfully serving the Lord.

New parents, let me speak to you for a moment. You may be present here or watching on television. When you were single, you were only responsible for your own spiritual walk, then when you married, you and your mate became spiritual partners. Many young married couples are too busy having fun on Sunday to make church a part of their lifestyle. That’s not good – but

it's your choice. But when God blesses you with a child, suddenly you become responsible for the spiritual development of someone else – that little child. It is critically important for you to give your child a firm spiritual foundation upon which to build their life. If you don't do that, don't be surprised if that child grows up and causes you terrible pain and embarrassment.

Parents, you want to give your children something more valuable than all the toys, gadgets, cars, and trips put together? Give them a good spiritual foundation. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." How early do you have to start? Well, Jesus parent's started when He was 40 days old. That's a good time for you to start.

Have you ever heard the statement, "It's never too late to start?" Whoever said that never tried to start providing spiritual training to teenagers. The time to start is when they are little. Is there someone reading this - and God is convicting you, "you need to be in Sunday School and church and you need to take your children so that they can have a firm spiritual foundation for the rest of their lives." Enough about Jesus' parents, now let's also look at

II. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPHETS

In this passage we are introduced to two interesting characters: Simeon and Anna. They have several similarities. First, we see they were both elderly individuals. The language describing Anna's age is a little unclear; it could mean she was 84 years old or that she had been a widow for 84 years, after being married for 7 years, which would make her over 100 years old. Whether she was a young 84 or a healthy 110, we just know she was "mature." We aren't told Simeon's exact age, but the context makes it clear he had been coming to the temple looking for the Messiah for many years and that he was ready to die. Second, they were both looking for the same thing when they came to the temple – the salvation of God. Even though the temple sacrifices continued day after day according to the routine that had been unchanged for hundreds of years, they were looking for something more. They knew from reading the Old Testament that God was up to something new. They knew the Messiah was coming and they were on the lookout.

We all know when the police or the FBI are looking for a suspect they issue an APB, short for an All Points Bulletin. We've seen enough cop shows to know they say something like, "Be on the lookout for a suspect, male, Caucasian, 30 years old, 5' 10", 190 pounds driving a late model white Chevrolet. Suspect is armed and dangerous." When someone finds him they report, "We have a positive ID."

During the years before the birth of Jesus, the Holy Spirit issued an APB, short for All Prophet's Blessing. He had said, "Be on the lookout for the Messiah, born to a virgin, born in Bethlehem, lineage of David...Messiah is holy and blessed." Simeon and Anna were on the lookout; that's why they recognized Jesus. When they saw him, they said, "We have a *positive ID*." I am amazed to think that on that day, there were hundreds of priests, rabbis, and other Jews at the temple area, but only these two elderly saints recognized that God was present. I am more amazed that several thousand people will show up for church here this morning, most will just go

through the motions, the same old routine. Yet others will have an excited sense of expectation: God is on the verge of doing something fresh and new – and He is here right now!

I like to call Simeon and Anna “Super Senior Saints.” I used to dread getting older. I heard the old poem people used to recite about old folks: I can see with my bifocals / my dentures work just fine / I can live with my arthritis / but I sure do miss my mind! Actually, since I am now an old 47-year-old guy, I am learning more and more that senior saints haven’t lost their minds. In a real sense, they are the smartest folks around. Oh, they may not know how to log on to the Internet, but they know how to love on folks around them. I thank God for the hundreds of Super Senior Saints we have here in our church. Let’s see what Simeon and Anna identified about the infant, the Lord Jesus.

These Super Senior Saints recognized that:

1. Salvation is in a person – not in performance

Just picture old Simeon taking the baby Jesus in his arms and gazing into His eyes. He said, “My eyes have seen the salvation of the Lord.” (vs. 30) He wasn’t looking at the temple when he said it and he wasn’t looking at the sacrifices constantly being made by the priests; he was looking at Jesus.

Now we are told that Simeon was “righteous and devout.” That means he was careful to obey the Jewish laws but even though he was meticulous in his observance of the law, he realized these rules and regulations were not salvation – Jesus was. He realized all of his religious performance could not prepare him to die in peace; only meeting Jesus could do that.

You see, when you become a born again Christian, you don’t receive a religion; you receive a person – the Lord Jesus. This is number 1,786 for me to say this but here goes: Christianity is not a *religion* – it is a *relationship*. It’s like when you get married, you aren’t receiving the institution of marriage; you are accepting and receiving a person, a husband or a wife.

Too many people today still think they will go to heaven because of the “Christian things” they do – going to church, giving money, feeding the poor and the list goes on. Those are all good things you do *because* you have a relationship with Jesus.

Should you ever stand before God and hear the question: Why should I let you into heaven? For heaven’s sake (literally), *don’t* say, “Because I was a good person,” or “I did a lot of good things.” The only thing that will get you into heaven is to say honestly, “Because I have a personal relationship with Jesus – I know Him. He is my Lord and I am His servant.” Here’s the next thing these Super Senior Saints recognized. That

2. God’s light is shining for everyone – not just the Jews

Because none of us are First Century Jews living in Jerusalem, it is hard for us to understand just how radical it was for Simeon to say what he did in verse 32. “A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of your people, Israel.” Every Jew believed God’s light was shining

for the Jews – but for the Gentiles? By this time, most of the nation of Israel had forgotten that God's original covenant with Abraham was to make the nation of Israel a blessing to *all* nations. (See Genesis 12:3)

God's light had been darkened for the past 400 years. During those four centuries there hadn't been a prophet, an angel, or a word from the Lord. But on this day, Simeon recognized that God had once again turned on the light of revelation and this light was Jesus. Isaiah predicted that the people who walk in darkness would see a great light (Isaiah 9:2). That was fulfilled when Jesus came. Later Jesus confirmed this by saying, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)

Have you ever heard the expression, "I see the light at the end of the tunnel?" Four hundred years of silence, that's a pretty long tunnel. But Jesus was the light at the end of the tunnel of God's silence. In June, Cindy and I took our girls to Europe to celebrate their graduations. After a few days in London, we took the train from London to Paris. There was bright sunshine as we traveled toward the English Channel, and then we entered the tunnel, called the Chunnel. It wasn't unpleasant because the train was well lit and comfortable, in fact all three girls slept as we traveled underneath millions of tons of water. After about twenty minutes, I was looking outside the window and I could tell the wall of the tunnel was beginning to brighten. It kept getting lighter and lighter until suddenly we burst into the bright sunshine again.

There are probably some of you who find yourself in some kind of a dark tunnel right now. The darkness of despair or depression or desperation is thick and scary. Maybe you are so discouraged you think you will never again see the light. It could be that you are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or pornography. It may be that you are lonely and afraid. Or perhaps you have sunk so low that you are in the darkness of some sinful habit that has turned out the light in your spiritual life. I want you to do exactly the same thing that Simeon did – recognize Jesus for who He is, the light at the end of the tunnel. Lift up your eyes. Look to Jesus and you will find His light dispelling your darkness. Your heart may be searching in a lot of the wrong places to find hope. Simeon had a hungering desire to see the Messiah and when he found Jesus he was satisfied.

My friend, you will never be totally satisfied until you come to Jesus. 1,500 years ago, St. Augustine wrote: "God, you have made us for yourself – And our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you."

You may wonder, "Okay, where can I find Jesus?" Here's right here with you as you hear these words or read these words. Hundreds of people at the temple that day came and left and missed the glorious fact that God was there in the person of Jesus. Jesus is here right now – do you recognize Him? That's a look at the parents, and a word about the two prophets. Now, let's dig a little deeper into what Simeon had to say to Mary. I call this

III. THE ANTICIPATION OF THE PAIN

As Simeon was holding Jesus He recognized he was holding the Messiah, God's salvation. He recognized that Jesus was the *light* that came into the darkness. That's the good news that causes joy and celebration. However, since he was filled with the Holy Spirit, he receives a revelation

that he must speak to Mary. I imagine he was singing and shouting the song found in verses 29-32. But I imagine his voice was somber as he almost whispered the rest of his prophecy to Mary. He told Mary four things about her son; all of them would cause her pain. On this day Mary learned Jesus would:

1. Have a dividing effect on people

He says, “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel.” (vs. 34) In other words, some would be raised to a new level of life because of Jesus but others would fall into sin, all because of Him. When you understand the radical nature of the gospel, you see that Jesus actually has an opposite effect of people and as a result people are divided over Him. When it comes to Jesus, there is no neutral ground: you either accept him or reject him.

Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.” Because we bear the nature and character of Jesus, real Christians also have the same effect on people. A real Christian usually irritates a confirmed unbeliever. Why is that? Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. “For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?” I don’t mean to be personal, but let me ask you, “How do you smell today?” If your nature is saturated with the nature of Jesus (being filled with the Holy Spirit) you will have the aroma of Christ. To lost people you will stink. They will condemn and persecute you. You smell like death to them. But to those who know Jesus, you are a lovely fragrance of life. If you don’t stink to unbelievers it’s probably because you are trying to smell too much like them (imitate their lifestyle) – and in that case you stink to Jesus!

Jesus always had and has today a dividing effect on people. He loves everyone, but some choose to reject His love. That’s why we are going to see in Luke 12 that Jesus said sometimes He would set family members against each other. (see Luke 12:52) That’s not His perfect intent but that’s the reaction people have toward Jesus, some accept Him, others reject Him.

Next, Simeon told Mary Jesus would

2. Be violently opposed

Simeon told Mary Jesus would be “a sign that would be spoken against.” Can you imagine how Mary’s heart must have been troubled to learn this tiny little infant boy would be a person whom would be spoken against? Even today, 2000 years later, people are still speaking against Jesus. What do you think they are doing every time the name “Jesus Christ” is uttered a curse word? To this day there are many who say Jesus was not the Son of God, he was merely a man. From the beginning of His ministry until this day, Jesus has been a lightning rod of controversy.

Do you recall some of the things they said about Jesus? They said He performed miracles by the power of Beelzebub (the prince of demons), they inferred he was an illegitimate child by saying, “We know who *our* Father is.” They said he was a liar and an insurrectionist. During His brief three-year ministry, Jesus was the target of more bricks than bouquets.

This prediction was going to come true faster than Mary could imagine. Matthew tells us that a few months after this, Magi from the East sought Jesus. They stopped by Herod the Great’s palace and asked for directions. Some Old Testament experts suggested they try Bethlehem. Herod was eaten up with envy over any one who claimed to be “Born King of the Jews.” (Herod had bought his position). He told the Magi to go look for the child and when they had found Him to report back to Him so that he also could go and worship the child. Yeah, sure, we know the real reason behind his interest. He planned to kill this usurper to his throne. After the Magi left, God warned Joseph in a dream to take a detour to Egypt because Herod was out to kill the child. Can you imagine the amazement of Mary and Joseph to learn that King Herod was determined to kill their little boy? From the very start, Jesus was opposed. You may wonder why Luke didn’t add the part about the Wise Men and Herod the Great. Remember, Luke is writing to Theophilus and a Greek-minded audience. There would be little interest in Jewish politics and the activity of a dead Jewish ruler like Herod. Also, the Holy Spirit knew that Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience would include it, so Luke didn’t need to write about it.

The third thing Simeon told Mary was that her Son would

3. Excavate the hearts of people

He said, “the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.” Jesus had the unique ability to peer into the heart and look at the character and motives of others. This was not just good intuition – this was a miracle. When Jesus first met Nathaniel, he said, “Here is an Israelite in whom is no guile.” How did He know? He could see his heart.

When Jesus was talking with the woman at the well, He knew without being told she had four husbands and was living with a fifth man at the moment. Beyond that, He could tell she was a woman who was unsatisfied with a life of sin and was searching for something like living water.

Do I need to go on or may I just remind you that *at this moment*, the Lord Jesus is looking into your heart? Your thoughts and desires and intents are revealed to Him. You can fool me; you can fake me out but when it comes to Jesus, *forget it*. You might as well come clean with Him; you can’t deceive Him.

Finally, Simeon told Mary that her precious Son would

4. Suffer terribly

And because He would suffer, she would hurt as if a sharp sword had been thrust into her stomach. He said, “A sword will pierce your own soul, too.” Now, take a moment and think. What do you think Simeon was prophesying? Standing here, 2,000 years later, we have the advantage of knowing what happened to Jesus. I believe the Holy Spirit was starting to prepare the heart of a loving mother for the day when she would be standing before her Son as He was nailed to a cross.

In a short 33 years, Jesus would divide enough people, be so violently opposed, and reveal so many of the inner thoughts of people that the religious leaders decided to kill Him. We are told Mary was present in Jerusalem during the days when He was arrested and crucified.

I want you to picture the scene that morning. After a brutal night of torture and sleeplessness, Jesus was hauled before Pontius Pilate who delivered Him to the Roman soldiers to crucify Him. First, however, the soldiers decided to torment Him. He was blindfolded, and then the muscular soldiers took turns batting him across the head with a stick, asking Him to identify the soldier who struck Him. They positioned a wicked crown of thorns on his scalp and pressed it down until there was a profusion of bleeding. They strapped His hands to an iron ring high up on a pole and began to lash His back until the skin was ruptured and bleeding.

They stopped His whipping before He was too weak to know He was being executed and they moved Him to an area outside the city wall called Golgotha, because the face of the cliff looked like the skull of a skeleton (it still does). They held down his arms and drove huge spikes into his hands, severing the sensitive median nerve that runs from the fingers through the wrist. After nailing His feet to the cross, they lifted Him up. There suspended between heaven and earth, He was left to die. Watching all of this agony was His mother Mary. I believe she was in agony as much as if she had been stabbed with a long, sharp sword. Every painful grimace of Jesus was as if someone took a sword in Mary's body and twisted it cruelly, gouging more deeply into her wounded soul.

Every parent in this room knows the unique pain that is ours when we see one of our children hurt. Any loving parent would gladly take the place of their suffering child. I'm sure Mary's pain was as intense as that of Jesus, just a different kind of pain.

When her son was hanging on the cross, the first thing He said was, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing." But the second thing He said was, "Woman, behold your son." I believe at that moment, Mary's pain grew to almost unbearable proportions. I believe her mind went back to the time when her son was 40 days old and an old prophet had said something strange: "a sword will penetrate your soul." Finally, at the cross, Mary understood what Simeon meant.

Keep this picture in your mind because we aren't truly ready to serve Jesus until we, too, have shared His suffering. Paul writes in Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering; becoming like Him in His death."

Is there something else we can learn from this passage that we can apply to our lives? Yes, I believe that there is a great

PERSONAL LIFE LESSON:

You can die in peace when you acknowledge that Jesus is your *only* source of salvation

Old Simeon spent hundreds of days in the temple trying to ID the Messiah. God promised him that He would not die until his eyes saw the promised Savior. When Simeon gazed into the infant eyes of Jesus, his first comment was "God, you can now release your servant, finally I can die in

peace!" Only after meeting Jesus could Simeon die in peace. In that moment, his life was fulfilled. In that one moment, he knew God kept His promises and that all of Israel and the world would be redeemed. It set his heart on fire and put life back into his old self. I imagine that forever afterwards, people would look at the light in Simeon's eyes, the grin on his face and the spring in his step and be amazed. They would turn to each other and ask, "What's gotten into him?"

The same thing is true of every one of us as well. You aren't ready to die until you recognize and acknowledge who Jesus is. In fact, you aren't ready to live until that happens. Have you recognized Jesus? He's here.

There is an amazing true story that comes out of World War II. Perhaps you've heard it:

The Army lieutenant stood up from his bench, straightened his uniform, and studied the crowd of people going through Grand Central Station. He looked for a girl he loved but whom had never seen her face. Many months before he found her address in a library book, wrote her to conquer his loneliness, and she, surprisingly, replied. The lieutenant went off to serve his country in World War II and for thirteen months they corresponded while he was overseas. As they wrote back and forth, they began to fall in love with one another. He wrote and asked her for a photograph, and she wrote back, "No. If you love me, you won't care what I look like". So they continued corresponding, and their love grew.

When the lieutenant was to return stateside, he asked that she meet him in the Grand Central Station in New York. She agreed, and said he would recognize her by the rose she wore. So the lieutenant looked – and saw the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in a green suit. As he started toward her, he stopped, for behind her he saw a woman wearing a red, red rose.

The woman with the rose was well past 50 years old, plump, with thick ankles shoved into low-heeled shoes. Her gray hair was tucked under a floppy, worn hat. The woman in the green suit walked away and the young man nearly followed her. Here he was confronted with a choice, the young woman, or the old spinster. Yet as he thought about it, the letters they had written to each other jumped out in his mind. He squared his shoulders, walked up to the older woman, and said, "I'm lieutenant John Blanchard. You must be Miss Maynell. I'm so glad to meet you, could I take you to dinner?"

The woman's face lit up, and she said, "I don't know what this is about, son but the young lady in the green suit who just walked past asked me to wear this rose. I was supposed to tell you if you came up, that she is waiting for you in the restaurant across the street. She said this was a kind of test!"

What's the point? Simeon got to see Jesus with his eyes. He got to hold Jesus in his arms. We don't have that advantage but we should have the same joy. Listen to I Peter 1:8, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."

OUTLINE

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2. Right start: They presented Him to God

II. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPHETS

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2. God's light is shining for everyone – not just the Jews

III. THE ANTICIPATION OF THE PAIN

On this day, Mary learned that Jesus would:

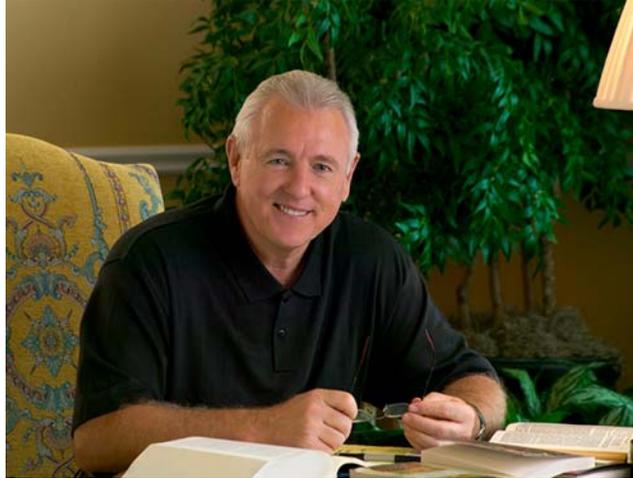
1. Have a dividing effect on people

"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." *Matthew 12:30*

For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? *2 Corinthians 2:15-16*

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3. Excavate the hearts of people
4. Suffer terribly

PERSONAL LIFE LESSON: YOU CAN DIE IN PEACE WHEN YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS YOUR ONLY SOURCE OF SALVATION



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes