



# Near and Now

*When My Calling Brings Joy - Simeon and Anna*

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## **Warm-up Question**

*What is the most important thing you have waited for?*



Picture by Ümit Bulut on [Unsplash](#)

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## She Began to Praise God and to Speak About the Child

Read [Luke 2:22-38](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

It is quite shocking how often someone in the Bible breaks out in song; compared to how often it happens in everyday life, there is a clear winner in celebration styles. Within this passage we see the prophet Simeon burst into song praising God for witnessing Jesus prior to his death. God had promised Simeon that he would see the Messiah, the promised deliverer, and this passage is a good example of God's faithfulness to us.

We also see the prophet Anna called to worship God for the joy that she had in seeing baby Jesus. For both prophets there is an overarching theme of hopeful anticipation. They both found joy in the waiting and took comfort in God's faithfulness to them. They were both elated to be witnesses to God keeping his promise and to see for themselves the newly born Messiah.

There is a Greek word "parakletos" which translates to "one who comes alongside" or "advocate." The parakletos is both a comforter and one who intervenes on someone's behalf. Simeon was waiting for the "consolation of Israel;" he was waiting for victory to be brought to the Israelites. Jesus in this passage is proclaimed and admired as the salvation that was promised. He, as sung about in verse 32, will be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:32). Jesus will bring us salvation by being our perfect advocate here on earth so we can have the gift of eternal life.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you resonate with this passage?
2. In what ways do you have dissonance with this passage? What challenges you about this passage?
3. Where in your life have you experienced *parakletos* from God?
4. In what ways do you relate to Simeon or Anna in this passage?
5. Simeon prophesied Jesus would be a "sign that is opposed." What were ways that Jesus experienced opposition in his life and what ways do people oppose him even now?
6. How will Mary experience both joy and suffering as the mother of the Messiah?
7. How are thoughts from the hearts of men revealed then and now?
8. What can we learn about being the presence of God to others through this passage? How can we apply this passage practically?
9. Simeon and Anna had waited a long time in anticipation of the Messiah, and now the Church waits for the return of the Messiah. What do Simeon and Anna do in their waiting and how can you apply their example to your own life? What does waiting patiently for Jesus look like in day to day living?
10. How can I tell the difference between being led by the Holy Spirit and being led by my own desires?

## Activity Suggestions

Create a worship space. Sing songs similar to the one Simeon sang, filled with joy and praise.

This mindfulness practice can be used to help strengthen patience before challenging situations arise or when we're amid an emotional hijack. It's easy to remember:

S: Stop what we're doing or saying to take a deliberate pause.

T: Take several mindful breaths. Narrowing the focus of attention to what the breath feels like as it moves in and out of the body.

O: Offer in prayer what might be testing your patience to God.

P: Proceed. Having taken the opportunity to check-in, choose what is the wisest way to proceed. What next step is best to take, or not to take with the longer term in mind. If the body is still highly activated, maybe choosing to do the STOP practice again.

Find space to be creative. Paint, draw, color or build something that will take time. In the process of slowing down pray that God will give you patience in the waiting.

## Prayer Concerns

Those who are waiting for good news, those who have lost faith in God's plan for them, those who are experiencing infertility problems.

## Closing Prayer

Turn my joy into witness, O God, through who I am, what I say, and what I do. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

