

Riverview Baptist Church  
Sunday School Teaching Plan  
For December 14, 2014  
“How Long Can I Hold On”

**Memory Verse:**

“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people.” Luke 2:30-31 NIV

**The Big Idea:**

Essence of the sermon in a sentence: The source of our hope determines our persistence.

**Sunday School Scripture:**

Luke 2:25-35 “How Long Can I Hold On? Learning to Accept Hope filled Consolation in Tough Times”

*Have you tested God in tithing? What has been hard? What have been the successes?*

**Presentation:**

The lesson today is called, “*How Long Can I Hold On? Learning to Accept Hope filled Consolation in Tough Times*”. We will explore the beginning of the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke by focusing on what the Holy Spirit did in the life of a righteous and devout man named Simeon. As we study, we want to ask God to teach us to have hope in His Word and to receive His comfort no matter what we face as we follow Jesus.

Turn in Your Bible to the Scripture passage, Luke 2:25-35. The memory verse for the week is Luke 2:30-31. Read the verse and then use that verse in family devotions during the next week as a family memory verse.

*How easy is it for you to wait? What is your attitude like when someone delays doing something for you that they promised to do?*

Describe a time when you had to wait on God to do something in your life that you felt He was sure to do based upon His promises to you. (Salvation of a child, provision of a financial need, wisdom in a decision)

Have you ever thought about how the people of Israel felt about the promises of God in the Old Testament before Jesus was born? What was God doing? Why was He waiting to send a Messiah? Do you think they gave up hope? Would you?

**Explanation:**

1. Old Testament Promises

**Read** the following verses and identify anything in the verses that seem to be prophecy fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

Isaiah 7:14 - *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:1-2; 6 - *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 11:1 - *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.*

Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. "

Psalm 2:7 - I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Chart the prophecy fulfillment as you identify them.

What confidence do we gain when we see that God has kept His Word to us as in the past. How does that help us to maintain hope now?

2. A promise fulfilled to Simeon. Verses 25-32

**Read** Luke 2:25-32. Look prayerfully for spiritual clues in the Scripture that teach us about examples of hope, or obstacles to hope.

Define what it means to be righteous and devout: Use the word studies at the end of the lesson if needed.

Consider the ways in which Simeon's devout righteous life prepared him to hear the Holy Spirit and to be consoled in His faith. What ways can we be devout and righteous to the Lord Jesus?

Highlight the connection between Simeon's obedience to the Holy Spirit and His ability to be present when Jesus was presented at the Temple. How many divine appointments have we missed? Think about divine appointment made through obedience to the Holy Spirit.

3. A Promise and Warning for Simeon: Luke 2:33-35

**Read** verses 33-35. Look for spiritual clues in the Scripture that teach us about examples of faith, or obstacles to faith.

How might Mary and Joseph felt about these words of Simeon?

- How can Jesus be such a blessing to so many and then be hated by so many?
- In what ways is Jesus being spoken against today in your world?
- In what ways do you see him causing the rising of many?
- Does it hurt you to know how people treat Jesus?
- Does it help you remain hopeful that God told us that it would be this way?
- Are there other prophecies about future events that help us have hope in spite of those who oppose Jesus?

**Integration:**

1. We can be consoled in our faith because God has kept His promises in the Bible. Studying fulfilled Old Testament birth prophecy helps us remember God is faithful.
  - ✓ Key Question: What habit of study are you willing to commit to in order to better know God's promises in the Bible?
2. Waiting and opposition have always been encountered by those who live righteous and devout lives.
  - ✓ Key Question: Have you become impatient and softened in your resolve to live expectantly and pure before the Lord? Is your life devout and righteous today?
3. Obedience is required in order to be in the places where hope is found. When God speaks and you obey, the result is personal consolation and hope grows stronger.
  - ✓ Key Question: What do you need to do for God that would put you in a better position to hear from Him and find hope?
4. Bad news is not the only news! God salvation has been prepared for all people.

- ✓ Key Question: Are you sharing the good things God has done with other people? Will you take time to invite lost friends and family to Sunday School this week?

**Application:**

- Invite three people to Sunday School next week. Invite someone who you think will never come. God has prepared salvation for them to!
- Begin to study God's word to know His promises. Use the devotional material provided by the church this week with your family or by yourself.
- Genuinely ask God to show you how to be devout and righteous. If you know you are in sin, confess to him and repent from that sin. Get in a place to be filled with hope.

**Key Terms:**

**Hope: ἔλπις**

in the NT, "favorable and confident expectation" It has to do with the unseen and the future, Romans 8:24, 25. "Hope" describes

- a) the happy anticipation of good (the most frequent significance), e.g., Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:21;
- b) the ground upon which "hope" is based, Act 16:19; Colossians 1:27, "Christ in you the hope of glory;"
- c) the object upon which the "hope" is fixed, e.g., 1 Timothy 1:1.

**Consolation: παράκλησις**

- a) a calling near, summons, (esp. for help)
- b) importation, supplication, entreaty
- c) exhortation, admonition, encouragement
- d) consolation, comfort, solace; that which affords comfort or refreshment
  - a. thus of the Messianic salvation (so the Rabbis call the Messiah the consoler, comforter)
- e) persuasive discourse, stirring address
  - a. instructive, admonitory, conciliatory, powerful hortatory discourse

**Righteous: δίκαιος**

righteous, observing divine laws:

- a) in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God:
- b) in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them

**Devout: εύλαβής:**

taking hold well,

- a) carefully and surely
- b) cautiously

reverencing God, pious, religious

**Bible Study Notes:** From David Guzik as found on Blue Letter Bible November 2012

1. **A promise fulfilled to Simeon.** Verses 25-32

*"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."*

- a. **Waiting for the Consolation of Israel:** Simeon may have known that there were rumors of something happening regarding the coming of the Messiah. The news of John the Baptist's birth and its meaning was widely publicized (Luke 1:65), and the shepherds who heard the angelic announcement may have kept temple flocks, and they may have reported what happened among the people of the temple.
- b. **So he came by the Spirit into the temple:** It was not rumors, but the **Spirit** who led him into the temple on that day. Simeon was a man who knew how to be led by the Holy Spirit, both in hearing God's promise to him and being prompted to go to the temple at the right time. Thus was the Spirit, after a dreary absence of nearly four hundred years, returning to the Church, to quicken expectation, and prepare for coming events. He was led to the temple at the exact moment when Mary was bringing Jesus to be circumcised.
- c. **He took Him up in his arms:** With unhesitating certainty, he takes the baby in his arms. Simeon's prophecy is filled with love for his Savior; and he hardly knows Jesus! We who know so much more about Him should love Him even more.
- d. **According to Your word:** Simeon now had the peace of seeing God's promise fulfilled in his life.
- e. **You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation:** It's as if Simeon was commanded by God to keep a lonely watch through the night until he saw the sun come up; here is God's sunrise, and because Jesus has come, Simeon can be relieved of his watch. Many saw this child, nay, the full-grown "man, Christ Jesus," who never saw in Him "God's Salvation." This estimate of an object of sight, an unconscious, helpless babe, was pure faith. He "beheld His glory" (John 1:14). In another view it was prior faith rewarded by present sight.
- f. **A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles:** The amazing thing about Simeon's prophecy is that it shows that this **light** is for the Gentiles also. The salvation of Jesus began with Israel, but was always to be extended beyond Israel.

## 2. A promise and a warning from Simeon. Verses 33-35

*"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."*

- a. **Joseph and His mother marveled:** We can imagine their combination of joy and surprise to see how God has touched the hearts of *others* with an understanding of their Son is. No matter how well you know Jesus, there is something special about seeing someone else come to know Him.
- b. **For the fall and rising of many:** This is shown in the way that Peter repents, but Judas despairs; in that one thief blasphemes, the other believes. Jesus is like a magnet that is attractive to some, but others are repelled from Him.
- c. **And a sign which will be spoken against:** **Sign** is literally "a target that people shoot at." Jesus would surely be the target of much evil.
- d. **A sword will pierce through your own soul also:** It was important for Mary to know that mothering the Messiah would not be all sweetness and light. It was both a great privilege and a great burden.
- e. Possibly no other human agonized as much over Jesus' rejection and suffering as His mother did. This was not only because of the natural love of a mother, but also because His rejection was her rejection. Wonderfully, His vindication was hers also.

### Old Testament Prophecies of Jesus' Birth Fulfilled

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:1-2; 6 - *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the*

*government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 11:1 - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.*

*Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. "*

*Psalm 2:7 - I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son ; today I have become your Father.*

**Points of Reflection from the Scripture:**

- ❖ Waiting demands hope: Faith and hope are similar and are connected. Hope is required when our faith is tried over time and difficult circumstances.
- ❖ Just as faith and hope are connected, there is a real connection between the devout and upright life of faith and our ability to persevere with hope. The life that is right with God is ready to believe in the good and bad times of life. When we are out of fellowship with God, even small difficulties appear tragic and bring on feelings of hopelessness.
- ❖ Consolation comes from God to those who look for it with hope. There is an amazing truth of scripture that those who look with hope will find consolation. Those who are blinded by despair and live in sin, miss the consolations and do not grow in hope. Repentance and spiritual discipline are necessary to receive and recover hope. God doesn't force hope on anyone. But those who seek it will find it.
- ❖ The word of God, His promises through the Holy Spirit and those written in the sure Word of Scripture are to be believed. Therefore God's word provides consolation and is a basis for our hope. God fulfilled His own written promises in sending Jesus. He had also spoken personally to Simeon in His Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Hope is possible and necessary because the life of following Jesus will not be easy. However, it will be a blessing and it will be profitable to all who follow. Some will forever oppose Jesus and attack those who follow him. We can have hope in spite of these opponents of Christ.

**Additional Study:**

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)