



December Cell Talk: Week 4

Theme: Waiting (Luke 2:22-40)

Kit List: Bibles, candle, matches, words to "Joy to the World"

Welcome

What is one thing you have had to wait a long time for in your life?
(Reminder: See if you can find a news article about your neighbourhood to bring in and discuss, as a way of "reading the world" alongside reading the Word).

Worship

Where have you seen God and community this week?
Light seven candles this week for our seventh week of Advent, the time we celebrate Jesus' coming. As you light the candles, have someone read *Isaiah 9:1-7* twice through. Add your prayers of thanks, joy and expectation to this Scripture.
Sing "Joy to the World" together.
(If you are in Vancouver, please join us on Thursday at 6:30pm for a special candlelight service in celebration of Christ's incarnation)

Word

Read Luke 2:22-40 together.
What does this story have to do with our celebration of Christmas?
Why do you think this story is in Luke's gospel? What point is it making?
What do Simeon and Anna have in common?
Why did they wait so long? Are you willing to "wait on God" like that?
Simeon's life mission seemed to be to wait for the Messiah to arrive. What is your mission?
What, according to Simeon and Anna, did the coming of Jesus mean?
What do Simeon's words to Mary mean? How would these words make you feel if they were spoken over your child?
How did these prophetic words come true in Jesus' life?
Why is every first-born Jewish male considered holy unto the Lord, and why do they require a sacrifice to be made at the Temple on their behalf?
Why is it important that Jesus and his family fulfilled the Law of the Lord in this way?

Witness

Go out to street corners and declare that the Saviour of the world has come, and will come again in glory. The best way to do this at this time of year is through Christmas carols. One way to do this is by signing up for a Kettles shift as a cell group this week. For those in Vancouver, **we are now into the last week before Christmas, so it is vital to fill all the Kettles shifts. Please call Nicole before (or during) your cell and find out what shifts are available!**

Also, be in prayer daily for a friend who does not yet know Christ the Saviour of the

world. Now is a great time of the year to talk about the Saviour with friends who don't know Jesus.

Are you up to date on your tithing for the year? Now at the end of the year is a good time to ensure that you have been supporting your local ministry with your finances as well as your time and prayers. Also, check out www.justsalvos.com for some just Christmas gifts this year.

Have you been impatient with God for anything? God will accomplish His will in His own timing. Ask God this week for the ability to be patient and worshipful as you wait on Him. Ask also for patience for others in your life.

There were three ceremonies to fulfill the Law after a first-born male was born: circumcision, the Redemption of the Firstborn, and the purification of the mother (40 days plus a sacrifice). The Redemption of the Firstborn is based on Exodus 13:2, 11-16, and is meant to represent giving the first born males back to Yahweh, who "passed over: the first born males of Israel during the tenth and final plague on Egypt during the Exodus. First born Jewish males were "redeemed" by the offering of a sacrifice (in their place). Mary and Joseph give the sacrifice of a poor family (Lev 12:6-8). So Jesus is born into a poor family, but one that is God-fearing and that honours the Law of the Lord. This story does serve to put us in mind of the Exodus and Passover very early in Jesus' life, and this is a significant theme throughout his life, particularly in terms of the death of the first born son. Christmas and Easter are forever linked together.

This story also highlights that Israel was waiting for its Messiah, and that there were some with eyes to see him when he came. Simeon and Anna both recognise the importance of this child, and proclaim that everything they had been waiting for had come. They were both aged, and had waited for a long time for this moment to come. They had waited faithfully, fulfilling the tasks set before them by God, and their devotion to God is expressed by their attachment to the Temple. Simeon declares that Jesus represented salvation, light even for the Gentiles and glory for Israel. Anna likewise proclaims the redemption of Israel. Simeon also prophesies to Mary, saying that Jesus will be opposed and rejected, that she will suffer greatly because of this, and that he will cause the rise and fall of many. This is not the most comforting of prophecies. In Jesus' life we do see the rising of many unlikely people, and the falling of other would-be leaders.