

# PENINSULA CHRISTIAN F E L L O W S H I P

## ***Hoping for The Promise of Christmas***

Think back on all of your past Christmas celebrations...

- From childhood up to this year
- **When did you start looking forward to it?**
- After Halloween or Thanksgiving?

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Has there been a time when you hoped for a **specific gift?**

- A popular toy, an article of clothing, or something else greatly desired
- Maybe **something promised** by your parents or spouse

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Who was **waiting & hoping for Christ** before He came?

- Most who believed the promise held it in a very general sense
- Not expecting that it was **on the very horizon**
- **Who of those expecting Him had been waiting the longest?**

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We could be tempted to think of **Mary**

- **Waiting at least nine months**
- Because of **her certainty** and her role

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I think **Simeon** may have been waiting the longest **of those expecting Him**

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**Luke 2:25-26**, And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, **waiting for the Consolation of Israel**, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And **it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before **he had seen the Lord's Christ**.

- How long? We don't know

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**Vs. 27-29**, So he came **by the Spirit** into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, **he took Him up in his arms** and blessed God and said: **"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word;** for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

.....  
**"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word"**

- God may have prolonged his life into old age...
- **Expecting & waiting for God's promise**
- Like Joseph in **Psalms 105:19**

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**Mary was waiting in absolute certainty!**

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**Luke 1:26-28**, Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, **of the house of David**. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, **"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"**

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**Vs. 29-33**, But when she saw him, **she was troubled at his saying**, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, **"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;** and the Lord

God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

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**Vs. 34**, Then Mary said to the angel, “**How can this be**, since I do not know a man?”

- She’s **asking for understanding**, not doubting.

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**Vs. 35-37**, And the angel answered and said to her, “**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you**; therefore, also, **that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God**. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. **For with God nothing will be impossible.**”

- **Nothing God initiates** is impossible!

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**Vs. 38**, Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! **Let it be to me according to your word.**” And the angel departed from her.

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**Elizabeth** was the next to **believe & hope in faith**

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**Luke 1:39-45**, Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and **Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!** But why is this granted to me, that **the mother of my Lord** should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. **Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.**”

I think it’s safe to believe that **Elizabeth told Zacharias**

- Given their experience, I think **he believed too**.

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Contrary to his own convictions, **Joseph joins the early believers**

- **Faith in God’s promises** displaces unbelief

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**Matthew 1:18-19**, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: **After His mother Mary** was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she **was found with child** of the Holy Spirit. Then **Joseph her husband**, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, **was minded to put her away secretly**.

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**Vs. 20-23**, But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, **do not be afraid** to take to you Mary your wife, for **that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit**. And she will bring forth a Son, and **you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**” So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

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**God can promise things** that are **fearful** to us

- Things **only He** can do

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**Vs. 24-25**, Then **Joseph**, being aroused from sleep, **did as the angel of the Lord commanded him** and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. **And he called His name Jesus**.

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All of these people **believed God’s promise** and ordered their lives accordingly

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**Do we hope in faith** for His coming **among His people** before His return?

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**Ephesians 4:13-16**, *Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

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Simeon, Mary, Elizabeth, Zacharias & Joseph...

- All **believed & yielded to God's promise** of Christ
- They lived in faith **before** He came (**some of them together**)
- **Will we?**

.....

*Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... grow up in all things into Him... joined and knit together by what every joint supplies... causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:13-16)*

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What are you actively **looking forward to from God** in the faith of Hope?

- Are you **asking Him** for it? (**Matthew 7:7-8**)
- **That's a promise from Jesus!**
- Without that, life can seem **dull & uninspiring**

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*Let's believe God together, **and live like it!***