

# Come And Adore

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Date: 21 December 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] This morning we've been listening, hearing, responding, singing together of what Advent calls us to.

The lines, come all you faithful, come behold him. Him who has been born the king of angels, come and adore. That is both the invitation and also our proper response in this Advent season.

In the Advent season, it calls us to practice both anticipation and admiration. And by anticipation, we know that Jesus is here and he is present and he is among us.

And so we anticipate that. We anticipate enjoying his presence and knowing him and being impacted by him, experiencing him, spending time with him.

But also there's an anticipation of a future return that he is coming again. And there's also this adoration that we stop and think and respond to who he is.

[ 1 : 00 ] We respond to what he has done. We respond to what he is doing and how he is among us today. And I would argue this, anticipation done right, builds toward adoration.

108 years. That was the time between the first time the Chicago Cubs won the World Series title and the next time that they won it. The drought ended in 2016, not too many years ago.

And the faithful super fans of Chicago, the Chicago Cubs, those who showed up year in and year out, enduring good seasons and not so great seasons.

They experienced that 2016 moment, the end of that drought, very differently to those who kind of haphazardly just jumped on the bandwagon because they were doing so well.

So the difference in the celebration, the difference in the adoration, the adoration, those super fans' experiences connected to the anticipation, the faithful waiting that they endured.

[ 2 : 00 ] And God's redemptive story leading up to that first incarnation, the first advent, the first arrival of Jesus involved a much longer drought than 108 years.

Israel's national decline after King David over the centuries ended in exile and then ultimately in silence from God. But not before God had foretold that a Messiah king would come to save and restore his people.

And the last time the prophets had spoken, it was 400 years before he opened heaven again and began to speak to his people and broke the silence. And yet there were the faithful until that time who showed up year after year looking for that drought to end.

They were looking and they were praying as they waited with anticipation of this Messiah king. And then God broke the silence, the drought ended. God came and he gave some of the faithful, those who had been waiting and enduring and patiently hoping.

He gave them the inside scoop about Jesus' birth. One of my favorite stories around Jesus' birth is a man named Simeon. And he, I think for us, is a faithful example, a great example of anticipation that fuels adoration.

[ 3 : 23 ] We'll be in Luke chapter 2, verse 22, and it says this. And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.

Now, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was righteous 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. And he came in 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.

[ 4 : 26 ] Lord, for my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.

This is God's word. Simeon, what do we know about him? Very little. He has this little cameo moment. But we know a few things.

It says he was righteous and devout, which means that he was careful to obey God's laws. He was a man who kept sacrifice and feasts and all of those things.

And yet he was more than just a righteous and devout man. He said he was a man who also longed for the consolation of Israel. He was looking and longing for God's salvation.

And to Simeon, it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he wouldn't die before he saw the Lord's Christ. That word Christ means the long-awaited Messiah.

[ 5 : 24 ] Now, we don't know the how or when of this Holy Spirit revelation. We don't get insight into that. We don't know how it worked with Simeon. But we do know that it happened. We do know that Simeon believed it.

And he was eagerly anticipating this moment of beholding this promised child. Have you ever, did you ever experience this in school as a young student?

Did you, this classroom clock, just staring at it, waiting for it to hit a certain moment where the bell would go off and it would be recess time? It seemed like time slowed down the closer you got to it, you know?

And I suppose that's a bit of what Simeon was going through. Now, for you and me, we don't experience that anxious longing in the patient waiting as much anymore.

If I'm bored, I got all kinds of digital distractions or food, right, to eat. It helps me waste time. And that is one of my New Year's resolutions coming up for this year.

[ 6 : 26 ] I want to stop wasting time on those kind of things. I want to start wasting more time with God. I want to spend more time attentive thinking about him. And so we read this passage about Simeon, and we find it a little bit hard to relate to.

We can't fully connect to Simeon's joy at seeing Jesus. I mean, when was the last time you grabbed a person and praised God for them? Ad hoc, right? Haven't seen it much on Sundays.

See, we want the thrill of the feels of those kind of moments. We read the Simeon story, and we're like, oh, that's what I want. We say we want God to do amazing things, to break in and bring healing and make us marvel at displays of power.

We say we want our hearts to be moved deeply with wonder and worship in his presence. But to be honest, we live in a way where if that level of marvel and wonder came, we'd kind of nod along in our heads and shrug our shoulders and probably say, oh, that was pretty cool.

We want to experience God's transcendence and goodness. We want those types of experiences, but often we aren't moved to levels of deep adoration. Can you remember the last time God drove you to your knees in his presence or moved you to tears or filled your heart with joy because you experienced and tasted the level of his goodness or his mercy or his forgiveness towards you?

[ 7 : 52 ] And why is that? I want to argue that we just aren't good at waiting anymore on those things because we don't have to be. We're well entertained with many distractions.

But here's the thing, adoration, if that is what we were made for, that is our soul, what it longs to do, it is calling us to push back on that because attentiveness fuels anticipation that builds toward adoration.

Attentiveness is the opposite of distraction. Scripture tells us that Simeon was a devout man, and that word devout in the Greek means to take hold aggressively of. And it always was typically used in the Bible for religious connotations there.

And if that's the case, then he would have been a man that was well-versed in Scripture. He would have been a man that practiced the prayers. He would have known the prophecies of the Messiah who was coming to save Israel.

Simeon was attentive to the consolation of Israel that was promised in Scripture. It would have been foremost in his mind, even before the Holy Spirit revealed it to him with the good news that, hey, you're going to see this happen with your own eyes before you pass on into everlasting life.

[ 9 : 07 ] And Simeon lived his life like the kid watching the school clock with eager anticipation for recess to come. And in one sense, we could say that God chose to let him in on the big secret, right?

We could say, man, that was by God's grace. I'm sure there was other faithful, devout men. So that is absolutely true. But in another sense, we could also say Simeon was not passive in waiting before that, right?

So you have God's grace, his sovereign choice, and then you have man's responsibility. Both of those things at play. It's not an either or, it's a both and type of thing.

And he spent his time devoted to searching and to looking and to preparing and hoping in these things. And Simeon chose the ardent path of hopeful waiting instead of the comfortable path of frivolous distraction.

Does that mean our hopeful waiting is what makes God's hand move? Again, one could argue from the position of God's sovereignty that he moves when he wants to and as he pleases and in the measure that he does.

[ 10 : 13 ] And I would say yes and amen to that. And that is absolutely true from what we see in Scripture. It isn't our religious attentiveness that forces his hand. But also, that doesn't go far enough.

Throughout the Bible, there are incredible moments where God does marvelous things. Let's take Pentecost as an example. The Holy Spirit shows up in the sound of rushing wind in a closed room, right?

You typically don't have rushing wind in a closed room. And then, in addition to that, tongues of fire appear over Jesus' disciples. And they begin to proclaim the excellencies of God in foreign languages that they did not know how to speak.

But they were enabled by the Holy Spirit to do that. But Jesus, now before that happened, Jesus had told them he was going to send the Holy Spirit. He didn't say in what way and what manner and how it was going to happen.

He said, you got to wait. I'm sending the Spirit before you just go out and do that great commission I sent you on. That's what's got to happen. Wait, Spirit's coming, and then you go.

[11:12] Now, if you're one of the disciples, you know all this, what do you do? You know God's going to do something. Something may be incredible in the future. Why just not go about your business? He's sovereign. He's going to do what he wants to do when he wants to do it.

The disciples didn't do that. What do we find them doing leading up to that point? Waited. They were waiting with attentiveness. They were found in prayer together regularly.

Looking, waiting, expecting, preparing with faith that God's next great act would arrive soon. Did God sovereignly determine the Holy Spirit's arrival at Pentecost?

Absolutely. Did the disciples prepare themselves for Pentecost by regularly gathering in prayer? Yes, they did. See, the danger isn't that our lack of attentiveness won't usher in God moments or God movements.

The danger is that when it happens, we may be so spiritually dulled and asleep to how marvelous it is. We may not realize what we missed out on.

[12:18] During every revival or great move of God, there were those attentive to God and what he was doing. Because of their lifestyle of anticipation, they got to be involved.

They were included. They were in the front lines of those things. But also, in those revivals, there were the cynics and the distracted who stood on the sidelines and missed out. Simeon, he got to be involved in a very small way.

This little cameo moment. I mean, it was done and gone. Like, think about that. His whole life. We don't know how old he was. He was an old man.

And he got to pick up Jesus for one small moment. That was it. He got to be involved in a small way of what God was doing.

And that was his reward. Getting to behold the baby Jesus. But as he held this child, he held knowing he was looking at this small grace.

[13:20] Knowing that actually in this, the best was yet to come. And so he says, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace.

According to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples. A light for revelation to the Gentiles.

And for glory to your people, Israel. For Simeon, that small moment of seeing Jesus made his life of waiting worth the living.

Our anticipation turns to adoration in Jesus' presence. Simeon spent his life hoping in one thing. Searching for one thing.

Desiring one thing. It's like what Elliot read. This one thing I desire, Lord. This one thing do I seek after. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord.

[14:16] Beholding the beauty of your presence. His whole life. Imagine living your whole life in that one moment.

And then he says, that was it. I am satisfied. He got to behold the one thing that he desired most of all. Simeon was blessed to live at a time when he got to behold Israel's consolation.

I'm sure there were many faithful men and women just like him that preceded him who didn't get that. But you know what, friends? You and me today, we are privileged. Jesus is among us.

Not in person, but by the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that revealed Jesus to Simeon before Simeon ever saw the baby. The same Holy Spirit that led Simeon into the temple to meet the Messiah King.

Probably was 40 days old. Jesus was probably 40 days old at the time. The Holy Spirit who moved upon Simeon's heart to just expel adoration after adoration, being in the presence of his long-awaited Savior.

[15:24] And the Holy Spirit, he still moves today. He still brings us to Jesus. And he calls us to come and adore him.

Are we waiting, looking, and seeking for Jesus' presence? The invitation and our response is come and adore him.

As the band comes up and we look to respond. In a moment, we're gonna take communion. But I'm gonna say to you, if you're here, you're not yet a follower of Jesus.

Before we come to the communion table, you need to come to Jesus. That is your first step. That is your first response. There is no other way to salvation except through faith in Jesus Christ and belief on him as Lord and Savior.

That he came and he lived a life you couldn't live and die to death to pay for the penalty of your sin, to release you from the power of sin, to call you to himself, to unite him to yourself, you to himself.

[16:27] There's gonna be a prayer on the screen for you to pray if that is you. For the rest of us here that are already followers of Jesus, we're gonna take communion together today.

I know we rarely do that, but it seems like a good fitting end to this year. And so I'm gonna release you to go and to the communion table nearest you, grab the bread and the cup and take it back to your seat.

And remain standing when you get back to your seat. And then I'll lead us in taking communion together, okay? Amen.