

When All Seems Dark and Silent

(December 21, 2025, Glen G. Scorgie)

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7 and Luke 2:25-32

SERMON SUMMARY

The prophet Isaiah predicted that a coming Messiah, and that his arrival would be like a great light shining forth in a region long dominated by gloom and deep darkness. Indeed, there had been centuries (the so-called intertestamental period) leading up to that moment when God's voice had seemed altogether silent and God's presence entirely absent. This was a deep darkness, and for many who experienced it, faith died altogether.

But old Simeon, about whom we read in the Gospel of Luke, has been an inspirational example to generations of Christian believers because in the midst of that long, dark and silent time “he was [still] waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). *He waited.* He never gave up on God and God's promises. Such waiting was finally rewarded on the grand stage of human history with the arrival of Christ. It is also rewarded amid those long times of dark silence in our own lives when, though our prayers may remain unanswered and may seem to have been unheard, we wait upon the Lord and we wait for him to act. The great saints of the past knew about the dark nights of the soul. To wait out those times is one of the greatest spiritual disciplines of all, and one that is rewarded.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. What was your main personal takeaway from the message this week?
2. Have you had “dry” times in your own spiritual life, when the term “dark night of the soul” seemed like an appropriate description of your experience? Can you share a bit about that?
3. In what way, or ways, is Simeon an inspiring example to you amid the realities of your own current life journey?
4. During times of waiting, we may need to cling to some *promise* of God. In other times, however, there is no such specific promise. What we hold on to is what we know of God's faithful and loving *character*, and that becomes the basis for our hope. What questions haunt us during long waiting times?
5. Try to imagine everyday life experience and the course of world history if the Son of God had *not* arrived on earth at that first Christmastime in Bethlehem. What would be different about human existence on earth?
6. For what reasons does the metaphor of a light shining in a land of deep darkness seem fitting and appropriate for the coming of Jesus Christ? Share the significance for you of this image of *light*.

7. Share any response you may have had to Sue Monk Kidd's advice that while waiting can be difficult, we have to be patient. "We have to let go and wait. We must stop holding our breath . . . and just breathe . . . for as long as it takes."