

Summary

Pastor Addison shares his personal journey of raising a child with autism to explore the nature of biblical hope. Through the story of Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:22-38, he examines how these elderly believers maintained steadfast hope while waiting for the Messiah. The sermon challenges the congregation to examine where they place their hope, arguing that only Jesus is worthy of containing our deepest hopes for consolation (healing from past hurts) and redemption (deliverance from present and future struggles). The pastor emphasizes that true hope comes from embracing God on His terms, not our own, even when His answers don't match our expectations.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be receptive to Your Holy Spirit's leading and to set aside our own preconceptions about how You should work in our lives. Give us the courage to examine where we've been placing our hope and the wisdom to understand Your perfect ways. Prepare our hearts to receive Your truth with humility and faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one thing you were really hoping for as a child during Christmas that you either received or didn't receive? How did that experience shape your understanding of hope and expectations?

Key Verses

1. Luke 2:22-38
2. Proverbs 13:12
3. John 6:68-69
4. Leviticus 12:6-8

Questions

1. How do you relate to Pastor Addison's description of having a 'complicated relationship with hope'? What experiences in your life have made it difficult to remain hopeful?
2. Proverbs 13:12 says 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick.' How have you seen this play out in your own life or in the lives of others around you?
3. What strikes you most about Simeon and Anna's ability to maintain hope despite their advanced age and life circumstances?
4. Pastor Addison mentioned that Simeon and Anna were looking for 'consolation' (healing from past hurts) and 'redemption' (deliverance from present and future struggles). Which of these resonates more with your current season of life?

5. How do you think Simeon and Anna felt when they saw two poor teenagers with a baby instead of what they might have expected the Messiah's arrival to look like?
6. What are some 'vessels' (things, circumstances, people) that you've placed your hope in that weren't designed to carry that weight?
7. How does the concept of embracing 'God on God's terms, not our own' challenge your current approach to prayer and expectations?
8. In what ways have you experienced God showing up differently than you expected, and how did that change your understanding of who He is?

Life Application

This week, identify one area where you've been placing your hope in something other than Jesus. Spend time in prayer each day asking God to help you transfer that hope to Him, and practice saying 'Your way, not mine' when you feel anxious about that situation. Keep a journal of how God shows His faithfulness in small ways throughout the week.

Key Takeaways

1. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but God wants us to be hopeful people who place our trust in Him
2. Simeon and Anna maintained hope because they focused on the right source - they knew where to look for their consolation and redemption
3. True hope requires embracing God on His terms, not our own expectations of how He should work
4. Only Jesus is worthy of containing our deepest hopes - other vessels will always disappoint us
5. God often shows up differently than we expect, but His ways are perfect even when they don't match our plans

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the only source of hope that will never disappoint us. Help us to release our grip on the things we've been hoping in that were never designed to carry that weight. Give us the faith of Simeon and Anna to keep looking to You, even when Your answers don't look like what we expected. Teach us to embrace You on Your terms, trusting that Your ways are higher than our ways. As we face the uncertainties of life, remind us that You are our consolation for the past and our redemption for the future. Help us to be people of steadfast hope who point others to You. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.