

Bellefield
Presbyterian Church

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Our vision is to spread a sacred passion for the supremacy of God's glory in all things for the joy of all generations in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Merry
Christmas

Dear Bellefield Friends & Members,
Jesus wants our hearts for God's glory. He wants every beat of our hearts. That's why He came to earth as a baby, grew up to be a man, preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, went to the Cross, died & rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, & sent us the Holy Spirit—just so He could have every part, all 100% of our hearts, for God's glory. The beauty of Christmas is that as we give Jesus our hearts in faith, He's filling our hearts with His hope—and don't we all do so much better in all life's waiting when we have His hope? Merry Christmas! *Pastor Gedff*

#4: Hearts Filled with the Hope of Jesus

Luke 2:32-35

Jesus is our only hope today's for substantial healing in a hurting world. It's our hope in Him now, as well as our hope in His ultimate salvation, that enables us to wait well right now, to wait on the things we all want, for all the

marshmallows of our lives. But waiting is not a passive thing. Waiting on the Lord is the contin-



Trust God in cold times.

ual daily decision to say: *Lord, I'll trust You and obey You. Even though the circumstances of my life are not turning out the way I want and may never turn out how I want, Lord, I'm still betting everything on Your grace; & so I will live for Your glory, now, today.*



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- Sermon Moves at a Glance*
1. **Waiting is hard;**
 2. **But we wait well by holding to hope;**
 3. **Jesus one day will fulfill all our hopes;**
 4. **We need hearts filled with hope in Jesus Christ today.**

Today's Sermon Helps

Christmas Pageant Sunday December 20, 2009

Simeon Sez, "Wait...."

Luke 2:25-35

Ah, Simeon! What a good man and what a true story about the fine art of waiting with *hope*. If you've ever toasted marshmallows you know what waiting with hope is all about. It's a slow process, if you can make it. But how many times have you accidentally ignited the marshmallow trying to cook it

too quickly? It's really hard to wait, isn't it? Yet the gift of waiting with hope comes to us at Christmas time in the form of a baby in the manger: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of hope.



"Frosty, watch the fire!"

A Marshmallow Test for Toddlers

Back in the 70's, a team of psychologists from Stanford University did an experiment connected with a group of 4-year-olds. They

called it the "marshmallow test." It told them a lot about kids and some future potentials connected with the capacity to wait.

#1: Waiting—Not Easy But Important

Perhaps ever since we can remember, waiting for Christmas has been hard. And waiting to open presents has been even harder. We're suppose to be adults, but we still shake the presents to see what's inside. When we stop to think Biblically about our struggles to control our impulses, about our refusals to wait & trust, we can draw a straight line from our human demandingness right to the core of human sinfulness. And it's been that way since *Genesis* 3, when Adam and Eve couldn't wait, and instead, took that first bite of the forbidden "*marshmallow*" in the Garden of Eden.

So how good are you at

waiting? Also, what is it that you are you waiting for? We all wait and all will. For the Biblical pattern is that God uses waiting to grow Christians in their trusting to Him. In the Old Testament, 43 different times the people of God are told to "wait on the Lord." God has designed His marshmallow tests by His grace for each of us. This Advent, in this culture of immediacy, how's your waiting?



If we can just wait,
it will taste great!

"God has His
marshmallow tests
for all of us, too!"

#2: Waiting—Done Well by Hoping in Jesus

Luke 2:29

My guess is that most of us here are waiting on something, some personal marshmallow, we des-



We all want our
marshmallows...

perately want. So what does it take to wait well? That's what *Luke* 2 is all about. Simeon waits well, and he waits a *long* time. He shows us the way to do this well for God's glory.

#2: Waiting Well by Holding to Hope—(cont.)

Luke 2:26

Simeon had been told by God that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah. And Jesus is brought in, and Simeon holds the baby Jesus. What kept him waiting well all the years? I suggest it was his incredible hope that God would in His sovereign time and in His

sovereign way bring about the birth of the Messiah. Simply, he had the hope that Christmas was coming! Is God this sovereign with His consolation for all of us? Yes!



Christmas *IS*
coming!

#3: Jesus—One Day Will Fulfill Our Hopes

Luke 2:29-32

In Luke's gospel the word *salvation* here carries a holistic impact. *Holistic* simply means that when our salvation comes in Jesus in its entirety, every part of us that has been damaged, corrupted, or hurt by sin will someday be healed—our relationship with God, our relationships with each other, and our minds, our emotions, our bodies, which have been hurt and wounded by living in the pain and destruction of this fallen world. So: how do you wait well in hope? You look

to the certainty of Christ's tomorrow, as well as His yesterday. It is the certainty of Jesus perfect birth, life, death & reign that enables a Christian to endure all manner of delayed gratification while here on the earth. It is the truth of *Advent in 3 Tenses*: Jesus *came* to Bethlehem, He *comes* to our hearts, and He *will come* again with the best basket of marshmallows ever! We can trust God's grace in Christ for this certainty, & surely, it is enough.

Advent in
3 Tenses:
Past,
Present &
Future!