**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 5** Luke 2:21-52 Jesus–the Young Boy!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture, and how does it apply to your life?
2. Scan Wiersbe chapter 2 and read pages 35-42.
   1. Like all Jewish boys, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.   
      What important spiritual truth did circumcision proclaim?
   2. Explain the importance of Jesus’ relationship to the law.
3. Read Luke 2:21-24. Jesus Presented in the Temple!
   1. Read Genesis 17:9-14 and Leviticus 12. What were some of the Jewish regulations/traditions concerning children found in the Law of Moses?
   2. Joseph and Mary were both Jewish. What do you learn about them concerning   
      their religious traditions?

*Traditionalism* is the practice of adhering to tradition as authoritative. Traditionalism can further be defined as the belief that moral and religious truth comes from divine revelation that is passed down by tradition rather than attained by human reasoning. Traditionalism seeks to uphold these traditions and is resistant to change.

In one respect, religious and moral truth does come from divine revelation—the Bible is full of moral and religious truth. However, human tradition is fallible. Divine revelation is the ultimate authority, not the human tradition that has developed around it.

Often, debates over traditionalism crop up in comparisons between Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestantism adheres to *sola scriptura*; that is, Protestants hold to the authority of Scripture alone in matters of faith and practice. Catholicism, on the other hand, gives equal weight to church tradition. When we look at what the Bible actually says, including Jesus’ rebuke of the traditionalists of His day (see Luke 11:37– 52), it is clear that the Bible is to be our authority. This is not to say that tradition is without merit, but that tradition is only authoritative insofar as it is based on biblical truth.

Second Timothy 3:16–17 says Scripture is God-breathed. It also claims that Scripture “is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Nothing needs to be added to Scripture; we are thoroughly equipped for serving God through God’s Word.

Jesus Himself affirmed the importance of Scripture. When He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, He responded three times with “It is written” (Matthew 4:1–11). Jesus did not respond with “The patriarchs of old” or “According to tradition.” He told the Sadducees that they were in error regarding the resurrection because they didn’t “know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Jesus often called out the religious leaders for adhering to traditionalism over the true commands of God. When some Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus about His disciples’ breaking the tradition of the elders in a certain matter, Jesus asked them why they broke God’s law for the sake of their traditions (Matthew 15:1–20). Clearly, it is God’s Word, not tradition, that holds authority in our lives…

Humans are fallible, and thus, so is human tradition. That is the weakness of traditionalism. We must not keep tradition simply for the sake of tradition. Rather, we must carefully examine our traditions and measure them against God’s Word.

That being said, there can be much value in tradition. Some traditions are commanded in Scripture. The Jews were to keep the Feasts of the Lord to help them remember God’s faithfulness and rejoice in His blessings. Other traditions are not expressly commanded in Scripture, yet they can honor the Lord. The Jewish feasts of Purim and Hanukkah are examples. Neither is one of the biblical feasts, but there is nothing contrary to Scripture in their respective emphasis on the book of Esther and deliverance from the Seleucids. In fact, some scholars believe Jesus observed Purim (see John 5:1). Many traditions surround Christmas, observed by Christians around the world, and such celebrations are not wrong.

Traditions can be instructive to us on many levels, and there is nothing inherently wrong with observing tradition. Traditions can give a sense of identity, unite us as the unique family of Christ, provide teaching opportunities, and help us remember important truths. But we must always maintain a distinction between divine commands and human traditions. God’s commands are binding; manmade tradition is not. Traditions, no matter how ancient they may be, only have value if they are grounded in God’s truth and point us to Him. Tradition must be under the authority of God and His Word; any tradition that contradicts God’s Word or distracts us from it should be discarded.   
Tradition may be a way we practice our faith, but our faith is founded in God’s truth, not fallible human tradition.[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Can you name some religious traditions still practiced? What is their purpose?
2. Can a person be saved through religious traditions? Why or why not?
3. How is a person saved (Eph. 1:13-14; 2:8-9)?
4. Read Luke 2:25-40. Simeon and Anna—waiting on the consolation (comfort) of Israel!
5. For whom was Simeon waiting?
6. According to the following verses, how would/did the Messiah bring consolation to Israel (and to the world)?

Isaiah 35:5-6

Isaiah 40:1-2

Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21

Matthew 9:35-36

1. Who enabled Simeon to know/recognize who this baby Jesus was?
2. Look at verses 31-32. Explain what these phrases mean to you:

*For my eyes have seen your salvation* (John 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:15-16;   
and 4:3-4).

*You have prepared in the sight of all peoples* (Ps. 98:3; Isa. 52:10; Matt. 3:16-17; 9:35-36; Mark 14:49; Luke 22:53; John 14:11; 18:20-24)

*A light for revelation to the Gentiles* (John 1:5-9; 8:12; Rom. 1:16-17;   
Acts 9:15-16)

*For glory to your people Israel* (Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Luke 1:77; Rom. 11:25-27)

1. Verses 34-35 state, “Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother:   
   ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’”

Explain the following phrases (see definitions of Greek words below):

* *This child is* ***destined*** (κεται) *to cause the* ***falling*** (πτωσις) *and* ***rising*** (αναστασις) *of many in Israel* (Luke 12:49-53; John 6:66-69)

κεται, third person, singular, present passive indicative of κειμαι, with the sense of the perfect: to have been set, laid, or solemnly appointed.

πτωσις, fall, falling…In Matthew 7:27 the noun means: fall, collapse, crash.

αναστασις, rise, rising, resurrection; for example, of Jesus, from the dead (Rom. 1:4); of people: (a) of their souls Rev. 20:4-6; cf. John 5:25); (b) of their bodies (John 11:24; cf. John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:12-14).[[2]](#endnote-2)

* *And to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed* (Luke 4:48; John 6:41, 52; 8:13, 31-59; 15:18-25)

The child would be a “sign.” This means that he would point away from himself to his Sender, whose image he would reflect and whose works he would perform. In claiming this close relationship to his heavenly Father he would be “spoken against” or contradicted.[[3]](#endnote-3)

* *And a sword will pierce your own soul too* (John 19:25-27)

1. Anna was an old prophetess who loved God with all of her heart. She worshipped in night and day, fasting, and praying.

For many years the voice of prophecy had been silent. Now here suddenly there is this prophetess! She reminds us of the evangelist Philip’s four unmarried daughters on whom similarly the gift of prophecy was going to be bestowed (Acts 21:9).   
A true prophet or prophetess is on who, having received revelations of the mind   
and will or God, declares to others what has been thus received. See Deuteronomy 18:18. The apostle Paul regarded the gift of prophecy as being highly important   
(1 Cor. 14:1).[[4]](#endnote-4)

* What did Anna do?
* What did she speak about?
* Why do you think both Simeon and Anna were expecting the Messiah   
  to appear soon?

Simeon and Anna represented all who saw that their only hope was in the mercy and grace of God. Along with the poor carpenter and his wife and the outcast shepherds, they were flesh-and-blood examples of those to whom Christ comes. They personified the paradox of being profoundly empty and profoundly full—“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). They longed for the righteousness and consolation that would come only through the Messiah. They came to God’s house hungry, and they received as few others have in the history of the world.

Lives like these are rare. Such longing is not in vogue today. The ideal modern-man sees himself as fulfilling Hemingway’s line, “You’re the completest man I’ve ever known.” He needs nothing, no one, not even God—or so he thinks. We need to ask God to show us our insufficiency. What grace would come to us if we dared to pray for a greater sense of our spiritual need![[5]](#endnote-5)

* How does the hunger and thirst that both Simeon and Anna possessed to know God and worship Him challenge you? How will this change the way you live going forward?

1. In verses 41-52, we find Jesus doing the same thing that Simeon and Anna   
   were doing.

* Where was Jesus spending his time? Where do you spend your time?
* Read Hebrews 10:25. Do you belong to a healthy, Bible-teaching church?   
  (**Hint:** The Bible is central to the teaching in corporate worship and small   
  group study) If not, why not?
* As Jesus spent time in his Father’s house and in His Word, what happened to him (verse 51)?
* Read Romans 12:1-2. If your desire is to grow in wisdom and in favor with God, what should you do?

1. What is the most important truth you have learned in this lesson and how will it change the way you live?

1. https://www.gotquestions.org/traditionalism.html [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 176. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. 170. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. 172. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 97. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)