

Introduction: The verse on our bulletin cover this morning is one of twenty-two lines of poetry describing the ideal woman: strength and honor ‘clothe’ her, and she laughs at the day coming after (*Proverbs 31:25*). No one can live up to every quality given in this poem, but all God’s people should open their hands to the poor, and open their mouths with wisdom and teaching of kindness (*verses 20, 26*). The last two lines summarize how every woman, every person, should live before God: to fear (have faith in) the covenant God, and to let her works (of obedience) praise her (*verses 30-31*). *** In other words, we **should all believe all** of God’s **promises in order to obey all His commands**. *** Last week we saw how Ruth responded to what she had learned about God from Naomi after being her daughter-in-law for many years. After suffering the loss of her husband, Ruth pledged to stay with the widowed Naomi saying, ‘Your God will be my God’ (*Ruth 1:16*). It seems that through ‘bitter’ hardship Naomi’s weak faith in God had been strengthened. She desired to return home to worship her God with her own people. And she had told Ruth about her God, the Savior of Israel. *** Today we have heard about a woman who had worshipped God night and day in His Temple for most of her life. After they had dedicated Jesus, she approached Joseph and Mary with her heart full of thanksgiving. Then she spoke about Jesus to all who were there and the redemption He would bring as The Savior sent from God. *** Both Naomi and Hannah teach us that: **Women who worship God speak about Jesus**.

Women who worship God will tell of His salvation. We will close by considering four practical ways that godly women in the early Church showed their faith through beautiful good works that please God. Let’s start with our Gospel passage.

I. The conclusion of what The Spirit revealed to Simeon about Jesus at His consecration. (Luke 2:33-35)

Context: When Mary’s forty days of uncleanness after the birth of a son were complete, she went to the Temple to be purified according to the Torah (*Leviticus 12*). A man named Simeon was there. He was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. It had been revealed to him by The Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen Messiah. He came by The Spirit to the Temple, took Jesus in his arms and said: Master, as You promised, You now dismiss Your servant in peace. My eyes have seen Your Salvation prepared for all people: a light of revelation to the nations and the glory of Your people, Israel (*verses 22-32*).

A. Joseph and Mary were marveling. (*Verse 33*)

1. And the father of Him and the mother were marveling (*Verse 33a*)

Ongoing: They were increasingly filled with wonder at the prophetic words of Simeon.

2. ... at the words being said about Him. (*Verse 33b*)

Being said: The Savior is a light of salvation to all nations and the glory of Israel.

May we always marvel at God’s amazing Word of good news IN His Son.

B. Simeon blesses Mary and gives a difficult word concerning Jesus to Israel and Mary. (*Verses 34-35*)

1. And Simeon blessed them. (*Verse 34a*)

Blessing: He gave a ‘good word’ request to God on their behalf.

2. And he said to Mary, His mother. (*Verse 34b*)

To Mary: Until now, Simeon’s words about the child have been for all people. But now, even though we can all benefit from these words, they address the special concerns mothers have for their children, especially their sons.

3. Behold! This one is destined concerning (the) fall and rise of many in Israel. (*Verse 34c*)

Behold-destined: After getting her attention, he tells Mary her Son is chosen to do His Father’s will.

In doing so many will fall and many will rise, depending on how they respond to Him.

4. And to be a sign being spoken against. (*Verse 34d*)

Sign: The Gospels tell of opposition to Jesus and signs and wonders He did. Many priests did not consider themselves servants of the people to bring them to God. Instead, they considered themselves almost God-like and were proud to be priests. (*John 11:46-50*) They did not want to give up that position even to The High Priest. (*Hebrews 2:17; 3:1-6; 4:14-16*) May we be motivated by Simeon’s prophecy so we do NOT oppose Jesus.

5. But also, your own soul, a sword will pierce. (*Verse 35a*)

Mary: Mary witnessed everything that happened to her Son on The Cross. The death of a child is one of the greatest tragedies for a mother. And, before He died, Jesus made sure that John would take care of His mother (*John 20:25-27*).

6. That may be revealed: thoughts from many hearts. (*Verse 35b*)

Revelation: All people have difficulty being honest about what they think. We want to think rightly.

So, we often deceive ourselves. Only God can force us to face who we really are.

We can face ourselves when we have assurance of His forgiveness IN His Son.

II. The prophetess Hannah, who lived in the Temple many years, came up giving thanks to God, and speaking of the child to those looking forward to redemption. (Luke 2:36-38)

A. Hannah never left the Temple after the death of her husband, praying and serving God night and day. (*Verses 36-37*)

1. There was Hannah, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, from Asher’s tribe. (*Verse 36a*)

Hannah: Hannah means ‘grace’, Phanuel ‘face of God’ and Asher ‘happy’.

2. She was advanced in many days, having lived with (her) husband seven years after her marriage, and she a widow as many as eighty four years. (*Verses 36b-37a*)

Age: Depending on the meaning of the preposition, she was either eighty-four years old, or one hundred five years old, if she married at age fourteen!

3. She was never leaving the Temple, in fasts and in prayers, worshipping night and day. (*Verses 37b-c*)

Presence at Temple: She was a constant presence in God's house: known by, and knowing, all.

Fast and pray: Fasting and praying are excellent ways to joyfully draw near to God.

Worship: After her husband died, she worshipped God twenty-four/seven.

May we be inspired by Mary's and Hannah's examples to continue to worship God, even at the loss of a loved one.

- B. Having come up that hour, she was thanking God and speaking about Him and redemption. (*Verse 38*)

1. And she, in that hour having come up, was giving thanks to God. (*Verse 38a*)

Give thanks: Thanksgiving results: when God grants our prayerful petition (*Psalms 30:12; 118:21*); or, as a promise before God answers our petition (*Psalms 35:17-18*); or, as the result of understanding His great character (*Psalms 7:17; 28:7; 118:28-29*). Prayer should always begin with thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is the basis of prayer

2. And she was speaking about the child to all those looking forward to (the) redemption of Jerusalem. (*Verse 38b*)

Speak about child: Simeon only spoke to Mary. Hannah was speaking to all who had hearts desiring to see God's promises fulfilled.

Redemption: God provides redemption for His people (*Psalms 111; 130*). He had promised to redeem His city of Jerusalem (*Micah 4*), those exiled to Babylon (*Isaiah 49:25-50:5*), and the idolatrous northern tribes (*Hosea 13*). Because Hannah always worshipped God, she was ready to speak about His Savior Son when she was prompted by The Holy Spirit.

Women who worship God speak about Jesus

Coda: Godly women in the early Church. (*1 Timothy 5:10*)

1. In good works, she (is) being testified about. (*Verse 10a*)

Kalos: The primary meaning of the word for 'good' is 'beautiful'. All that is good is beautiful!

The other word for good deals with excellent and upright character.

- i. Having brought up children (*Verse 10b*)

Children: Child-rearing (motherhood) is part of the ideal poetic woman (*Proverbs 31:13, 21, 26-28*).

She instructed her children in God's wisdom. Timothy's mother Eunice ('good victory') instructed him in the sincere faith of Jesus (*2 Timothy 1:3-5*).

- ii. ... lodged strangers ... (*Verse 10c*)

Mothers: Godly women are mothers to their own children; and, they may also be 'mothers' to strangers.

Torah: God's people must treat strangers and aliens as equals (*Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Deuteronomy 10:19; 31:10-13*) because they were strangers in Egypt. They were even to leave some of the harvest for strangers to glean (*Leviticus 23:22*). And Jesus taught that when people turn away a stranger, they are turning Him away (*Matthew 25:34-40*).

- iii. ... washed feet of saints ... (*Verse 10d*)

God's family: A godly woman cares for all of God's children as a mother. They are her brothers and sisters IN Christ.

- iv. ... she has relieved those being afflicted. (*Verse 10e*)

God's words: Jesus said His disciples are always being afflicted in this world (*John 16:33*). God commands His people to relieve those who have become poor or infirm (*Leviticus 25:35*), and to relieve (those under) oppression (*Isaiah 1:17*). Actions often speak louder than words.

When women do what The Word of God commands they may also speak about what they know of Jesus.

Women who worship God speak about Jesus

2. Every good work has closely followed (her). (*Verse 10f*)

Good: Her works are upright and excellent.

Closely follow: The word picture is all her good works are coming behind her footsteps as she walks with The Lord. What an excellent legacy for any woman of God.

Bottom Line: Our Bible passages this morning teach us that faith in God's Savior Son will enable us to deal with great personal loss and pain at any stage of our lives. And, by continual worship of God, we can be filled with thanksgiving and we can do beautiful works of faith for God.

Conclusion: Godly women worship God even in times of pain and loss. And, they tell others of Jesus in both words and beautiful works of faith.

Homiletical Idea: *Women who worship God speak about Jesus*