Refrain of Redemption

Study Guide

Karl Helvig | Refrain of Redemption | Luke 2:29-32

Simeon's Song

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Introduction

Advent is a season that trains us to wait.

That alone makes it countercultural. We live in a world shaped by speed, efficiency, and instant results. Waiting feels like a problem to solve, a delay to eliminate, or a failure of productivity. And yet, throughout Scripture—and especially in the story of Simeon—we see something very different: **waiting is not wasted time.** It is often the very place where God does His deepest work in us.

Simeon's entire life was shaped by waiting. He waited for God's promises to be fulfilled, and when they finally were, he discovered something our culture desperately longs for but rarely finds: peace.

This study invites us to explore how waiting forms us—how it reshapes what we mean by productivity, identity, and peace—and how God might be inviting us to slow down enough to notice His work in our own lives.

Where do you notice impatience or hurry showing up most clearly in your life right now?

Text: Luke 2:25–32

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him…"

Reflection & Discussion

1. **Waiting as a Way of Life**

Simeon is described primarily as someone who was *waiting*.

    a. What stands out to you about that description?
    b. How comfortable are you with the idea of a life shaped by waiting?
2. **Waiting & Productivity**

Simeon didn't "accomplish" much in visible terms—yet God chose him to recognize the Messiah.

    a. How does our culture usually define productivity?
    b. In what ways might waiting feel unproductive or even irresponsible to us?
3. **Waiting & Identity**

Simeon calls himself God's *servant*. His identity is received, not achieved.

    a. How does that contrast with modern ideas of self-discovery or self-creation?
    b. Where do you feel pressure to define or prove your identity right now?
4. **Waiting & Peace**

Simeon says, "You may now dismiss your servant in peace."

    a. Why do you think peace comes *after* waiting, not before it?
    b. What kinds of peace do we try to manufacture without waiting on God?
5. **Deep Formation**

The sermon's central claim is: **Deep formation occurs through waiting.**

    a. Where might God be forming you right now through slowness, delay, or uncertainty?
    b. What would it look like to trust that waiting is not a detour but part of the journey?

Your Move

The invitation of this passage is not to stop working or caring—but to **stop hurrying**.

There is a deep connection between patience and slowing down. When we eliminate hurry, we create space to listen, to notice, and to savor God's presence.

Practice for the Week

Choose **one concrete way** to slow down intentionally this week:

- Build margin into your schedule instead of filling every moment.
- Resist multitasking during prayer, Scripture, or conversations.
- Practice waiting without distraction (no phone, no productivity).
- Name one area where you are tempted to rush God—and consciously release it.

Closing Question

Where might God be inviting you to slow down so that He can do His formative work in you?

Spend a moment in silence, then close with a prayer asking God for the courage to wait and the trust to believe that His timing is worth it.

For Deeper Study (NOTE: fit this onto the back of the program notes. I have often done this in the past, though note recently)

Waiting as Welcoming: The Formative Power of προσδέχομαι (prosdechomai)

When Luke tells us that Simeon was *"waiting for the consolation of Israel"* (Luke 2:25), he uses a rich Greek word: **προσδέχομαι (prosdechomai)**. At first glance, it means *to wait*. But underneath that simple translation is a far deeper idea.

Prosdechomai means: to wait **with expectation,** to **receive** or **welcome,** to accept with **open hands and open heart**

Biblical waiting is not passive resignation. It is **active, relational, and receptive**. To wait, in Scripture, is to stand ready—to receive what God has promised, whenever and however it comes.

Waiting ≠ Doing Nothing

Prosdechomai combines two ideas: **pros** — *toward,* **dechomai** — *to receive or welcome*

This means waiting is a posture turned *toward* God, not away from Him. It is waiting that says: "I trust You enough to receive what You give, when You give it."

This word is always used in the **middle voice** in Greek, which means the subject is personally involved. Waiting shapes the one who waits.

Look It Up: Where Else Is This Word Used?

Take time this week to read a few of these passages. As you do, ask: **What are these people waiting for—and how does that waiting shape them?**

Messianic Hope

- Luke 2:25 — Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel

- Luke 2:38 — Anna speaking to all who were waiting for redemption

Kingdom Expectation

- Mark 15:43 — Joseph of Arimathea waiting for the kingdom of God
- Luke 23:51 — Waiting, even in the shadow of the cross

Christian Hope

- Titus 2:13 — Waiting for the blessed hope
- Jude 1:21 — Waiting for mercy that leads to eternal life
- Luke 12:36 — Servants waiting for their master to return

Endurance & Cost

- Hebrews 10:34 — Joyfully accepting loss
- Hebrews 11:35 — Refusing release for a better resurrection

Welcome & Hospitality

- Romans 16:2 — Welcoming Phoebe
- Philippians 2:29 — Receiving Epaphroditus with joy
- Luke 15:2 — Jesus welcoming sinners

As you read, notice how often **waiting leads to action**—hospitality, courage, endurance, worship.

Reflect: Waiting as Acceptance

Consider journaling or discussing these questions:

- Where in my life am I waiting reluctantly instead of receptively?
- What would it look like to *welcome* this season rather than resist it?
- Is there something God may be forming in me that cannot be rushed?
- Who or what might God be asking me to receive—rather than fix, solve, or escape?