



Holiday Rush

Perhaps you have been at Harbison in the Christmas shopping traffic jam. Too many cars crowd into too little space and tempers begin to flare. As the day wears on, more horns blow, more hand signals are exchanged, and we swear that next Christmas, our shopping will be completed by October.

At the busiest of those intersections you will often see a lady standing on the corner holding up a hand-made sign of encouragement and peace. It simply says: *"Have a Merry, Peaceful Christmas."* I know this lady, and she isn't looking for handouts or recognition, she needs neither.

It's just her way of stepping into the Holiday Rush to say, *"slow down friend, and enjoy the season and what it means. January 1st will be here soon enough."* I like her because I think that's the kind of thing Jesus would do if He were visiting Harbison.

This is Stephen Chitty, pastor of Christian Life. Remember, *Life Matters*, and so do you.

Luke 2:21-39

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." 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 upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 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." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.