

UNTOLD STORIES OF ADVENT

ANNA (Luke 2:36-38)

-Homesick?? (heart aches for home/parents/spouse/kids/dog/bed)

Luke is going to tell us another untold story about those who were hungering and thirsting after the Presence of God – in expectation of the Messiah. Waiting desperately on God's promise to come true.

READ Luke 2:36-38 - we just read about Elizabeth...then Simeon (waiting to SEE Messiah)

“And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and *then* as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She did not leave the temple *grounds*, serving night and day with fasts and prayers. ³⁸ And at that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak about Him **to all** those who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.”

*We just read last week about Simeon: (Believed God. Loved God. Devout. Faithful. Hopeful. Filled with the Spirit. Busy about the Kingdom of God. Waiting on the Lord).

-Vs. 27: The **Holy Spirit** led Simeon into the temple that very day, that very hour to intercept Mary and Joseph and meet the baby Jesus, the Promised Messiah to come.

***Why did God pick Simeon and Anna to see and behold the Messiah** – even as a baby; and fully understand what that meant (that Jesus had come to save Israel, and the gentiles, from their sins).

Why did God choose them? Why bless *them* with this Good News? To see, hold, and worship Jesus the babe – as the promised Messiah?

-God chose these two faithful saints, Old Testament (Covenant) Saints in part because they were prayerfully **expectant**. They took God, His Word, and His promise to be truth. And they were faithfully waiting on God to show up. They had been praying for the Messiah to come.

Vs. 25 “And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon**; and this man was righteous and devout, **looking forward to the consolation of Israel**; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Vs. 38 “and she continued to speak about Him **to all** those who were **looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.**”

Both Simeon and Anna's hearts were bent on God's presence and His Promise to send the Messiah, to send salvation for Israel and the world.

Vs.28-32 “then Simeon took Him (Jesus) in his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹“Now, Lord, You are letting Your bond-servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰**For my eyes have seen Your salvation,** ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples: ³² **A light for revelation for the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.**”

Now Let's Consider Anna for a moment: She was old; she was a widow; she was a prophetess Her **age** was not an excuse to give her time and passion to the Lord Her **circumstance**, being a widow, was not an excuse to give her time and passion to the Lord Her sex, being a **female**, was not an excuse to give her time and passion to *serve* the Lord

Anna = **Prophetess**? (Female prophet or a wife of a prophet (Is. 8:3): 5 mentions in Scripture of a female prophetess – who God used to deliver His Word to a particular people for a particular instance. = **Miriam** (Exod. 15:20), **Deborah** (Judg. 4:4), **Huldah** (2 Kings 22:14), **Anna** (Luke 2:36), and Phillip's **4 daughters**. The Prophet Joel anticipated a time when all God's people, "male servants and female servants," would be filled with God's Spirit and prophecy (Joel 2:28–29). Paul encouraged **all believers** to desire to prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1), that is, to deliver God's truth which builds up the church (14:5)

= Someone (i.e. Anna) who is so close to God and so steeped in His Word, that when she speaks to others she speaks God's wisdom (Women in min./in the home/comm. =live, love, and lead through God's Word = God's voice through YOU (actions)=lead lost to Him!!!

Anna had a hopeful life. Husband. Future. Hope of Children. Purpose. Joy. Then TRAGEDY!! Her husband dies. She is left a widow. Childless. =Angst. Purposeless. Hopeless.

****BUT...she actually does what God wants ALL of us to do .. to allow our pain, our loss, our tragedies to push us into HIS arms alone!!**

Anna dedicates the rest of her life to the Lord and His presence. Where else will she go??? She lives near & around the temple - serving and praying and fasting for the Lord's return. =Hungry for His presence and hungry for redemption for Israel - awaiting the Messiah.

So why did God choose Anna? And How did God use her life as a witness for Him?

1. Anna leveraged her life for what is **eternal**; She spends her time wisely being busy for the things of the Lord.
2. Anna was full and satisfied with the Lord's Word and His presence alone in her life. Her life was not a waste. And because she was where her heart was filled (in the Temple, in the closest place she could get to where the shekinah glory of God's presence used to dwell), she got to be present when Simeon was told by the Spirit that he would behold the Promised Messiah. She got to see Jesus before she died. She got to participate in the gospel story
3. Anna because she was going to be a witness to others of God's promise – to testify that she had seen and beheld the promised Messiah. She encouraged people to be ready...ready to receive the Messiah in their lives – to believe Him & follow Him.

"Joy to the World" -Isaac Watts (1700's) – **NOT a Christmas tune**, but a Psalm to sing w/passion (very controversial in his day = the start of the worship wars in the Church of England)

"Joy to the World, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room."

Let every person make their heart ready to receive King Jesus as Savior and Lord – to live within each heart, and reign as the Sovereign King of the universe over every aspect of their life

Piper: "God prepares a person to receive Christ by stirring up a longing for consolation and redemption that can come only from Christ." =That your heart would be home-sick and desperate to meet Jesus as the only hope for your soul, the only hope for your future.

-Heb. 9:28 “So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save **those who are eagerly waiting for him.**”

-2 Tim. 4:8 “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to **all who have loved his appearing.**”

-Is this true of you? Are you hungry for the Lord’s return?? Are you being faithful until He comes? Have you set your face toward heaven and are ready and anticipating Christ’s return?

-1 Pet. 1:13 “**Set your hope fully on the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**”

APPLICATION

1. No matter your age, male or female, single, married, divorced, widowed – use your life to point people to Jesus as the sole source of your hope – your peace – your joy (because you ARE living it!!). Our age/sex/rel. status/experiences are NOT excuses to waste your life, to waste your voice, to waste God’s gifts to you.
2. Are you praying expectantly for the Lord’s presence in your life? We can never be surprised if God doesn’t show up to act IF we weren’t prayerfully expectant of it. We can never be surprised if God doesn’t answer our prayers IF we are not prayerfully expectant that He will. Live, hope, and pray with the expectation that God will keep His promises to you.
3. Jesus is still the prize two thousand years later. They were waiting for Him as Messiah; He came and now we await for His glorious return. He is worth the wait again!!!