

Meditations on Anna

by Barry Kirk

Anna's life is a powerful example of what it means to be committed to God, serious about serving Him, and passionate about proclaiming His message to others.

Scripture: Matthew 18:20, Matthew 19:29, Luke 2:36, 2 Corinthians 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:2

Topics: "Prayer And Fasting", "Faithful Service"

Description

Barry Kirk preaches on the life of Anna, a prophetess who was totally committed to God, serving Him with fastings and prayers night and day. Anna, despite her old age and social status, found favor with God and remained consistent in her fellowship with Him, never departing from the temple. Her life serves as an example for believers today to be serious about serving God at all times, demonstrating immediate communion with Him and being diligent in prayer and fasting, regardless of convenience.

Transcript

Terra Alta, WV

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser. she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Lk. 2:36-38

Could we consider for a few moments these last three verses? Truly we find that these few little thoughts of this beautiful old saint who was totally committed to God are precious. And I think we can see a nice little pattern for the believer today by her example.

First we see that she is a prophetess. Now that doesn't have anything to do with the pattern for the Christian today, does it? After all, isn't that someone who sees visions and dreams dreams of God and then tells the people what God said?

Well, if we think of the real definition of the word prophet or prophetess as it's used here, it's really very clear that there is something here for us to follow. It simply means one who is a proclaimer of a divine

message. Wouldn't it be wonderful if each of us were known as one who proclaims God's message?

Well it is a wonderful thought, however, we have to personally know the Word and His message first and then proclaim it ... not the other way around. And I believe that Anna was the example to follow in coming to know the Word personally as we shall see.

As we continue, we see that she was the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. Asher was the least of all the tribes ... he was the last son of Jacob's unwanted wife's unwanted maid Zilpah ... and this is the only reference in scripture to Anna's father Phanuel. Did all this mean they were insignificant? Maybe in social acceptance and status, but Asher means 'happy,' and Phanuel means 'the face of God' and Anna means 'favored with God'. What a Godly example we find in this family ... their social status was not their standard for joy in their lives. Asher, perhaps, was the least, yet he was known as truly 'happy.' Phanuel was only mentioned once yet he must have reflected and revealed 'the face of God' at least to his family many times (truly not a small responsibility), and Anna, an old, old woman, found 'favor with God.'

Can't we take comfort in the fact that God uses ordinary, insignificant 'earthen vessels' to make known His glorious Gospel (2 Cor 4:7), and that those, no matter what their social status before men, who give Him the preeminence will be significant with God (Mt 19:29-30).

Doesn't this describe Anna and wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if it described us? As we said, she was a old, old woman-probably over a hundred years old. And even through loneliness and tragedy and the normal troubles that came with age, she departed not from the temple.' She stayed in fellowship! How about us? Are we inconsistent or do we stay intimately close? You know one of the definitions of a prophet or prophetess is 'one who has immediate intercourse or communion or relations or fellowship with God.' Is our fellowship with God characterized by immediacy or distance depending on the circumstances-Anna's was immediate no matter what. 'She departed not from the temple.'

How serious are we about serving God? You know, everything we do reflects just how serious we are about being a Christian. Are we serious only when it is convenient?

What's the pattern here? Anna served God seriously all the time! When she spent time in prayer, she was serious, and she demonstrated it to God by fasting. We not only see this pattern found here in Anna's prayer life to be a beautiful one, but also quite a challenge.

Not only did she show her seriousness by fasting, but also in the fact that she was consistent whether it was convenient or not-she prayed night and day! Oh how we need to 'be instant (diligent) in season, out of season' (2 Tim 4:2) ... not just when it seems easy.

And then we notice the sum and substance of her whole life and her whole being culminate as it reaches its highest point. Picture, if you can, the scene there in the place where God had chosen to place his name (1 Kings 9:3) ... not really a crowd, but just a few. Perhaps only 'two or three gathered together' (Mt 18:20) ... and those speaking are not speaking according to a pre-determined schedule or creed but only being led by the Holy Spirit (vs. 27). There are no distractions. Every thought is perfectly in one accord, for there is only one focal point-the One 'in the midst of them.'The one who is speaking calls no attention to himself but rather lifts up the One in their midst and blesses God (vs. 28) and causes those gathered there to marvel 'at those things which were spoken of Him' (vs. 33), and what are these blessed and marvelous things that are being spoken? Why, it's amazing the simplicity of the thoughts-he's simply speaking of the peace (vs. 29) found in this One-the salvation (vs. 30) found in this One-the availability (vs. 31) found in

this One -the glory (vs. 32) found in this One, and all the wonders found in His accomplishments and what would come (vs. 34-35) It's all about the one in their midst. It's all about who He is and the things He'll do!

And who, likewise, do we see gathering instantly to the Lord's Christ? It's Anna! The old saint from the unwanted and insignificant family but yet the one who found favor with God. The one who was always willing to share His Word. The one who was consistent in her fellowship with God whether in tragedy or loneliness. The one who was serious about serving God-night and day. The one who 'departed not from the temple' and as a result she had immediate communion with God-'And she, coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord,' (vs. 38a).

Yes, my friends, her life was well poised to worship Him-it was automatic for her that she would gather there. There was no other possible place, because it was there that He was in the midst, and if she had not been there she would have missed seeing Him. She would have missed seeing God praised. She would have missed seeing the saints marvel at the thoughts of Him. She would have missed the privilege of giving thanks likewise unto the Lord' (vs. 38a), and surely her zeal to tell 'all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem' (vs. 38b) would not have been the same.

It's not until we see the One in our midst for who He is that we will have the right zeal to tell all those who look for redemption about what He has done.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/barry-kirk/meditations-on-anna/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net