

A True Widow

by Erlo Stegen

Anna's life as a true widow is an example of dedication to serving God, prayer, and fasting, and how we can apply her example to our lives.

Duration: 1:01:15

Scripture: Psalm 1:6, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:36-38, Acts 21:9, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 14:29, 1 Corinthians 14:34

Topics: "Widow"

Description

In this sermon, the minister tells a story about a woman who confronts a man about breaking his promise to marry her. The story escalates as more women come forward with the same complaint. The minister uses this story to emphasize the importance of keeping our promises and making amends for our wrongdoings. He also highlights the idea that our actions and words are being recorded and will be accounted for in the future. The sermon encourages listeners to live with integrity and to consider the consequences of their actions.

Transcript

Yesterday I spoke about Simeon. Today I want to speak about Anna. So we'll read from Luke chapter 2 from verse 36.

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage. And then as a widow to the age of 84.

And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. And at that very moment, she came up and began giving thanks to God and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. We'll read thus far.

Anna was someone amazing. She was quite old by this time. She was a widow.

She had been married and lived with her husband for seven years. And so she lived with her husband after she had been a virgin. So she had lived also as a pure young girl, a virgin.

And she got married as a virgin. It's amazing in what detail everything is recorded. Do you realize that even your life is being recorded? Do you know that one day when we stand before the Lord, the books will be opened, those records will be opened and be read.

What is being written about your life? And that's written how you live together with your parents. Your life at school is recorded. And whether you went to church or not, and even if you went, whether you listened while you were in the service or not.

And it's also recorded that as you sit in the service, whether you're just busy watching that door, the people coming in and going out, the people who cause distractions, you just keep yourself busy with them. That when you go home after the service, you don't even know what the sermon was about. So God is very much at work.

He's busy recording everything you do, even when you're in the bathroom, when you're bathing, everything you do is being recorded. God records everything, even what you do with your fingers and with your hands. Every detail is being recorded.

Everything, even after you've left school, when you go out and do what you do, God's recording everything. Because one day He still wants to speak to you about all these things that you've been doing. And He wants to speak to you about whether you've kept what He's told you or not.

And so God records everything, even her age and how she got married after her virginity, how she had got married pure, having lived a holy life. There were no fingerprints of any boy on her. God knows all the fingerprints that are on your life.

He is going to ask you about them. And so you know, you know of people who go around who are marked all over their bodies, tattoos, when a person takes his shirt off, you see all these marks on his body. So one day God is going to make you show your arm, your whole body.

And then all those marks and all those things that have been left on you will be brought to light. And not just those fingerprints, those letters, those love letters which were passed between you and somebody else. And all those men you left into your life and into your house, God is going to reveal everything about your life.

It's like that young man that got married. He stood before the altar and said he would take his bride as his wife, and they would stay together till death parts them. And then someone from a girl, and a girl in the audience got up while he was busy giving his vows.

She came and stood next to him and everyone was amazed. The minister looked, he looked. And then the man said, the man said, but what do you want here? And then she said, but don't you remember that you promised that you were going to marry me? Now you're marrying this other girl.

What about your promise to me? Call it, call it. And then one girl after the other came forward until there were a string of them standing there all saying, but you promised to get married to me. And it was a huge embarrassment.

And the bride started crying because, well, brides and wives often end up crying. Sometimes they only end up crying because they can't hit their husbands, but that's the way that they get them back. They just start crying.

But there are many tears which are wept. So these things all came to light. And so it could be in your life as well, and will be if you're up to that, if you live that type of life.

That's why the Lord said to that woman, that Samaritan woman, he said to her, you've had five husbands. And the sixth one, the one you're living with now doesn't belong to you. He belongs to someone else.

So you will also meet up with that one day where you are going to stand before God, and all those girls are going to come and say, but Lord, this is what he promised me. Here are his marks on my life. This is the mark he left on my life.

That's what you're going to meet up with, unless you make right with God what you've done wrong, and you make right with those people that you have wronged as well. And then the Lord says, every idle word that you've spoken, you'll have to give account for. You yourself are going to give account.

You're going to be saying to that person, just come here and then you will give account what you spoke to that person. You yourself will be doing it. We live so lightheartedly.

We go through life and are so superficial about things. We're still going to meet up with a difficult day one day. If you go through life realizing that that is what is awaiting you one day, surely you wouldn't just speak lightly and do things lightly.

You'd be careful and say, Lord, help me how I speak and help me even in what I think, because I could so easily think the wrong thing about somebody else as well. Thinking something and all the time it's not true. So Anna got married as a virgin.

I know her father's name, Fanwill. He must have been an upright man as well. Someone who set a good example.

Not just living a loose life, running after other women. If I come across a pure young virgin, then I can only respect that girl's father. How can a father that lives a loose life, immoral life, bring up his daughter properly? And even the sin of the father follows on to the children.

To the third and fourth generation. To the third and fourth generation. So remember you young men.

You go through life doing the things you're doing. You are bringing something upon yourself and upon your children that aren't even born yet. So you think you're just doing something on your own.

Yet God sees it. And when you get children, they will be injected with that same thing that you've done. And their children.

And those children. To the third and fourth generation God visits that sin. So we don't doubt that Faneuil must have been someone that was upright before the Lord.

He was of the tribe of Asher. There are ten tribes of Israel that just disappeared. Yet And he was of one of those ten tribes.

Only a few of these tribes went into exile together with those of Judah and Israel. And so while they were so to say preserved there these other tribes just were wiped off the face of the earth. Or just Or they were So they as tribes just disappeared.

They were scattered all over. And yet we know that this particular man was of the tribe of Asher. And So even though there are such families that just get scattered all over and nothing remains of them and yet even among and in this situation you find that this particular man it's recorded and known that he was of

that tribe.

You just have to look at people who forsake the Lord. Look at their children and you'll see how their children are just scattered all over. And the parents are left alone.

They're lonely while their children are scattered all over the face of the earth. It's a blessing if you can live together with your children. But of Of course if they go out to other countries because they're furthering and preaching the gospel well that's a blessing.

That's wonderful. But if they just go for other reasons that is a difficult situation. So Anna also was of the tribe of Asher.

Now Anna she got married she was a pure young virgin. Now of course if you grew up in the world as a heathen and you lost your virginity and then you can come to the Lord in the state that you are and repent of your sin and confess your sin and the Lord forgives you and then He makes everything new. He creates you anew and you become a brand new person.

Even if you've been spoiled by your own father or your own brother, God can make you into a brand new person. That is the gospel. That's the gospel.

But then you on on on on everything you've done. So if you've lived immorally and you've lived a rotten life you've come to the Lord, He forgiveness you and He has made everything new And then you don't need to go and tell your husband all the rotten things that you've done if the Lord has already forgiven you and what you've done with with other men because the Lord has made everything new and Especially if he's a heathen if you do that and one day something goes wrong he gets angry with you, then he'll recall all those things that you've done before and He'll use it against you and he's not not like with the Lord when he forgives he forgets It's all past only of course, if you go back to that sin, the Lord will remind you of what he had forgiven you in the past So the gospel is wonderful So the gospel is wonderful It is truly the good news because the Lord forgives he takes it away that evil is erased It's taken away where evil was was recorded. He erases it and he writes something good in its place And then she became a widow and now we get to her age and she was a widow to the age of 84 84? How long did she live with her husband? 7. 7 years.

7 or 84? 91. 91. It could even be that she was a widow for 84 years and then plus the 7 years that she was married and then we don't know how old she was when she got married.

I can't imagine she was under 12 so she was way over 100 then. 84 years a widow, 7 years with her husband, that's 91. Now you add her years when she got married.

I don't think that she was under 12. Maybe I'm wrong. I would rather think 16, 17, 18.

So she could have been 110 years or even more. But if she would have got married with 12 years she would have been 103 years old. Now it says of Anna that she lived and stayed in the temple and served there day and night.

She was a true widow. Some widows are true, some are not. In 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 5 or we can start reading from verse 3. Honor widows who are widows indeed.

But if any widow has children or grandchildren let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents for this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. Fasting and praying and being there all the time before the Lord.

But those who have children, those widows who have children, those children should be caring for their mother and if they don't the Bible says they're worse than the heathen. Now of course of course nowadays it's the other way around. All the young people they even have illegitimate children and they love these old grannies these widows because the widows care for them and for their children.

It's the wrong way around. The Bible says he who doesn't work should not eat. You should even tell him Peggy that he should make such a law in South Africa that if someone doesn't work he shouldn't eat.

But then there are worse criminals. They go around and they even pickpocket and rob the widows of their pension money and of the money they've got. Hell is made for them.

That's where they'll be fried. But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. So a widow so and then such a widow who is just after this pleasure and driven by lust even the way she dresses and she behaves she just wants to catch the attention of other men.

It's said that such widows they are dead while they're alive. Prescribe these things as well so that they may be above reproach. Do you see now what a true widow should be like? I thought this morning we've got quite a few widows around and we've also got some unmarried young woman.

And if you widows would be like this we'd be a blessed congregation. But if they're not we're the opposite of blessed. See opposite.

But Paul also did write and say that the young widows if they can they should get married again that they don't get driven by lust. That they shouldn't be a burden. But a true widow so Anna a true widow all these years living as a widow but in all those years staying in the temple serving God praying and fasting.

No time for men. She was engaged to another man. She had a boyfriend up there.

So she was busy there in the temple with praying and fasting and the Jews they fasted twice a week. And she was always in the services. She attended all of them because she stayed there in the temple.

There were two services a day in the morning at nine in the afternoon at three. It was also for practical purposes. They didn't have cars.

They didn't have electricity. So it was easier to have the the services during the day not at night. But she was there all the time faithfully attending these services.

The Bible says we should not neglect the fellowship. A person a backslider a backslider someone whose love grows cold towards the Lord you will recognize by the fact that he doesn't attend services anymore. He doesn't come to church anymore.

And then you'll have all sorts of excuses. He worked too hard. He had a headache.

He wasn't feeling well. Whatever reason these are all warning signs. Like with a tsunami when suddenly you see these signs that something bad is coming.

When Jesus was on earth when they were sick they went to the service to get healed. So she was a prophetess. Let's read in first Corinthians chapter nine.

I didn't make a note of it so it could be in 1 Corinthians 14. Verse 29. And let two or three prophets speak and let the others pass judgment.

Test it. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and all may be exhorted.

And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. So Anna was someone who exhorted other people who encouraged other people who preached to them.

Sharing God's word with them and counseling them. Philip had four daughters that prophesied. They preached the will of God.

But here in Corinthians we have read how there can be two or three may prophesy one after the other. But then he goes on to also say that he doesn't allow women to speak in church. Is that a contradiction? No there's a difference.

There it's spoken about teaching and here we read and it speaks about prophesying. And the Jewish synagogues were not like this auditorium. In the synagogues the men sat down so to say on the ground floor.

You may know some other churches like some Lutheran churches they have an upper level. And the woman would sit on the top upper level. They didn't sit with the men on the ground floor.

So the women nowadays are lucky they can sit together with the men. In those days they had to sit upstairs. Now in those situations in the synagogues not just one person would speak not just one man spoke many would speak.

I was once invited in Germany to speak to some Jewish people. And so before I got there someone warned me and said look among the Jews it's totally different because you'll find that while you're talking you'll suddenly find someone else will get up and he'll start speaking as well and maybe he'll contradict you while you are still talking and many start talking at the same time it's just chaos. So he said don't be disturbed by this fact that's just the way they do it.

You talk someone will agree with you openly others will contradict you openly but that's just the way it is and it's quite noisy. He said I think it's just better that I warn you before you get there because while you're there you can be totally confused by the situation. And then I remembered that the Germans have a saying if there's noise around like at home and the children are noisy then the older person will come along and say what's going on here is this a Jewish school or what is it.

Then I knew where that saying came from. So this is the situation Paul was referring to where he said the woman should be quiet in church or in the synagogues because while they were sitting upstairs there and the men were there was a huge commotion downstairs with the men all talking then the woman would sort of lean over the railing at the top and they would still have their say from the top and create even more confusion and that's why Paul said the woman should keep quiet. Do you understand now? So he wasn't referring to prophesying.

He wasn't referring to when a woman proclaims the will of God. But what he was referring to was these women. So he was referring to this situation where these women would shout from the top there teaching their husbands what they should be saying from the top there because there are such women who take the reins into their own hands.

And Paul said no he doesn't allow that a woman lords it over her husband like that. So Anna was a prophetess in the temple. They're proclaiming the will of God, helping people, counseling them.

She knew them and they knew her and they came to her for help. Oh Anna. So when Mary and Joseph were in the temple with the child and there was Simeon and as they were together it didn't take long and Anna appeared because after all she was always there in the temple.

She never left the temple it says here. Serving night and day with fastings and prayers. And so she appeared at that very moment.

She was at the right place at that right time and she began giving thanks to God. She most probably got there while Simeon had the child in his arms and while he was praising God and so she joined in. Now it's amazing.

She came there and remember at that time there were many in Israel who were awaiting the Redeemer, awaiting the coming of the Messiah. And here we find this old woman coming in, hearing this and then seeing what she saw and recognizing what was happening and then she started praising God and then she didn't have any rest after that telling people about the fact that the Messiah had come. And then I thought of all our unmarried lady co-workers and I thanked the Lord and I said oh Lord thank you for so many of these unmarried women who can be before you all the time serving you wholeheartedly, undividedly.

It's different when you get married because then you've got a husband also to care for and it's amazing. Many people want to get married but when they do get married then it's too much for them. So if you're unmarried you're blessed in many ways.

You have so many liberties. You can serve the Lord wholeheartedly. When you get married you can serve the Lord and then you're tired and you think you need to go to bed and then the husband comes home and then he expects you to make tea for him, to have food ready, to have time for him and if you don't then he's upset.

So there are many things to consider. So seek God's will and if it's God's will for you to go through life as a widow or an unmarried person, not a divorcee but a true widow, then you can devote your life to serving the Lord, to praying and being before the Lord and what wouldn't the world be like if we had more such widows. And not that you become a gossip when you're a widow or when you are alone but and that you become the local newspaper, then you are dead while you're alive.

So let's take after Anna, follow her example, even for us men that we should that we serve God day and night. Now I said that there were morning and afternoon prayers at that time, but she didn't just pray in the morning and the afternoon, she prayed and served day and night. As the Bible says we should pray without ceasing.

Some people they So many people get together for prayer meetings and during that prayer meeting while at last they're all on fire and they pray and there's amens and hallelujahs and what not all, but as soon as

they walk out of that prayer meeting there's none of it left. Then they live a different life, but our life should be a continual devotion to the Lord where we're before him seeking his face, serving him, praying. You young people You young people should learn from that as well, not that you're just busy with the opposite sex, that's all you busy with.

Can you not devote your life to the Lord as well where you can even share with other young people, warning them and telling them about the kingdom of God. So there are those that are alive spiritually, but there are also those that are dead spiritually. Now from what you've heard, I hope that you've realized whether you're a rotten egg or whether you are healthy.

They are the Simeons, they are the Enners. Where do you belong? Which group do you belong to? So there are those that are good, there are those that are wicked. Which group are you in? 2005 lies ahead of you.

What kind of person will you be in this year? Will you be a blessing in the kingdom of God or will you be a curse? Let's pray. Lord, we have heard about Anna. It's obvious that right from her youth, she was someone who was committed to heaven, not for the world and for hell.

Lord, we pray that in our midst you will raise up people like Simeon and Anna among the older people and among the youth. Lord, we pray that in our midst you will raise up people like Simeon and Anna among the older people and among the youth. That's how they grew in your service too.

Amen.

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