

3 Lessons From the Prophetess Anna

Read Time: 3 Minutes 34 Seconds

I have been slowly—very slow—reading through the Gospel of Luke in my daily time with Jesus. Though Christmas is two months away, I find myself luxuriating in the story of Jesus' birth.

Tucked in the second chapter of Luke is the story of a rather insignificant woman named Anna (Luke 2:36-38). In a quick reading of the story, you might almost miss her. However, with careful reading, her life inspires us to pause and ponder.

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to fulfill the Jewish laws of purification and to present Him before the Lord. In the law it was written, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord" (Leviticus 12:2-8). Beyond Simeon, who was waiting to see the Messiah before he died, there was a prophet named Anna in the temple. Anna was a widow. She had only been married seven years before her husband passed. The significance of her widowhood might be lost on those of us living in the present day. However, in the time in which she lived, this would mean she lived in poverty and insignificance without the protection of a husband. Yet, she never left the temple day or night. Instead, she lived a life of worship and prayer. When Jesus was brought to the temple, Anna recognized that this child was the promised Messiah. Scripture tells us that she gave thanks and told everyone she knew about the child who would bring redemption.

What can we learn from this woman that will lead us to further transformation?

3 Lessons from the Life of Anna

1. God uses seemingly insignificant people. At the first reading of Anna's story, she seems so insignificant. The world at the time of Jesus would have considered her a nobody. However, God saw her dedication to Him, delighted in her worship and listened to the cries of her heart.

Oh friend, you may feel insignificant, wondering if God can and will use you. Rest assured, God sees you. He hears you. He understands the longings of your soul. And, He will use you if you allow Him to do so.

2. A life lived in worship and prayer results in recognizing the work of God. Anna had spent hours worshipping God and praying to Him prior to this moment. As a result, When Christ entered the temple she recognized Him as the one sent to redeem.

As I think back on the recent COVID pandemic and all the division it created, there were some who wisely remained silent, yet asked God to reveal what we were to learn. Those who had spent their lives worshipping and praying didn't panic. Instead, they realized the hand of God was calling the church to new levels of discipleship and prayer. Rather than posting lots of opinions on social media, these wise saints got on their knees and asked God for wisdom as to how they could minister and encourage in new ways.

Friend, a life lived in worship and prayer is never wasted. God sees the hours you spend worshipping Him and crying out to Him on behalf of others. He sees the times you pray in the middle of the night when you're not sure what else to do. He hears the whispers of your heart when you're not sure how to pray and He sees every time you turn your panic into praise. None of it is lost on Him. As You faithfully continue, God will open your eyes to recognize His work around you. He will open your ears so that You can hear His voice and know beyond a shadow of a doubt just how much He loves you.

3. Age is not the determination for serving God. I love how tucked into the Christmas story is the life of an insignificant teen, Mary, who God chose to use to mother His Son. Also tucked within the story is an 84-year-old widow who God also uses to spread the story about Him.

Friend, your age is not an indicator of how and when God might use you. If you're young, resolve to follow Him wholeheartedly. Make it your goal to live a life of prayer and worship like Anna. If you're old and still breathing, God is not done with you yet. Keep worshipping and praying. God has you on earth for a reason.

Allow the life of Anna to encourage you this week. Remember, God uses insignificant people. A life of prayer and worship will help you to recognize when God is at work, and finally, no age is disqualified from serving God.

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Becky Harling, a bestselling author, is a popular speaker at conferences, retreats and other events. She is the author of 11 books, including "The Extraordinary Power of Praise." Becky is a certified coach with the John Maxwell Team and offers parent coaching. Becky and her husband, Steve, have traveled and ministered in over 70 countries around the world.