

Luke 2:22-40 Jesus Presented in the Temple

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"^[a]), ²⁴ 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."^[a]

²⁵ 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 on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss^[a] your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ 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, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^[a] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ 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.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Talking Points

'Part 2 - Faith: The Intersection of Action and Belief'

Delivered 01 03 20 by Pastor Anita

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; **Luke 2:22-40 (Sermon)**

This is the second sermon in a two part sermon set looking at the Faith of two who encountered Jesus when he is presented in the Temple.

Last week the scriptures highlighted Simeon.

This week we will look at the prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher.

Anna is identified as a prophet in Luke 2:36.

A prophet in the strictest definition, is an individual who is regarded because of their contact with God and is said to speak on God's behalf.

They serve as an intermediary with humanity and God by delivering messages or teachings.

Anna, when we meet her in the scriptures today is said to be advanced in age, very old.

Even at her old age she is still listed as the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. We are told Penuel was a member of the Tribe of Asher. His name means "Face of God".

Which in itself is fortelling, since Anna is about to see the human face of God in the infant child of Mary and Joseph in this moment at the temple

Just like Simeon, Anna is described as very devout in their faith.

She married and lived with her husband for seven years of marriage and then was widowed for some 80+ years.

Anna is a very devout woman of faith.

She is said to have never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying.

And we are given the blessing of witnessing in scripture this extraordinary moment when Anna sees Jesus.

The scripture says that she gives thanks to God and then proceeded to speak about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

What a beautiful moment.

Anna looking upon the face of her savior.

How poignant that must have been.

This woman of exceptional and extraordinary acts of faith and devotion, meeting the object of her devotion face to face.

Anna in the company of Mary and Joseph who have made an extraordinary commitment themselves to God to be the earthly parents of the Son of God.

Anna, this woman who labored in prayer all day and all night who was devoted to fasting and praying, and who we see praising God and speaking of this extraordinary miracle working God who will redeem her people, and indeed the world.

Anna, devoted Anna is given the opportunity to see the now enfleshed God.

I find it interesting that Anna appears in our scripture after Simeon has prophesized about Jesus and has blessed the Holy Family.

You see Simeon prophesized to Mary mother of Jesus, “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Isreal, and to be a sign that will be spoken again, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Luke 2:33-35)

And then enters our Anna.

This must have been a weighty moment for young Mary and husband Joseph. Especvially Mary.

After carrying the Son of God and knowing that she has the honor and the challenge of walking as his earthly mother beside Him, but now knowing that this will ccause agony as well as joy,.

This foreshadowing of Christ's agony on the cross, I imagine would have left her perhaps wondering about all that is to come.

And here God sends Anna.

An opportunity to see the older woman and to hear Anna praising and rejoicing and speaking about this newly arrived Messiah.

See Anna is a beacon of hope in this moment.

Anna is for Mary and for us to, a reminder that life has pain, but a life of devotion to God and living for God can our joy can be made complete.

Anna had lost her husband at an early age.

For a woman of that time the death of a husband meant the loss of potential income, loss of the children she had hoped to once bear.

Being a widow meant that you would be dependent upon the community around you.

But Anna praises God.

Anna, this woman of faith knew what it meant to lose one close to you, and Mary has been told that she will suffer a loss far greater

Anna in this bright day at the temple, is hope, that difficult times may come, but clinging to God restores our purpose.

Anna, does not remain quiet. Like Isaiah in 62:1 “I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet”

Anna knows in faith that God is a keeper of His word, and salvation is at hand.

Anna knows as Isaiah did that the work of the Christ Child will cause His peo[ple to become a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Simeon and Anna together come to say that before you can get to Easter, you have to go through Good Friday.

Before you can get to the Resurrection, you have to go through the cross.

Indeed, weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

(Psalm 30:5)

God had promised and in faith, Simeon and Anna took God at His word.

God had promised and they declared like the Psalmist Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. (ps 148:5)

God promised and they believed.

And their belief rose in the their very spirits like rose in the Psalmist mouth to utter praise “let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and heavens.

And he raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart.” Psalm 148:13-14

Praise the name of the Lord!

Glory be to God.

We serve a God who keeps His promises.

So what is the lesson for us today?

Beloved it is very simple.

Faith is an action word.

Faith literally is 'belief in action'

Anna believed in her God and served Him day and night.

Anna believed in God and fasted and prayed, enough so that the scriptures pointed her out for all readers even in our times.

When we believe in God, it causes us to act like we believe God is faithful to His word.

When we believe in God, when we rejoice in the living God, it changes our behavior.

We seek to serve Him, to know Him and to love Him.

And when we come close to God He blesses us with His presence.

Simeon and Anna, two separate people allowed to see the same blessing of seeing the earthly face of God.

The holidays were difficult for all of us, but God says hold on just a little while longer, you too will see a bright new day.

Hold on just a little while longer I have a plan. Just hold onto my hand a little while longer.

God is still a God that says He is not a man that He should lie.

(Numbers 23:9)

He has told us He will never leave us or forsake us. (Deut 36:1)

Anna's simplicity speaks to us especially in this time of pandemic when our lives are uprooted

When there is pain from all that has been lost – stability, jobs, gathering together, even loved ones.

God sent Simeon with a difficult word to Mary. Then God sent Anna with the reminder that it's going to be alright.

A reminder that people of faith are not abandoned by God.

Beloved of God, be encouraged, whatever you are facing.

After the rain storm, God sends His sunshine.

AMEN.

CHALLENGE

Our challenge today, this first Sunday of the new year, is to remain faithful.

Have faith in God, believing that He will bring carry you through.

Believe in Him and act in faith knowing that God is right there for you.

The time of fasting and praying is not for naught. God rewards those who seek him diligently.

In faith believe the words of Hebrews 11:6, "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Anna sought God. She prayed daily for decades, and she was rewarded by seeing the earthly face of God in the Christ child.

Amen

Benediction

Numbers 6:22-26

COMMUNION ANNOUNCEMENT

I want to remind everyone about our “*drive thru*” communion today from 12 noon until 1:00 pm.

The Communion Service will be part of the worship service broadcast. The distribution of the communion will take place at the church.

Your Elders will be in the church parking lot from 12 noon until 1:00 pm to distribute pre-filled sealed communion cups with grape juice and a wafer.

If you would like to receive communion on TODAY come to the church parking lot between 12 noon until 1:00 pm.

Your Elders will be in the parking lot and will serve communion to you while you are in your car.

Please remain in your car and wear a face covering.

Your Deacons will be in the church parking lot to hand out “*Our Daily Bread*” Devotion Books and prayer slips for this month, and to receive your tithes and offerings.