

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Evening

11th December 2022

Rev Philip Knowles, Ps/Hymns 8 1st version, t- Winchester, 84, 77, 68 tune of 16 or 402

Read: Luke 2:36-38 Text: Luke 2:36-38 Title – Anna's Witness of Christ

The woman who we have read about today, is Anna an elderly woman, who sought to please in Lord in her all ways.

Anna is a wonderful example, to every child of God who experiences sorrow, at some point in their life.

"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."

There are differences regarding the time frame, some suggest Anna was widowed until the age of 84 years.

Others suggest, maybe more favourable, that Anna's husband died after seven years of marriage and then for the next 84 years she was widowed, meaning, Anna would be over 100 years old in this passage.

But notice, when death visited her home, and her best friend was taken from her.

This sorrow did not drive Anna away from God or His house, but rather it drove her to God and His house.

Anna was devoted to her Saviour.

Anna did not depart from the temple, The house of God. The sense of words seems to be, while her husband was alive she would have attended the house of God to pray and worship.

Anna had her eyes fixed upon the Christ of God, the promised Messiah.

But now after her husband death, early in the marriage, continued coming to the house of God.

This is vital, because there are many who go through the valley of suffering, death visits the family.

May I encourage you today, to learn from Anna, that in every sorrow, trial, heart break, get to the house of God, attend the place of prayer, where Christ is presented as the great burden bearer, and the only refuge for the soul.

Plead the blood, plead the covenantal promises of God for your life, because Christ has purchased them for you.

Please notice again, she continued coming to worship God in her old age. **Verse 36** *she was of a great age*, literally means **“advanced in days.”**

In taking one of the views, Anna had been married for 7 years and then widowed for 84 years, that is 91 years in total, then possibly add another 13 to 18 years before marriage, Anna could be between 104-108 years old, but we don't know.

But what is Anna still doing at her great age. Anna is serving God, and at this stage of her life, she has a fresh view of Christ.

What a word for you in great age, keep attending the house of God, and seek Christ.

Verse 38 records, the providential leading of God in her life **“and she coming in that instant.”**

What instant did Anna come into the temple that day, what was happening. It was when Mary and Joseph in **verse 22** “**they brought Him, (Christ) to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.**” **Verse 27** it was “**when the parents brought in the child Jesus**” into the temple. This was also the same instant or occasion. Simeon saw Christ, and now Anna sees her Saviour.

What a blessing to see the Saviour in His House.

The blessing of God was granted to one who was faithful in spiritual devotion to God. Anna's great dedication to God resulted in her being in the Temple when Christ came to the Temple.

Had she not been so dedicated in attending the place of worship, she would have missed the greatest of blessings.

May that be our blessing as we have come today, and each time we enter the House of God, to see the Saviour in His House, to meet afresh with our Redeemer.

Anna's Witness of Christ

I FIRST, NOTICE ANNA'S POSITION.

The very fact that Anna **served God**, and was waiting for Christ, and **spoke of Christ and redemption in Christ.**

testifies of her position in the Lord, through faith in the promises of Christ the redeemer.

You hear me say and rightly so, a person can serve God and still be lost, have a religion without Christ, as Saul.

But not Anna, because she served God through Christ.

Only those who have a saving relationship with Christ have an interest in Christ Himself, to advance His Kingdom.

Therefore, her life is a witness to the genuine spirituality that will exist in the life and soul of the one who truly belongs to the Lord.

You see, by nature none are the servants of God. Scripture makes this clear, all are lost in sin, walk in darkness, and have yielded their lives to the devil's control, to serve him.

When Paul wrote to believers at Rome, he reminded them that before "***they became the servants of righteousness***".

That is, serving God they **Ch 6:17** "***that ye were the servants of sin.***" Without Christ, without a hope, but "***being made free from sin, and become servants to God.***"

This was the testimony of the Thessalonians. Paul writes of them in **1 Thess 1:9** "***...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son.***"

This is actually a reference to their repentance and to forsaking their idolatry.

True repentance is a turning away from sin and a turning to the Saviour. It is to walk in the opposite direction.

The Thessalonians forsook their idols, their pagan and false religion, to follow Christ.

Paul wrote with such gladness because their turning from idolatry was evidence of the power of the Gospel, the power of Christ to set sinners free.

Therefore, to serve God looking to Christ, is – to know Him, love Him, be in fellowship with Him, and walk with Him. *God cannot be served otherwise.*

The mark of true converted is service unto the Lord by Faith in Christ's person and gospel ministry. Anna's faith rested in the promised Messiah.

Remember, in the OT economy, the covenant of grace, the promise of salvation was presented by object lessons, types, shadows, and pictures.

In the Temple in Luke 2, the sacrificial system was still in place.

The animal sacrifices though never took away sin, yet they pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the one who does take away sin.

The offering up of a sacrifice for sin, the blood that was shed, the prayer of the High priest on behalf of the people, it was all a picture, of what Christ would do when He would come to dwell among men.

Anna put her faith and trust in Christ. She believed the promised of a Saviour who He was and what He had come to do for sinners like her, to save from all sin.

Anna stands on the page of Scripture as a witness to the grace of God.

She sends forth the message of what the Lord can do for sinners. She is an encouragement to female believers, great age believers, and young believers for a godly example.

Anna is a witness to you who are yet unconverted. You need to worship God by redemption in Christ.

II SECOND, ANNA'S PERSISTENCY

It is very obvious that for Anna *to live was Christ*.

Anna served God in the temple the house of God, “**with fastings and prayers night and day.**” Anna sought the Lord and spent much time in communion with Him. Her worship was persistent, night and day, not of and on, here and there.

Anna was on talking terms with God. Her heart in tune with God.

There is a time set aside in her life, during the day and night to spend with God in fasting and prayer.

Now we do not know the words Anna prayed, but, considering she was a prophetess, the word referring to a teacher she would have known her OT Scriptures, and so in prayer, we can say Anna would have prayed over the word of God concerning the birth of Messiah, praying for the fulfilment of the seed of the woman.

That's why she is in the temple, praying and fasting. Anna, never doubted the promises of God.

Can I ask is there a time set aside in your day to speak with God and pray over the promises of God in building His church and to you.

Stay there until you see the Lord in His word. Never doubt the promises of God.

It is interesting to note in **verse 38** there are a combination of names in connection with Anna that reveal her own personal walk with God.

The very name **Anna** means **gracious or grace of God**. **Anna is the Greek name for the Hebrew name Hannah.**

Both Anna and Hannah have the same meaning. It is also wonderful to think that both were woman of prayer.

Furthermore, Anna is the **daughter of Phanuel**, this is the Greek name for the Hebrew place **Penuel** and **Peniel**.

But all three words mean- **to see face to face**. You know the account in **Gen 32:30** when Jacob was alone and there the Lord wrestled with Jacob in the prayer, and touched the hallow of his thigh. Jacob never walked the same again. Jacob was blessed

that day, "**and Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face.**"

Also, **verse 36** Anna of the **tribe of Aser**. Asher was the son of Jacob, and when he was born, Leah his Mother in **Gen 30:13** "**said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.**"

The very name **Asher** means **happy or blessed**. When combining all these thoughts – it was only by the grace of God Anna saw the face of God that day in the temple when she looked upon the infant Christ, and so she was truly happy or blessed.

What I am saying is this, when your walk with God is persistent, and you are in daily fellowship with God, and depend upon His promise you will be blessed, you will see the Lord through His word, and in His house.

III THIRD, ANNA'S PRAISE

"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord."

When Anna saw the Lord, she rejoiced, and praised God. For her Saviour. it was a public testimony of her faith.

The words "**gave thanks likewise**" are translated from one Greek word which means **to profess, to praise, to agree**.

The force of the words mean when Anna came into the temple, she continued to give thanks unto the Lord.

Anna offered continual praise, because the Saviour was born.

This is the same time Simeon saw Christ and **blessed Christ, God's salvation**. Therefore, Anna agreed with Simeon in his

praise about Christ. So she "likewise" gave thanks and praised God, for His redemption and redeemer, Jesus Christ,

Anna knew the seed of the woman, Christ would bruise the serpents head. On this foundation Anna knew the Saviour has come, to put away sin, and defeat the works of darkness.

When she seen Christ there was adoration, praise in her soul to God and glory in her speech for God.

The two go together. Believer thank and praise God for our blessed redeemer's birth, and for our sins He suffered and bled and died.

Believer always take time to praise the Lord, and to sing of the mercies of Lord. Praise Him for the Sinless life and substitutional death of Jesus Christ.

IV FOURTH, NOTICE ANNA'S PROCLMATION "and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Having seen Christ, and praised the Lord, then Anna was motivated to **speak of Him**.

Anna never left the temple to speak of Mary, Joseph or anyone else. Notice, **she spoke of Him to them all**.

In receiving a blessing, Anna was enabled to be a blessing.

When you praise God and have been blessed by God, you will be a blessing to others.

Christ is the great source of blessing, and so Anna desired that others who waited for Messiah would know He has come to dwell among them.

Jerusalem and the land of Israel as a whole was filled with darkness, sin and unbelief in the days when Christ was born.

Yet in the midst of such a dark scene, there are number of people in the temple, one is Anna, who remained faithful to the Lord and demonstrated that they truly belonged to this remnant of grace.

This small group of people in Jerusalem had not departed from the faith. They were looking for the Messiah to appear. They kept looking to His birth. What good news would it be to them to know that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Anna proclaimed Redemption in Christ. The word **redemption** means **to purchase, to buy back what was lost**.

The idea is of one hopeless to remain in bondage, burdened by debt unless they were bought with a price and set free.

Therefore, Anna told others the promised Redeemer had come to redeem, to set sinners free from sin's bondage and burden, by paying their sin debt with His life and death.

What about you, today, I urge you to Seek Christ now and in coming to know Him you will be able to rejoice in the blessed assurance of knowing and enjoying all that is in Him for sinners.

Believer, are you spreading Redemption in Christ, are you telling others with joy about the one who gave you such joy. Are you telling the lost of the Saviour, who is glad tidings of great joy.

Closing hymn **68 tune of 16 or 402**