

Today we are Faithful in Expression – How we express ourselves matters to God

- Here is what I'm not talking about...how expressive you are | Worship – Talking w hands
- Expression: Clearly and effectively communicating or revealing thought, feeling, or meaning  
What I'm doing right now is expressing myself...what you're doing right now is expressing

Know where you can see a high level of expression? When you're forced to wait  
I had to go to the courthouse to handle some paperwork from when nephew stole our car

- Take a number...15 people ahead of me...there hour and a half – Watched people wait

Today we look at the expressions of a woman who had to wait for a long time – Anna

- I don't know about you...I hate to wait: Wait for answers – line – results – information
- Anna = Those who faithfully wait on God will recognize His work and joyfully proclaim it  
Thousands of years waiting...Anna was there - **Big Idea - Christmas Declares Gods Plan**

<sup>36</sup>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 from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup>and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Set scene...Jesus has been born and is 40 days old and Mary / Joseph are presenting temple

- Presentation at the temple was the welcoming of a new Jewish child into society
    - Purification ritual for Mary – Dedication to the Lord – Sacrifice of two turtledoves
  - At the presentation of Jesus, we are introduced to two people – Simeon and Anna
- Simeon was promised by the Lord that he would not die before seeing the Messiah
- Simeon then blessed Mary & Joseph...delivered a solemn prophecy specifically to Mary
  - Prophecy is profound, and maybe we'll preach on it another day...want to meet Anna

- <sup>36</sup>And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.
- Prophetess – One of few women called...only in the New Testament (Philips Daughters)
    - She was recognized as someone through whom God communicated truth
  - Daughter of Phanuel & Tribe Asher – Face of God | North-west tribe...far from home  
She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup>and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.

Average age = 12-15 years old | Married 7 years | Widow for between 60-65 years  
Where do we find this 84-year-old...poor...lifelong widow...far from home – Temple waiting

## 1. Anna's story reminds us to: Pray expectantly (36-37)

She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.  
Think about Anna...think about being a widow for 60 years...widow from 1965...12 years

- She could have withdrawn – Grown Bitter – Concluded her usefulness was over

Instead, her loss became the soil in which devotion grew

**Look at her devotion** – Was in the temple day and night...worshipping...fasting...praying

- Priorities were shaped by the Lord – Schedule shaped by devotion – Identity presence
- Night and Day = Perseverance | Prayer = Dependence | Fasting = Hunger for the Lord

She was not merely religious—she was expectant | Fueled by hope in the Lords promises

- When you pray...do you have the expectancy of Anna? Do you believe your prayers

Before automation...lighthouses needed to be kept running by a man nicknamed 'Wickies'

- They lived onsite and their one job was to keep the fire burning...this is Anna  
Are you manning the fire? Are you in the church in devotion? Fasting and praying?
- Are you a Spiritual Wickie?** Have you turned your hardship into expectant devotion?

## Takeaway - Live your faith

Prayer – Reading – Fellowship – Evangelism – Repentance and Confession – Disciplines

- Fruit of the Spirit = Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Self-Control
- Acts service – Tending poor – Sheltering widows – Adopting | Are we spiritual wickies

## 2. Anna's story reminds us to: Worship gratefully (38a)

- <sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God
- Do you think it was accidental Anna comes right as Simeon is prophesizing over Jesus
  - Providential...the woman who was anxiously awaiting the savior was there...God chose
- Gratitude is easy when life is comfortable...flows from a heart has waited long and suffered
- Anna had waited decades—through widowhood, obscurity, and unanswered prayers
  - When God fulfilled His promise, first words not explanation, instruction...thanks to God
- This short phrase teaches us that recognizing God's work always produces worship  
Think about...Two different people could see the sunrise...could see light or beauty
- If you just see what the sun does you miss the beauty...Anna saw the beauty = Worship

Do you just see the stuff God does or do you see the beauty?

⇒ Do you just see nature and creation or do you see the perfect hand of the creator?

⇒ Do you just see circumstances as coincidence or do you see undeniable orchestration?

⇒ Do you see life change in people as normative or the ever working of the Holy Spirit?

⇒ Do you see outreach as a program or as a supernatural working of God to save nations?

When you see the Lord at work do you drop to your knees and cry out 'Thanks be to God'

**Takeaway - Express your gratitude** | I'm going to give you three ways to express gratitude

- a. Verbal Expression = Worship and Prayer | Praise – Singing (Worship singing prayers) ELF
- b. Obedient Living = Modeling God's Character | Submission – Integrity – Ethics
- c. Generosity and Service = Giving Back | Hospitality – Tithes – Offerings

This is how you can lead an Anna life and see the work of the Lord for what it is...worship

## 3. Anna's story reminds us to: Testify eagerly (38b)

<sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Look at evangelical message she carried...she spoke of Him...she got out and talked Jesus  
Think God's done with you? Look at this 84 year old widow...think of her out running around  
What is she doing? She is giving testimony - Do you know what testimony is?

Testimony = Expressing what you have seen and experienced God do

Faith is not meant to be private. Anna had waited decades, worshiped, fasted, and prayed

- When she finally recognized the Messiah, she spoke of Him to others
- A true encounter with Christ leads to joyful proclamation to those who are longing for hope
- Anna speaks to "all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem."
  - Targeted those longing for God's deliverance— spiritually prepared to hear good news
- There's an old illustration about preaching to 'Red Apples' – Let me explain...golf course  
Here's something want to clear up...you do not have one testimony...you have testimonies
- You have a testimony of your salvation...that is your primary testimony...you have more
    - Marriage – Finances – Injury / Illness – Addiction – Hardship/hurt – Worship/wonder

Here is what it takes to form a Testimony

What the situation was like before God intervened - How God intervened – Life now

**Takeaway - Voice your testimony**

Here is what I want you to learn from Anna...she was ready | At 84 years old...ready  
Are you ready and willing to express yourself for the Lord  
Your testimony is your greatest expression of the faith (RECAP)