

January 3, 2024

Slower Than Christmas

[Luke 2:36-40](#)

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)

How long have you ever waited for something? *Insert jokes about a man waiting on a woman shopping.*

For a child, waiting on Christmas seems like forever, birthing the saying “slower than Christmas.”

The Prophetess Anna, awaiting the literal birth of Christ, could teach us something about waiting.

Most posit Anna was between 84 and 107 when her wait ended. Though widowed and likely impoverished, Anna remained faithful by living in the temple and worshipping the Lord night and day.

In his book, *Twelve Extraordinary Women*, John MacArthur describes how Anna must have waited for decades, “She was singularly and completely devoted to the service and worship of God – mostly through her prayers and fasting.”

During her decades of widowed loneliness while awaiting the Messiah’s appearance, I imagine Anna must have wondered, Is God still good?

Are His promises true? Is He going to come through for us as He promised?

Is He ever going to send the Promised One of Israel to save and redeem us? Anna’s faithful life demonstrated the opposite of such questions.

In the verses that precede these, when Simeon saw Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus in the Temple and began prophesying, Anna so expectantly awaited her Savior that upon hearing the Good News, she also began offering thanks to the Lord. The rest of her life’s work was speaking of Jesus to “all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

Prayer: *Lord, may we all be found worshiping you through prayer and fasting and possessing sustaining faith and love for you when you again return for your church.*

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