



Someone once said that on every tomb stone there is found a dash between the date of birth and date of death, which begs the question, what will you do with your dash? Or more explicitly, what will your legacy be? Anna is only afforded three verses in the entire Bible, but there is a lot of information packed into them. Notice in Luke 2:36-38:

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. 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.

We're told that she only lived with her husband for seven years. If she married at the usual age of other girls back then, that would have placed her in early twenties when her husband died and young enough to remarry and still have a family, but Anna preferred to remain in the temple to worship, pray and fast for some sixty years! Imagine that! I wonder how many other women back then, or even now, would consider this to be a life well spent.

Leave alone women for why should we expect only women to not remarry these days. What about men? When a wife dies or moves on do men devote their lives and time to the work of the Lord? Or is marriage the first thing on everyone's mind and we start looking for #2, #3? This is an important question.

And so, there is a lot we can learn from Anna and her life of faith and devotion.

1. Anna's focus was on her God not her circumstances.

Here is another question to think about? How long have you stuck with something in spite of little to no support? This too is an important question. We may do this in our secular work or school or even in our relationships with immediate and extended families. But what about in the Lord's work? How would we describe ourselves in the work of the Lord: starters, part of the journey, quitters, finishers?

Women were not permitted into the inner courts of the temple. Their primary duty was to marry and raise children. She went against the culture of the day to remain in the temple. I don't think I would have been so inclined to persevere but think of how many people Anna was able to share her faith with, pray for and support over those sixty years. I believe she could remain there because her eyes were fixed on God and not her circumstances. We can endure and still run the race when our eyes are fixed on the Lord Jesus. Is our gaze on Him or on others? If we look around at who's doing what or this or that we will get discouraged and lose hope. In a race the runners do not look anywhere except at the finishing line which is their goal and their focus is on the race and what they need to do. If you look around, you will lose seconds and this can cost you the race. Is your eye fixed on the Lord Jesus or are you looking at this one or that one?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. – [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

2. Anna's life was one of obedience.

Anna obeyed God. She surrendered her will to God and did what God told her to do. How about you? Has God told you to do something, but you've been hesitant? How quick are you to obey when God gives you a directive knowing the blessings of being obedient far outweigh the blessings of getting your way?

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. – [1 Peter 4:10-11](#)

Do you know what gifts you have from God? If so, what are they and more importantly, are you using them to serve others in the Body of Christ? If not, then what are you doing to find out? The tragedy of the assembly and other assemblies as well is that there are many just floundering away and not serving or knowing what to do. They think they are living what in their minds is the Christian life and the tragedy or sad irony is that they have no fruits to show. A life not lived in the service of God is not a Christian life at all.

3. Anna's life demonstrates that with God all things are possible.

Even in the toughest of times (Anna being widowed at such a young age) God is with us. Anna assures us that we can be used by God no matter who we are, or what situation we find ourselves in.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; Your love, O LORD, endures forever – do not abandon the works of Your hands. [Psalm 138:7-9](#)

I was speaking to an elderly lady these last few days and someone who was a member of our assembly. And she is over 70 and still going strong for the Lord. She is a widow and has a number of health issues and she's not greatly proficient in the English language but what faith and what an example and her life speaks to me to this day and I've known her for 40+ years.

And despite her personal circumstances she is still faithful to her assembly and people think she is not very literate so what does she know. But God has given her discernment unparalleled and the ability to recognise the true character of people, even so-called believers and elders. Why has God done this? Because He has a plan and purpose for her life and she continues to minister to this day. She

ministers to her children and grandchildren and remains fervent in prayer using her phone and messenger. We need more men and women like this.

And I told her on New Year's eve, God has kept her alive because He has work for her to do. It is not over yet. Until she has breath, she is to keep going on for her Lord.

And so, able-bodied, educated and financially stable saints, what are we doing for the Lord? A life not lived in the service of God and a life of disobedience to God is not a Christian life at all!

4. God provided for Anna.

How was Anna able to provide for herself residing in the temple night and day? The answer is, she didn't, God did. Being a widow, Anna, had to rely on others to feed and clothe her. The Lord provided for her and He will provide for us too!

My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not slipped. I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer. –[Psalm 17:5-6](#)

5. Anna was courageous and committed.

I don't think I need to go into the kind of courage and commitment it would take for anyone to remain in God's house night and day ministering to others and telling others about the coming Saviour. I thought of [Joshua 1:9](#) for courage, *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, [push past your fears to reach your goals] for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

For us we might not have the temple today, but we have the assembly that we belong to. What commitment are we showing to the assembly – its people, activities, prayer life and various ministries? Have you asked God what he wants you to do in 2022 and beyond? Or will another year go by without you doing nothing or even the bare minimum?

Note Romans 5:3-5 for commitment:

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us – they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Is this our view of trials and challenges? Do we think they are good for us or just a nuisance and kill-joy? Do we still continue running the race or do we stop and give up? Do we endure or lose hope?

6. Anna understood what patience meant.

She waited for Christ to come despite the many years that had passed. This one truly hits me right at my core, for patience has never been one of my best virtues. I am not sure I could have waited that long, but Anna could wait because of all the reasons I stated above. She knew God, she was completely surrendered and committed to Him, and she knew more so than anyone perhaps, that with God all things are possible.

In closing the following Bible verses from Colossians 1:11-12 are instructive: *We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people, who live in the light.* - [Col 1:11-12](#)

Change is upon us all everywhere, and especially for all who are Christians or with Christian background or associations. Doctrinal decay, moral deterioration and the; “rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing” state of things is widespread and deeply entrenched everywhere. Even so in Samabula Gospel Chapel. Revelation 3:17 presents a strong and timely warning and this has much to say to us as it did to the Laodicean church: ¹⁷*For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

The reality is that even if reduced to simply two or three gathered in the Name of the Son of GOD our Lord Jesus Christ, He will be with and among us in all His glorious grace and power. We need nothing else.

Shall we pray: