

watch and wait
for God
to answer
prayer.



CURRENT THEME:
Characters at the Cradle

MEMORY VERSE

“And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.” **Luke 2:40**

JANUARY 11 | LIFE APPLICATION

Watch and wait for God to answer prayer.

Today's Scripture: Luke 2:36-39

Characters at the Cradle: "God is Faithful - Anna"

Review last week's lesson:

"And Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." **Luke 2:19**

What were "all these things" that Mary treasured in her heart and pondered?

Think back to all that has happened since we first knew about Mary in **Luke 1!**

- The angel Gabriel's visit
- Zechariah and Elizabeth's miracle baby at an older age
- Her time with Elizabeth (when Elizabeth's 6-month-old baby leapt in the womb in the presence of her newly conceived baby named Jesus)
- The angel Gabriel's visit to Joseph (he surely shared his angelic visitation story with Mary)
- The birth of Jesus
- The shepherds' surprising visit to the stable where Jesus was born
- Simeon sees the Messiah he had been waiting for — baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph in the temple

This week: Anna has also been watching and waiting, and she is also able to see baby Jesus in the temple!

Discuss **Luke 2:36-39**

"36 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, 37 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. 38 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. 39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth."

1. Before reading **verses 36, 37**, prepare your family by saying: **After I read, be ready to tell me what you learned about Anna in this passage.**

Then, after reading, let your family members tell what they learned about Anna and then make a list.

- Anna was a prophetess. **What does that mean?** (Someone who speaks forth God's truth.) **Did you know that there were other prophetesses in**

the Bible? (Miriam in **Exodus 15**, Deborah in **Judges 4**, Hulda in **2 Kings 22**, Philip's 4 daughters in **Acts 21**, and now Anna.)

- Anna was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.
- Anna was an older woman. **How do we know this?** (Anna had been married for just 7 years and was a widow for 84 years. That would make her over 100 years old!)
- **What was unusual about Anna's faith?** (She never left the temple. She was there day and night.) **What did she do in the temple?** (She worshipped, prayed and fasted.)
- At the very hour that Simeon had seen Jesus, Anna began to give thanks to God. **Why?** (Because she knew that Jesus was the answer to her prayers. He was "God's salvation for all peoples" — the Messiah that had been promised by God.)

2. Why is worship, prayer, and fasting important? Read **Matthew 7:27**:

"For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

Remember our **Life Application** from last week: God always answers our prayers! Anna believed this and she never stopped worshiping, fasting, and praying — and she was able to see God answer her prayers for the Messiah!

3. See **verse 38**. When Anna heard Simeon's words spoken to Jesus and to Mary, she also began to thank God and to prophecy:

- She gave thanks to God (after all those years of waiting, now answered)
- She began to speak to all about Jesus, the one they too were waiting for...
- And about the redemption of Jerusalem

4. What did Mary and Joseph do after all of this happened at the temple? (**Verse 39:** *They returned home to Galilee, to the town of Nazareth.*)

A word from our pastor, David Chadwick

Anna is a beautiful character during Jesus' first days on earth. May we all have her passionate zeal for Jesus. May we all want to see him glorified in the world as Anna did. May we all seek him with the same kind of zeal that Anna did.

Bottom line: In our lives, may Jesus alone and always receive all the glory. He is the only one worthy of all our praise. **And no matter what your heart's desire, keep on asking, seeking, and knocking on God's door for answers.** Persevere like Anna did! And wait expectantly upon the Lord for his answer.

Family Challenge:

Anna had the breakthrough she had prayed for! And we can too.

Our church is observing a 21 day fast for a breakthrough this month.

Do you have an area where you would like to see a breakthrough? Use the guide on **“21 Days of Fasting and Prayer”** that can be found on the MOHC website, or pick up a guide at church on Sunday. **It’s not too late to start!**
momentsof hopechurch.org/prayer

What can we learn from Anna’s example? We don’t all have to go live in the temple, but we can ask God for breakthroughs, for his guidance, and for his blessings in our lives.

Anna showed us the importance of:

1. **Perseverance:** the ability to wait well in worship, fasting and prayer.
2. **Passion for Jesus:** love for him and giving our lives to him.
3. The **desire to tell others about Jesus.**

Ask your family to think about an area in their lives where they need a breakthrough. For example, it could be in an area where they need to make a change or correction, something they would love to have happen, a broken relationship, an illness that they have, or someone they care about who needs help. After an hour or so, bring everyone back together and share the place where they need to have a breakthrough.

Then, following the “21 Days” guide, go ahead and get started!

Finally, watch for God’s answers! And when he does answer, share it with others as Anna did! Keep a journal to record answered prayers, or give each person a box where they can keep notes on answered prayers.

Prayer: *Jesus, Thank you for Anna’s example of perseverance while waiting for our prayers to be answered. Help us to remember that worship, fasting, and prayer are all important parts of seeking a breakthrough from you. We have faith that you WILL answer our prayers and we will watch and wait until you do. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*