

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 11 June - 10:30AM. Danny speaking.

Sunday 18 June - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

Sunday 25 June - 10:30AM. Dr Douglas Jacoby speaking.

Sunday 02 July - Wellington Country park outdoor service with the Thames Valley churches of Christ.

Sunday 09 July - Service 10:30AM. Christian Xavier will be our visiting speaker. He hails from our sister-congregation in North West London where he and his wife Temi oversee the Youth Ministry.

Sunday 16 July - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

Sunday 23 July - 10:30AM. Mike Desouza speaking

Sunday 30 July - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking.

'Awesome Anna' part 2



The Anna podcasts can be found [here](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/malcolm-cox/id429885944): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/malcolm-cox/id429885944>

"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, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 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." (Luke 2:36-38 NIV11)

What do we learn about Anna's relationship with God?

Her relationship with God was not negatively affected by her age.

Anna is described as 'very old'. It is not fashionable to comment on a woman's age. Indeed, it is considered downright rude. "There are three things you don't ask a woman: her age, her weight, and how many shoes she owns." - How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2003)

However, Luke's comment is intended as a compliment. Her dedication to the worship of God has not been dimmed by the passing years — and there are a lot of those years. How many?

It is possible she lived 84 years as a widow. If Anna married at 14, was widowed at 21, she then encounters Joseph, Mary and Jesus 84 years later when she is 105. That would make her the same age as the apocryphal figure Judith when she died (Judith 16:28).¹

Nonetheless, whatever her precise age, she kept a disciplined schedule of corporate and personal

¹ (<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/judith-a-remarkable-heroine/>)

worship. She did not use age as an excuse to reduce her devotion.

Applications

1. Different stages of life present challenges, but also opportunities. She was past menstruation so that meant she could be more devoted than earlier in her life (menstruating women were excluded from the temple if not by direct command, certainly indirectly as a result of the instructions in Leviticus 15:19-23). Anna's opportunities to participate in worship expanded as she got older which led to her spending more time in worship than before. Are you aware of the ways in which your current stage of life is creating unique opportunities for you to connect with God? What is different in your circumstances from 5 years ago? How might your devotional practices change as a result?
2. Her vulnerability was an opportunity to live by faith. Old age makes the strongest of us weak. She remained devoted despite that vulnerability. In this she symbolises the marginalised and vulnerable — a theme in Luke — and is a model for us in living by faith. How can you turn your weaknesses into strength? Is God prompting you to seek his strength in some way? When do you feel spiritually strong? What is happening or has recently happened to create that experience?

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.” (Hebrews 11:32-34 NIV11)

“That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

(2 Corinthians 12:10 NIV11)

Conclusion

We will conclude today by considering another faithful older person, Caleb.

“So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.” (Joshua 14:10-12 NIV11)

Caleb knew God was with him — and had always been with him — from his youth to his old age. No matter what our current age, God provides ways for us to meaningfully connect with him. I hope Anna's example of devoted worship will inspire you as much as she has me.

God bless, Malcolm

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www.aimukandireland.com

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