

“She gave thanks to the Lord”

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“And coming in that instant, she gave thanks to the Lord...” Luke 2:38a

Not long after Jesus’ birth, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple to present Him to God, as the law passed down since Moses’ time required for a first-born child. While it was certain to be a special moment in their lives, it was also something that they would no doubt have expected to be fairly routine, like a christening, baptism, or dedication would be today in our own experience.

As soon as the little family entered the temple, though, things started going a different route. Luke chapter 2 tells us, “And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, [Simeon] took Him up in his arms and blessed God...” (which was probably pretty exciting, right? I mean, you enter the temple, and immediately someone starts blessing God because of your baby!) And Simeon continued to speak, giving praise to God, blessing Mary and Joseph, and speaking prophetically about the future of both Jesus and Mary.

While Luke records the response of Joseph and Mary as they “marveled at those things which were spoken,” I can imagine there was probably a bit more going through their minds, especially as Simeon continued on. Who is this guy? Are we sure letting him hold the baby is a good idea? Can we trust what he is saying? And that was all before things got real; Simeon’s final words weren’t exactly filled with comfort:

Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

If I put myself in Joseph and Mary’s shoes, I’m thinking, “Wait, what? A sword piercing my soul? Thoughts revealed? Is this still a good thing?” The excitement that accompanied Simeon’s first words would have given way for some serious concerns and doubts. I imagine a silent prayer coming out right about now, “God, are You in all of this?”

As if in immediate answer, God brings in Anna. Luke 2:38 tells us she came on the scene “the instant” Simeon’s words were coming to an end. A devout, elderly widow, I imagine Anna immediately made you feel comfortable, like a grandmother would, and you probably could hear the wisdom in her voice. In that instant, Anna gave thanks to the Lord for Jesus. Any questions or concerns, any momentary doubts were quickly answered. Yes, God was in this. Jesus’ very existence was reason to give thanks.

If you’ve walked with the Lord for any period of time, you probably already recognize parts of this story from

your own experience. The Savior has come, and when you join His team, you're signing up for a life that won't necessarily follow the route you expect. Yes, there will be things to be excited about. There will be tough times, too. You will have your own moments to "marvel" at what is going on; doubts and questions will come. Through it all, though, you can be assured God is in it. You have Jesus, and that alone is reason to give thanks.

Questions:

What can you do to be "Anna" to someone this week?

Have you taken time to give thanks to God for Jesus' presence in your life?