

12-22-1997

Advent Devotional "Simeon and Anna"

S. Ray Granade

Ouachita Baptist University, granade@obu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work

Recommended Citation

Granade, S. Ray, "Advent Devotional "Simeon and Anna"" (1997). *Creative Works*. 30.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work/30

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Creative Works by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

Advent Devotional
December 22, 1997
Simeon and Anna
Luke 2:25-38

My mother is the oldest of her siblings; I was her first (and only) born. My wartime birth found Mother at her parents' house while my father was overseas. I came home from the hospital to that house, and I seemed forever returning. Our geographical closeness bred a corresponding relational one as I grew up. I even use the name they all shared. Mother's parents lived into their nineties, and their age combined with Mother's and my birth order to extend our relationship through most of my life.

By the time Ronnie and I moved to Arkadelphia in '71, Momma Ray and Pop had aged more than the century. They never saw our home, and our increasingly-fewer visits occurred mostly at holidays, usually Christmas. Also increasingly during their last decade of life they asked a recurring question. I rarely saw them that they did not wonder aloud why God continued to extend their lives. Friends died, relatives died, their world became more and more circumscribed by the restrictions of age's infirmities and life's vicissitudes. Yet they lived on.

As my parents age, I see the same question forming in their minds. My mother has surrendered, temporarily, the Sunday School class she has taught for over twenty years. The doctor has told my father that over a half-century of preaching is enough. He should surrender the pulpit; he's earned his rest, and should take life easy

now. The question occasionally emerges, as it did implicitly with Mother's folks--what is our purpose now?

It is a question that I ask as well about my own life. I sometimes think it a sign of advancing age. Perhaps age intensifies the question; it certainly offers more opportunities to ask. But I have asked the question at several points in my life, and students around me ask it all the time.

Simeon and Anna must have shared that question.

Luke tells us of two old and faithful servants, both righteous and devout, servants to whom God had promised a peek into the future. Both were advanced in years: Simeon's age is implied, but Luke calls Anna a prophetess of eighty-four. We know that Anna was a widow. In my mind's eye, both resemble my grandparents. Their time has passed, their friends and relations have died. Surely God's promise has dimmed with the years; surely both wonder what their purpose can be.

Mary and Joseph enter the picture. They are following the Law, purifying her and sanctifying Jesus. God's first command to Moses after the Israelites left Egypt was that every first-born male child should be consecrated to Him. And so they enter the Temple.

For Simeon and Anna, it is a day like any other. They are following their individual routines, wondering why their lives continue, wondering what purpose they can have in the scheme of things. Then, unprompted by anyone around them, their purpose emerges from the routine. They recognize, in the unremarkable young family before them, the ultimate aim of their lives.

Faced with the Messiah, Simeon and Anna loudly offer thanks to God. They are witnesses who have seen the future, individuals called upon to offer praise and

testimony. Their long lives have pointed to this single event, this one moment in their extreme age. Simeon sums up the situation for them both with his observation that now he can die in peace. The wondering is over. They have their answer. Their faithfulness has been a reflection of His faithfulness, their willingness rewarded with His direction. I wonder--will I trust this answer in my own life?

Ray Granada