

THE PRODUCE OF PRAYER | JANUARY 27, 2019

Two weeks ago, Luke talked about the *Mystery of Prayer* and the importance of learning to be attentive *to* and dependant *on* God. Last week, we heard from Dave who talked about the *Point of Prayer*. In prayer we remember God, we are brought to a humble place, we are given hope and we are open to the supernatural. Today we are talking about the *Point of Prayer*. **Luke 2:36-38 “Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.”** Here in Luke chapter two we are introduced to Anna, a widower and prophet. What we know of Anna: She was married. Seven years into her marriage her husband died. In the midst of her pain and loss, she didn't allow herself to become bitter and angry with God, instead she planted herself in the temple where prayer became the focus of her life. She spent decades in the Temple! It's clear that Anna's devotion to prayer produced intimacy with God that connected her to God's heart for the world and His work in the world. What we see in Anna, in these three short verses, is that prayer produced in her passion, persistence, patience and praise.

PRAYER PRODUCES INTIMACY WITH GOD THAT CONNECTS US TO HIS HEART |
LUKE 2:38A “SHE CAME ALONG JUST AS SIMEON WAS TALKING TO MARY AND JOSEPH, AND SHE BEGAN PRAISING GOD”

- To effectively be God's hands, we must have his heart.
 - To be effective in doing God's work we need to be passionate about people because there is a big difference between someone who *has* to do something and someone who *gets* to do something.
 - The sheer act of Anna's persistence showed that she was truly invested (decades in the Temple praying and fasting) and the praise she gave was a natural response to her life of devotion to God.
 - To spend time in prayer is to spend time in the presence of God and since we become like those we spend time with it transforms us into the lines of God which means that our will becomes shaped to the will of God and our desires become aligned to His.
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PRAYER PRODUCES INTIMACY WITH GOD THAT CONNECTS US TO HIS WORK |
LUKE 2:38B "SHE TALKED ABOUT THE CHILD TO EVERYONE WHO HAD BEEN
WAITING EXPECTANTLY"

- Intimacy with God that is produced in prayer gives us meaning to His work. We aren't just doing God's work because we have to. When our hearts are transformed to His likeness we begin to wholeheartedly believe in that work.
- Anna got caught up in the work of God.
- We read a similar story in John's gospel, where a Samaritan woman has a profound encounter with Jesus at the well. She's so excited that she runs back to her village to tell people about him, leaving her water jar behind.
- The intimacy we have with God naturally calls for a response. We see God at work and we want to be a part of it.
- In many ways, prayer takes the extraordinary and breathes it into our ordinary. Our ordinary lives are just that - ordinary, and yet, when we begin to see the way that God does the extraordinary, we recognize that he does so through our ordinary.
- "Prayer changes the world because prayer changes us." Prayer transforms us to become God's hands in the world.

CONCLUSION

- John 15:4-5 "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."
- A fruitful life is a life connected to Jesus.
- To remain in Jesus is to have a close, personal relationship with him and that is developed through consistent times of prayer.
- Prayer produces intimacy with God that transforms our hearts to His likeness and allows us to effectively become his hands in the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In that ways does prayer change us?
2. Can you think of ways in which God breathed the extraordinary into your ordinary?
3. What have you felt encouraged or challenged by through out the series?