

The Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less

1. Luke 2.36-38 describes the 2nd character to offer praise over Jesus on the 8th day of His life, as He was presented for circumcision in the Temple: Anna, the old, devout, widowed prophet.

2. Anna's joy was attentive and spontaneous, the result of a lifetime of spiritual preparation.

3. The opportunities for joy may be random and unpredictable, but the ability to respond to them is not; your spiritual habits and practices are the requisite prep needed.

4. Anna's joy was sparked by someone else's praise (i.e., Simeon)

5. "Joy multiplies when it's shared." (R. A. Salvatore)

6. Like the palm branches used on what we now call Palm Sunday, "the redemption of Jerusalem" was a common phrase used for the Jewish hope that a Messiah would come, and lead a revolt against Rome to secure Jewish independence once again (see Luke 24.21 for a similar phrase).

7. So Anna's joy about Jesus was misguided and inexact; like so many others both during His forthcoming public ministry and even the biblical Advent stories themselves; Anna was more inaccurate than accurate about His mission.

8. We ought to find comfort in this: our spiritual journey takes us from the joy we thought we'd find in Jesus to the joy He actually offers.

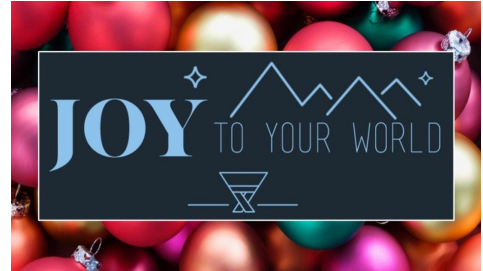
9. We will spend more time being wrong about God, scripture, and Jesus than we do being right, so we need to learn to "forgive ourselves for not knowing what we didn't know before we learned it." (Maya Angelou)

10. Spiritual growth is often more about unlearning than learning (Richard Rohr), so we should expect to outgrow or need to lay aside misconceptions about Christianity and Jesus on a fairly regular basis.

A Prayer for the Week

A Prayer Adapted from Philippians 1.25 and 3.13:

Lord, until our dying day may we continue to progress in the faith, moving from where we are to where You're taking us, leaving behind whatever we must in order to stretch forward to what You have for us next, and through this pursuit may You lead us into greater and greater joy, amen.



A Video Recommendation from our Christian Education Committee

Here's a short, special edition video about Christmas from "The Chosen": [The Chosen Special Christmas Episode](#)

A Song for the Day

Anna's fallibility, with which we can all relate, led me (Pastor Chris) to find this creative take on the well-known Christmas carol, "O Come All Ye Faithful." - I hope you find it as moving as I did:

"O Come All You Unfaithful" - [O Come, All You Unfaithful](#)

Resources for Celebrating Christmas at Home with Your Family This Week

From The Presbyterian Outlook, here are a bunch of resources to use with your family anytime this week, but they're specifically intended for Christmas Eve:

[December 24 — Christmas Eve: Family faith formation @ home](#)