**“Hannah”**

“A Story of Gratitude”

November 15, 2020

* I know many who have prayed **under pressure** or **distress**.
* Some pray when they are **afraid**.
* Others pray when there is **no hope** in sight.
* A few pray, just to **give thanks** and **rejoice** when they have received their answer from God. **This was Hannah.**
* **As we read Hannah’s prayer, consider if you’ve ever prayed anything like Hannah here in ….**

**1 Samuel 2:1-11**

Then **Hannah prayed** and said: “My heart **rejoices in the Lord**; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my **enemies**, for I delight in your **deliverance**. 2 “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; **there is no Rock like our God**. 3 “Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, **for the Lord is a God who knows**, and by him deeds are weighed. 4 “The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength. 5 Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry are hungry no more. She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away. 6 **“The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.** 7 The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. 8 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. “**For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s; on them he has set the world**. 9 **He will guard the feet of his faithful servants**, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. **“It is not by strength that one prevails;** 10 those who oppose the Lord will be broken. The Most High will thunder from heaven; the Lord will judge the ends of the earth. “He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” 11 Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but **the boy ministered before the Lord** under Eli the priest.

* **Do you know the story from 1 Samuel chapter one?**

El-ka-nah had two wives. One was Hannah and one was Pe-nin-nah. Pe-nin-nah **had children**, but Hannah had **none**. Verse 6 say, **the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb,** and her rival (who was Pe-nin-nah) kept **provoking** or **irritating** her. This seems to be an ongoing occurrence because verse 7 says, **this went on year after year**. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her **till she wept and would not eat.**

**Hannah is distressed because ….**

1. **Hannah wanted a child**

* I have personally witnessed family members who have had a difficult time conceiving and I’ve observed the sorrow this brings especially on the would-be mother.
* Now, compound that disappointment **times 10,** by understanding that in Hannah’s day, women in her culture found their **significance** in bearing children.
* Furthermore, Hannah **wanted** children, but **could not conceive**.
* To make matters worse, her rival (which was her husband’s other wife) knew this, and **used it** to belittle Hannah.

I’m sure as Hannah watched her **rival** **conceive**, **bear children**, **love** and **raise her children**; this must have made Hannah even more **depressed**, **sad** and even **hurt**.

What we don’t know is…. How many times…

1. **Hannah prayed for a child**

* The scripture doesn’t tell us about **Hannah’s prayer life** before **chapter one** and **verse 10**, but I have to believe that it is very possible that **Hannah prayed for a son every day**.
* Probably, every one of us here this morning and listening on Facebook can **relate in some way to Hannah’s desperation**. Some of you may have **prayed for a** **child,** like Hannah, but others of us have prayed for **other concerns,** that were just as important to us, as a child was to Hannah.
* **Desperation comes in many forms;** 
  + the need for a **job**,
  + a serious health problem;
  + followed by a prayer for **healing**.
  + **What do you do when desperation finds you?**
    - When desperate times come, the only thing we can do is to **turn to ONE** **who is** **bigger than our problem**;
      * to the **ONE** who **created** and **controls** the universe;
      * **Only God can** **remedy** **our situation**.
* The text **doesn’t** say, but I believe Hannah **prayed** and **prayed**, **but that’s just coming from** **my own personal experience** **with** **desperation** **and** **prayer**.
* What the **text DOES say** is that Hannah is **desperate**, that desperation was caused by **infertility** and her **rival** noticed that; “**God had closed her womb.”**

**Have you ever been desperate like Hannah?**

* **Story**: I have a friend who told me about his wife fasting in prayer one day a week for a year; seeking God to open her womb; she wanted a baby.
* When you are desperate, **what** do you do?
* **I’m not suggesting that God will answer every desperate prayer with the answer we want. However…..**

What Hannah does **next** **has been written for us**, and God’s answer to her prayer was recorded by the child (Samuel) that came as a result of…..

1. **Hannah’s vow concerning the child she prayed for**

**1 Samuel 1:9-11**

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord’s house. 10 In her deep anguish **Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly.** 11 And she made a **vow**, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, the**n I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life**, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

* **Hannah was at Shiloh for worship**: Hannah is with her family at one of the annual festivals.
* The Law required all adult Hebrew males to appear at the tabernacle or temple of the LORD for the three major religious festivals of the year.
* At this period of history the tabernacle was at **Shiloh** about 15 miles north of Ramah.
* **There at Shiloh**, **worshipping at one of these festivals**, **Hannah** **pours out her soul to God and requests a son**, but this time **Hannah’s request included a VOW,** that if God would **grant** her request and **give her a son**, **she would “give him back to the LORD for as long as he lived.”**
* So, **Hannah**, at this place of **worship**, is observed by the **man of God, Eli.** So passionate was **Hannah’s silent prayer** that Eli, the high priest noticed the movement of her lips and assumed she was intoxicated. When the priest learned about her trouble, “**he assured her that God would answer her prayer.”**

**1 Samuel 1:17-20**

17 Eli answered, **“Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.”** 18 She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. 19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. **Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her**. 20 So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, “**Because I asked the Lord for him.”**

* **What does true gratitude look like?**

Notice how Hannah begins…

**“My heart rejoices in the LORD;”** (I Sam.2:1)

**A. Hannah here acknowledges God’s provision.**

1. **Hannah Responds To The Lord Who Answered Her. “**

**“My horn is exalted in the LORD.”**

Here we sense the overflowing joy of Hannah’s heart. She was careful in her praise and prayer. She did **not** praise the **gift** but the **Giver**; she went directly to the source of her joy, who was – **Jehovah**!

The phrase, “My horn is exalted in the LORD” means **“my power is great in the Lord.”** The horn is the symbol of **strength**, and is taken from oxen whose strength is in their horns.

1. **Hannah References The Enemies Who Criticized Her.**

**Verse 1b** - “**I smile at my enemies**.”

* Hannah is saying, “Now I can answer those that criticized my barrenness.”
* A barren woman was a second-class citizen in the society of that day. She had heard the hurtful remarks of women with children, including her rival.
* Now she was no longer looked down upon. She could hold her head high and **smile** at those who had been her enemies.

1. **Hannah Rejoices In Salvation That God Gave Her.**

“because I rejoice in **Your** salvation.”

It is very interesting that there is **no direct reference to Samuel** in the prayer. She is completely absorbed in **praise to God**. **He is the source** of her blessing and the **focus of her faith**. **He is her salvation**.

Although Hannah cherished Samuel, she knows the **gift** is not greater than the **Giver**.

1. **HANNAH ADORES GOD’S PERSON.**

**Luke 6:5** says, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” and Hannah’s heart was **full of praise to God**.

**Hannah’s prayer speaks volumes about the depth of her understanding and faith in God.**

**Hannah Exalts God because of His Greatness.**

“No one is holy like the LORD, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any **rock** like our God. (Verse 2)

We could go on and on pointing out the **details of this prayer**, but I think you get the picture.

“The word ‘**anointed’** is in the last line of the prayer and creates anticipation, **preparing us for what is coming** ……

Here Hannah speaks prophetically in **anticipation of Jesus**, who is God’s anointed heir to the throne.

A thousand years later **Mary** sang a similar song and personalized it to sing about the **Child in her womb** who would bring **salvation to the world**. (Luke 1:46-55)

* **If you read on, you will see that the Lord continues to bless Hannah with three more sons and two daughters.**
* **Do you know God; as Hannah described Him in her prayer?**
* **Is He for your provision, who is great in power and is He the one you adore?**
* **The anointed one Hannah spoke of is described in …**

**Hebrews 7:25**

**Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

* **As God provided Eli to intercede for Hannah, so**
* **God has provided Jesus to intercede for you.**

**Whatever you are distressed by today, please know that you can whisper your desperate prayer; and Jesus sees your lips moving, and knows your heart.**

**And he is …. Able to save completely, those who come to God through Him – Jesus.**