

Hannah's Heart for God

1 Samuel 1:1-20

October 18, 2009

Intro

We come now to the first book of Samuel. The story begins during the time of the Judges and then transitions to the time when Israel was ruled by kings. Samson would have been the Judge during this time. The condition of the nation was not good spiritually and they were being oppressed by their enemies, specifically, the Philistines.

The nation was in terrible moral decay, and we read in chapter three that any word from the Lord was rare in those days and visions were infrequent.

There was terrible corruption in the priesthood as well. We read in verse three of chapter one that Eli was priest in Shiloh, but then in chapter two we see that his two sons were running the priesthood in an extremely corrupt way. There were rats in the priesthood. That was the condition of the nation when the events of chapter one took place.

The hero of the first chapter is a woman by the name of Hannah, but before we meet her we first gain an understanding as to what was happening in her family. We are introduced to Elkanah who was from Ephraim, he had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Great trouble came from the fact that Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not. The assumption could be that it was because Hannah was barren that Elkanah took Peninnah as a second wife in order to have children.

It's also important to understand that if a woman did not have children during that time that she would be considered cursed of God, or that there was some sin in her life.

However, it's also important to understand that Elkanah loved Hannah very much. Elkanah seems to have been an upright man of God and though Hannah was barren, she loved God and honored him in her life.

I. We Need Godly Persistence

- 1 Hannah's situation was very difficult to tolerate. From verse five we understand that her husband loved her much more than he loved Peninnah.
- 2 But that only served to make matters worse, because it caused Peninnah to deliberately provoke her bitterly in order to irritate her.
- 3 But the pain of Peninnah's taunts was only made worse by the cultural belief that a woman was barren because God was against her.
- 4 Actually, this view was in error because women's barrenness was not a reflection of their heart, but of the heart of the nation.

A. Don't retaliate when someone is against you

- 5 Hannah was enduring Peninnah's accusations and taunts year after year, yet we do not see any evidence that she ever tried to retaliate.
- 6 Hannah could easily have made Peninnah feel very badly because Elkanah clearly

loved Hannah more.

- 7 Instead of retaliating, Hannah turned to the Lord.
- 8 There is a great lesson here for all of us. Many people find themselves in a difficult dispute or in an unjust situation. Some people respond by trying to hurt other people with their bitter words, but not Hannah, and hopefully not us.
- 9 ... Even though it's very tempting...

Illus - Christianity Today ran a story about an elderly woman in a Cadillac who was having trouble finding a parking space at the mall. After circling for 10 minutes, she saw a minivan that was pulling out near the mall entrance. She put on her turn signal and waited patiently and you can guess what happened next...

- 10 Settling a score may seem satisfying; revenge may seem rewarding, but it most certainly is not God's way.

Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Romans 12:18-19, If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

B. There is a place that only God can fill

- 1 We turn now to Hannah's husband. When he saw this tragedy unfolding year after year, he tried to comfort her in a way that only a husband can, by telling her that she had no reason to be crying.
- 2 Actually, at first he said to her, "Why are you weeping?" In fact, it may seem that he is rather thick, that he just doesn't get it. This, no doubt, is a result of the fall of Adam... but he's trying, and God blesses a man who tries!
- 3 Hannah's husband then pulls out the best line of all, "Am I not better to you than 10 sons?"
- 4 In other words, "Baby, you got me! What more could you possibly want? Aren't I better than 10 sons?"
- 5 Yes, it is true that Hannah's husband loved her very much, but there is a place in our hearts that only God can fill. You will be disappointed if you expect a husband or a wife to truly satisfy your heart when God wants the first portion of your heart for him.

App - Let your heart be filled, satisfied with God and then you'll be the wife or husband you're called to be.

- 6 There is a beautiful picture of this in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There, Paul makes it clear that Christ loves your wife or your husband better than you ever possibly could, and so we should follow after Him in our love for each other.

Ephesians 5:25-26, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

C. We need more persistence in prayer

- 7 Hannah's response is to go to the Tabernacle to pray. But what we saw in verse seven is that Hannah was going to the Tabernacle every year in prayer.
- 8 No doubt it would seem to her that God has delayed his answer, but still she prayed year after year; and what we see is that God had a purpose in all that He was doing.
- 9 Jesus taught his disciples how important it was to seek God in prayer.

Luke 11:9, "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened."

- 1 But what we also see in the context of what Jesus was teaching his disciples was that we should be persistent when we pray.

Luke 11:5-8 The importance of persistence

- 2 There is an example in the book of Matthew of a gentile woman who approached Jesus about her hurting child. At first, Jesus gave her a gentle no by saying, "It is not good to give the children's bread to the family pet." But this woman would not give up and responded with both humility and persistence.

Matthew 15:27-28, But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

II. The Lord Hears Our Hearts

- 1 When Hannah went to the Tabernacle to pray, Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost as she prayed.

2 He saw her praying, but God heard her heart.

A. Pour out your soul before the Lord

- 1 In verse 10, we see right away that as she is praying to the Lord she is weeping bitterly.
- 2 She made a vow to God that if God would look upon the affliction of her life and remember her by giving her a son, then she would give that boy to the Lord all the days of his life, and that he would be a Nazarite from birth.
- 3 As we have seen before, when people make a vow to God, it is often a way of trying to manipulate God to get what they want.
- 4 But what we see here is not that at all. She wants more than a son; she wants to be able to give something to God that means the most to her.
- 5 It is as though she was saying, "Not only is my life yours, but those things in my life that are the most precious, I give to you. I cannot be satisfied until I know that you hear my prayer, and know my heart."
- 6 To make matters worse, when Eli saw her praying, he saw her lips moving, but did not hear her voice and assumed that she was drunk.
- 7 But her response was both beautiful and powerful, "I have poured out my soul before the Lord."
- 8 This is a powerful example to us of how we should pray. Many people pray just with their head, but what God wants is our heart.

Jeremiah 29:13, You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Psalm 62:8, Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

2 Chronicles 16:9, For the eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout the whole earth in order to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are completely His.

- 9 It's interesting that she is moving her lips, but there is no sound. In other words, this is a great verse to help us understand that God hears our heart when we pray.

Psalm 139:4, Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all.

- 10 In fact, he even understands the groanings of our heart when there are no words at all that make sense.

Romans 8:26, In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

B. Faith will change your countenance

- 11 When Eli realized that she was a sincere woman who had poured out her soul before the Lord, he answered and said, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him."
- 12 In the scripture it tells us that her face was no longer sad. In other words, she was convinced that God heard her prayer and that she would be content to wait for the answer.
- 13 What we see is faith arising in Hannah and we immediately see the change in her heart and life.
- 14 This also is a great lesson for us because so many people allow fear or anguish to discourage them.
- 15 Fear and anguish are understandable responses at first, but faith must arise in us so that we stand firm and respond in godliness to our troubles.

2 Timothy 1:7, For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

- 1 Prayer changed Hannah. God was wanting a man that would change the nation and allowed Hannah's prayers to be delayed until she was ready to trust God completely and to dedicate her son to the Lord.
- 2 She was absolutely faithful to her word and she took Samuel to the Tabernacle where he was trained under Eli and became one of the greatest men of God in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 15:1, Then the Lord said to me, "Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go!"