

***“Hannah’s Example” By E A Terry Delivered 5/12/19***

Proverbs 31: 10 – 31; Philippians 4:4 – 9; 1st Peter 3:8 – 18; **1st Samuel 1: 1 – 28 (Sermon)**

In verse 2 we read that Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.

God instituted marriage to be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2: 24)

God never intended for a man to have more than one wife.

Jesus also affirmed that marriage was to be between one man and one woman.

However, Israel did not always follow God instructions so there several accounts in the Old Testament when men had more than one wife.

But the fact that Israel disobeyed God is not a basis for polygamy.

And in many cases The Bible records the conflict between the two wives and the disruption in the home; for example Abraham, David, and as we just read in Elkanah’s home.

Hannah was probably Elkanah’s first wife and he married Pininnah because Hannah had not given him any children.

In Hannah’s day having children was thought to be a sign of God’s blessings and being barren was a source of shame and a sign of God’s displeasure.

Verse 5 states ***“The Lord had closed Hannah’s womb”*** and in verse 6 we read; ***“Because The Lord had caused Hannah’s womb.”***

We really do not know why God closed Hannah’s womb.

But from verse 3 we do know that Hannah and Elkanah were religious; ***“year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh”***

As you will recall all Israelite men were required to attend three festivals each year in the central sanctuary. (Deuteronomy 16: 1 – 17)

In verse 5 we are told that Elkanah loved Hannah more than he loved Pininnah.

Remember Jesus said; ***“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other”*** (Matthew 6:24)

In verse 6 we are told that Pininnah purposely tormented Hannah because of Hannah’s barrenness.

Pininnah kept provoking Hannah in order to irritate Hannah.

And verse 7 tells us that this went on continuously year after year.

Satan often uses other people to challenge our faith by ridiculing us, mocking us, and / or taunting us.

Satan’s tatic is most effecting when we are in the mist of a difficult time in our life.

They often say “you must have done something to tick God off.”

But there is no indication in scripture that that Hannah was mean or said any hurtful words back to Pininnah.

Hannah did not respond with hateful words or vindictive actions.

The first lesson we can learn is how Hannah responded to Pininnah.

In Romans 12:14 as Christians we are told; **“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse”** and in verse 17 we are not to repay evil with evil.

Pininnah was mean to Hannah, but Hannah took her problems to The Lord.

Elkanah tried to console Hannah but Hannah knew that The Lord was the only one who could really do something about her problem.

So the second lesson for us is how Hannah responded to her problem.

Hannah’s problem was that could not have any children.

After crying and not eating Hannah took her problem to The Lord in prayer. (Verse 10)

Being a Christian does not exempt us from problems and / or troubles.

Since we live in a sinful world everyone will have difficult situations and difficult problems.

But the good news is that as Christians we have a loving God who will come along side of us to comfort us, to pray for us, to help us, and to deliver us.

Jesus said; **“In the world you will have troubles, but take heart! I have overcome the world.”** (John 16:33)

Also we need to remember that our loving God allows good things and bad things to come into our lives.

God is sovereign and God has a purpose for allowing difficulties to come into our lives.

When difficulties come into our lives we should not blame God but rather we should ask God; *“Lord what do you want me to learn from this difficulty”* and / or *“what do you want me to change in my life”*.

We need to echo Job’s faith as expressed in Job 2:10.

**“Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”**

Ecclesiastes 7:14 puts it well: **“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.”**

Hannah persisted and persevered in prayer even though Pininnah's was merciless in her ridicule and taunting.

You see God had a plan for Hannah's life and it took a while for Hannah to fully embrace God's plan for Hannah's life.

When troubles come we should not abandon our faith or living a Godly life.

Remember "*in times of trouble seek God's power*"

Hannah, like all godly people, had problems. But Hannah knew how to handle her problems; she took her problem to God in prayer.

Hannah did not return evil for evil to Pininnah.

Psalm 55:22 says; "***Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you.***"

And in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:6-7; "***Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.***"

We have Hannah's prayer in verses 9 and 10.

Notice Hannah prayed with a heart full of sadness; "***she was in bitterness of soul***" (verse 10)

It is okay to pour out your heart, your hurts, and / or your bitterness to The Lord because The Lord already knows how you feel.

The Lord understands, and The Lord hears.

Also in verse 10 Hannah prayed with a broken heart/weeping "***she wept***".

In verse 12 we see that Hannah prayed with persistence "***she continued praying***".

In verse 13 "***she spoke from her heart***" and in verse 15 "***she poured out her soul to the Lord.***"

Then in verse 18 she prayed with confidence. "***she was no longer sad***"

Pininnah made Hannah sad but through Hannah's prayers Hannah was made glad.

Hannah left all her burdens before The Lord.

As Hannah poured out her heart to God Eli the priest mistaking thought that Hannah was drunk.

But when Eli realized what was in Hannah's heart, Eli blessed Hannah and expressed his hope that God would grant Hannah's request. (Verse 17)

Hannah knew God heard her prayer and Hannah accepted God's will.

Hannah trusted God and she left her burden in the temple.

Then Hannah had peace (Verse 18)

Hannah's vow to God is in verse 11.

Hannah prayed; ***“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, then I will give him to The Lord for all the days of his life , and no razor will ever be used on his head.”***

It is important to note how Hannah referred to herself; ***“your servant”***.

Previously we saw that Hannah was religious but here we see Hannah dedicated herself to The Lord's service.

Hannah knew that children are a gift from God and that all children belong to God since God is our creator.

In Exodus 13:1 - 2 we read; ***“Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal.”***

Similarly when we as Christians have our children baptized we are confirming our covenant with The Lord Jesus and we claim God's covenant promises for our children.

God allows parents to partner with Him in creating life.

And God gives us children to raise for Him.

God owns everything and God give us the privilege of raising them for Him.

As parents we do not own our children.

Also in verse 11 we read that Hannah made a Nazirite vow which promised that a person would not drink wine, nor touch any dead animal, and they would not shave the hair off of their head.

Hannah giving her son back to God was fulfilling The Old Testament Covenant.

Hannah's prayer for her son is another example for us.

Hannah does not pray that her son will be successful, rich, famous or intelligent.

Hannah's prayer is that he would live for The Lord God all the days of his life.

What is your prayer for you children this morning?

Is your prayer for your children's health, wealth, fame, intelligence or that they might have a heart for The Lord above all else?

It is not wrong to pray for physical things for our children but our first priority should always be to pray for spiritual blessings for our children.

You see it is a matter of priorities – eternal priorities.

In verses 19 and 20 we read that God did remember Hannah and God gave Hannah the son she prayed for.

Hannah's son Samuel became a great prophet and Samuel was God's faithful servant all the days of his life.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 2: 1 – 10 we see Hannah praised God when Hannah dedicated Samuel to God.

In Chapter 2 verse 21 we see that God blessed Hannah with 3 sons and 2 daughters.

God blessed Hannah way beyond her expectation.

We must never forget God's promise in Ephesians 3:20 says; ***“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us”***

Hannah's life was definitely a journey of faith.

Hannah's burden lasted for several years, but Hannah continued to pray and to seek The Lord.

When Hannah dedicated herself to God and willing to offered the very desire of her heart to The Lord, The Lord answered Hannah's prayer.

Hannah's life was directed by faith, and faith paid dividends for her.

In our lesson from Proverbs we are given a picture of an ideal woman and wife.

She is attractive and an inspiration because of her character not because of her accomplishments.

Her strength, her dignity, and her achievements are the result of her reverence for Almighty God.

Hannah is loved and is an inspiration to us because of her character which came from her reverence for God.

The bottom line is this; if we want God's best for us we must obey God's commandments, walk closely with our Lord Jesus each day, embrace God's plan for our life, and we must depend upon the power of The Holy Spirit.

The lessons we can learn from Hannah's example are not limited to barren women; rather they are to be applied by all of God's people.

When we turn to God and turn ourselves over to Him, He will hear our prayers and He will grant us what He knows is best for us in ways that are beyond all that we ask or think.

God is faithful to hear and answer the prayers of His people.

The Lord may not answer in the time frame we want, or even in the manner we thought He would, but The Lord will provide in His time, according to His will for our lives.

When we are going through a difficult time it is easy for us to get discouraged and to abandon our faith.

But we must do as Hannah did and remain persistent in prayer.

When we dedicate ourselves to The Lord and to The Lord's plan for our life The Lord will answer our prayers and The Lord will deliver us.

Remember God's promise in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:9; ***“no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind conceived the things God has prepared for those who love Him”***. AMEN