

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

Hannah was barren and even though her husband loved her, she bore the shame of being childless. Yet, we read how God heard her prayer, and Hannah responds by keeping her promise, dedicating Samuel to the Lord. The text continues with the inclusion of Hannah's Song of Great Reversal. What the world tramples upon God exalts. While we may be tempted to give into despair, Hannah reminds us to be patient and wait upon the Lord's vindication.

Theology Connection:

While we are always looking for formulas to get God's attention, that is not the purpose of this passage. The message is not that persistence pays off, or let's make a deal. The text is part of the narrative of God's restorative justice. Eli's family is abusing their status and power and God is looking for a righteous judge to help get Israel back on track. God, however, doesn't look where you and I might among the powerful and well-connected, but instead chooses one who was scorned and was truly at the bottom of the heap.

Application:

We have this tendency to imagine that if we are to do something special for God that we need to be something special ourselves. The truth, however, is just the opposite. God doesn't wait for us to prove ourselves worthy. He invites us to be persistent in our belief that our lives matter and that our actions can and will change the trajectory of history.

The Text: Exodus – 1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 19-20, 2:1-10

1 ⁹Once 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. ¹⁰In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. ¹¹And 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, 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."

¹⁹Early 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.

²⁰So 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."

2 ¹Then 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. ⁵Those 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. ⁷The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles, and he exalts. ⁸He 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.

⁹He 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; ¹⁰those 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."

Adult

Hannah desperately wants to have a child. So, she tries to strike a deal with God, a promise to dedicate the child to God. Can we identify with her 'hail mary pass?' Have we ever made a desperate plea to God? What do we do when it appears that God answers or doesn't answer in the way we had hoped? Do you think it is okay to try to nudge God by making a quid pro quo promise?

After having given birth to a child, she fulfills her promise to God. What follows is an exuberant song of praise, much like Mary's Magnificat in the Gospel of Luke. Having been scorned for her barrenness, she now engages in exaltation. In the midst of a pandemic, have you found reasons to exalt God? Do you see the gracious hand of God even in the midst of such trials? Does your faith lend itself to hope right now?

If you are interested, you can read Mary's Magnificat, Luke 1: 46-55.

YOUTH

Please read 1 Samuel 1:9-11, 2:1-10

Hannah was desperate to have a child. Therefore, she prayed many praises to God. Hannah's prayers were not selfish, as she wanted to give her son to God.

How did Hannah show her faith in God's grace?

What can we learn from this for our daily lives?

What do you think was the basic emotion expressed in this psalm?

What does this story show us about prayer?

How does it resemble our own prayer?

Does the story give us any ideas about our own prayer life?

Let us pray:

Dear God, we are blessed and humbled when you hear us call to you and you respond. Thank you for your listening ear. Please continue to guide us and listen to us. Amen!

CHILDREN'S

As believers, we have the special privilege to pray to God, because we know that He hears us. His answer may not always be what we want, but we can trust that He knows what is best for us! We learn in this Bible passage that Hannah wanted a son more than anything! She prayed to God that if He would give her a son, that she would then give him to the Lord. She wanted to have a son, so that he may serve the Lord. How cool is that?

Think:

1. Was Hannah being selfish or selfless in asking God for a son? Why/why not?
2. Is it hard to be patient sometimes?
3. What should we do when we are feeling impatient?

Remember:

God has a plan for each one of us! We need to be patient in order to see what those plans are. The more we put our faith in the Lord, the more content we will be!

Pray:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You so much for taking such good care of us! We trust you with all things, and when we are feeling scared, we know that You will keep us safe! Thank You for all the blessings that we have in our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!