

Hannah – a woman troubled in spirit

Mother's Day 2021

Transition: We are taking a one-week break from our study in Revelation in order to honor mothers and women. This is a fitting thing to do, of course, especially considering how important mothers and women are in the storyline of the Bible (besides our own lives!). Also, one beautiful thing about Hannah's story is that it is honestly relatable to anyone. In a conversation with a priest, she describes herself as "a woman troubled in spirit." Who among us hasn't been troubled in spirit at one time or another? Hannah is a woman of great faith who shows us what trust in God looks like in a very real life-situation.

Context: This story takes place near the end of the period in Israel's history when they were ruled by judges. (They had not yet demanded that God give them a king.) Someone once likened this time to being like our American old west, where the law is held loosely, and people often take matters into their own hands. In fact, the biblical book of Judges closes with this description, "*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*" Judges 21:25 ESV Yet despite this dismal, chaotic time, Hannah's light shined bright, and as a result, brought hope and healing to a nation that had lost its way.

Opening Questions:

- What do you admire about your mother? If you cannot think of anything (or didn't have a mother involved in your life), think of another woman whom you admired growing up. In what ways did she influence you?
- What does it mean to be troubled in spirit? In what ways might motherhood (or the prospect of motherhood) cause a woman to be troubled in spirit? When have you been troubled in spirit? How did you get through it?

Scripture/Storing: 1 Samuel 1

Discipleship Questions:

- Describe Hannah's situation in your own words. Specifically, what are all the things that are troubling her? What do you think is the main thing? Are any of these things in her control? How can we help the Hannah's among us today?
- Share a time when things outside of your control made your life difficult. How did you get through it? What did God teach you through the process?
- Hannah prayed a very difficult prayer/vow. What does her prayer reveal about her? Think of a time when you prayed a difficult (costly to you) prayer. What was it? Why did you pray it? How did it turn out?
- Eli, the priest, misjudged Hannah by thinking that she was inebriated. What are the dangers of misjudging others? What can we do to prevent ourselves from misjudging others?
- God blessed Hannah by allowing her to become pregnant. What all do you think was going through her mind during the years when she was weaning her son, Samuel?
- How do we get through those times when we need to do the right thing, but it will cause us significant pain in the process? What is an example of something we might face like this? What can we do that will help us with honoring our commitment?
- Hannah fulfilled her vow by dropping off Samuel at the tabernacle in Shiloh where he would serve the priests. Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10. How would you describe Hannah's attitude after she drops him off? How would you have felt? What is your reaction to her attitude? What does she say/pray that challenges or encourages your belief(s) about God?
- In what way has Hannah's story challenged your walk with Jesus?