

Anna and Hannah and Mary

Today's Treasure

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Luke 1:38 NLT

Anna, Hannah and Mary joined us on our *Pilgrimage Fueled by Hope* and left us with much to process. Each woman faced shocking challenges that could have left her hopeless and shattered. Yet each woman schools us with the way she responded to the pathway on which God placed her.

Anna reacted to the death of her husband by running to the church where she prayed and fasted twenty-four hours a day. We imagined her as the woman every pastor wishes was part of his congregation. She's the older woman who comes alongside struggling mothers to encourage them, that children are a gift from God and they are not alone in this parenting journey. Single or newly widowed women saw in Anna a role model that no matter the circumstances, they had purpose and they could experience joy again. Anna's auto response to tragedy was to surrender to God's purposes and live a life fully dedicated to serving Him.

Anna's Old Testament sister Hannah wrestled to submit to God withholding children from her. Her sister-wife Penninah poured salt into the wound of her empty womb every year during the family's annual trip to worship God. Years passed before Hannah experienced relief and the desire of her heart when she gave birth to her son. Hannah struggled to respond in a godly way to the unending taunts of her sister-wife and the constant reminder that God had closed her womb. Yet, she did not give up public or private worship in order to avoid Penninah's scathing life-taking words. Hannah's auto response was to worship and also to wrestle with God's purposes, without fear of His rejection.

Perhaps Mary's response to the earth shattering news that she would bear the very Son of God, even though she had never "known a man", best summarizes the auto response of Hannah and Anna to their life crises as well:

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Luke 1:38 NLT

I love how Mary ran to her cousin Elizabeth, who was experiencing her own miracle pregnancy. Mary's song, known as The Magnificat, seems to flow from her time with Elizabeth. There are so many similarities between Mary's Song and Hannah's Song that I

wonder if Elizabeth and Mary sang Hannah's Song as they reveled in the unfathomable mystery surrounding their pregnancies and the love of their God.

I see a "mission statement" in the words of Mary's response to the angel. Mary's mission was to serve the Lord no matter what His calling. Her circumstances became her platform for glorifying Him. Years before Mary was born, Hannah uttered similar words in her song after the birth of her son, Samuel. Similarly, Anna demonstrates by her life, that her calling was to view her circumstances as her platform for glorifying God.

Take Anna, Mary and Hannah along with you today and allow their lives to speak into yours. Each one offers teaching moments that encourage us to fall deeper in love with Jesus, trusting Him to fill our hearts with a song of praise, as we surrender each moment of our days to Him.

PRAYER

Oh Lord, Your love astounds us and we are so grateful for the lives of our sisters, Hannah, Anna and Mary. Thank you for how they responded to life crises that could have destroyed them. Instead, their lives help us focus on seeing our own circumstances as a platform for glorifying You.

