

HOW TO HANDLE BROKENNESS

Bishop Samuel R. Blakes

1 Samuel 1:4-6 KJV

And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

Let me talk to real people today. We have a bad habit in church of acting like once you get saved, your feelings get saved too. We act like coming to the altar magically erases the trauma, the abuse, the grief, and the deep emotional scars that keep you up at two in the morning. We tell people to "just pray about it" or "give it to God," but I need to preach to somebody who loves God, knows the Word, serves faithfully, yet you are dealing with a level of trauma that is quietly trying to take you out.

Today, we are looking at 1 Samuel chapter 1. When we talk about Hannah, we usually rush to the baby. We rush to the blessing, the answered prayer, the dedication of little Samuel. But to truly understand the magnitude of her praise, you have to understand the depth of her pain. You have to understand the context of the hell she was living in.

Historically, this story takes place at the end of the book of Judges. It was a dark, chaotic, spiritually dry season in Israel. The Bible says it was a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The priesthood was corrupt, the word of the Lord was rare, and the nation was entirely dysfunctional. Out of this national dysfunction, we zoom in on a localized dysfunction: the household of a man named Elkanah.

Elkanah has two wives: Peninnah and Hannah. In the ancient Near East, a woman's entire social standing, financial security, and cultural value were tied to her ability to produce male heirs. Peninnah had children. Hannah had none. But the text adds a crushing detail: Elkanah loved Hannah, but the

Lord had shut up her womb.

Hannah wasn't just dealing with a biological medical issue. She was dealing with a cultural stigma that labeled her as cursed. She was dealing with social isolation. She was dealing with a rival wife who weaponized her fertility to constantly remind Hannah of her inadequacy. Most heavily of all, she was dealing with spiritual confusion - wondering why the God she faithfully worshiped year after year in Shiloh was the very one who locked her womb. That is a unique kind of trauma. How do you handle it when it feels like heaven has put a heavy padlock on your promise, while giving your enemy the exact thing you are crying out for?

Before Hannah ever held a prophet in her arms, she was a woman drowning in depression, dealing with emotional abuse, and fighting through a traumatic season of barrenness. She was empty, she was provoked, and she was entirely misunderstood. If you are going to overcome the heavy, suffocating hurdles of your life, you have to learn how to fight through the trauma like Hannah did. I want to give you four principles from this text to help you push past the pain and give birth to what God placed inside you.

POINT 1: YOU HAVE TO SURVIVE BEING PROVOKED

1 Samuel 1:6-7 (KJV)

And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

Trauma usually doesn't happen in a vacuum. Sometimes, trauma has a name. For Hannah, her name was Peninnah. Peninnah was the other wife who had exactly what Hannah was praying for, and she used it to torment her. The text says she provoked her "year by year." This wasn't a one-time offense. This was chronic, systematic emotional abuse. Every time Hannah tried to go to church - every time she went to the house of the Lord to worship - the enemy used Peninnah to trigger her trauma.

Here is what you need to understand about the people or situations that

provoke you:

The provocation is designed to break your focus.** The enemy will use the very thing you are lacking to make you bitter. Peninnah's job was to make Hannah so focused on her empty womb that she forgot her covenant with God.

The provocation exposes your triggers.** Year after year, the same situation made her weep and lose her appetite. Trauma will mess with your diet. It will mess with your sleep. It will make you withdraw into a dark space.

The provocation is a setup for a setup.** God allowed the womb to be shut for a season, not to punish Hannah, but to position her. The pain you are dealing with is pushing you toward a desperate prayer that is going to change your entire bloodline.

You have to refuse to let bitterness settle in your spirit. When people rub your failures in your face, or when life reminds you of what you don't have, you cannot afford to get stuck in the cycle of crying and starving your spirit. You have to fight back.

POINT 2: DON'T EXPECT EVERYONE TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PAIN

1 Samuel 1:8 KJV

Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

1 Samuel 1:13-14 KJV

Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

One of the hardest hurdles of dealing with traumatic circumstances is the isolation. When you are hurting deeply, the people closest to you will often misdiagnose your pain. Look at Elkanah. He loved his wife, but he was completely tone-deaf to her trauma. He tried to bandage a bleeding soul

with his ego. "Am I not better than ten sons?" No, Elkanah. A good husband does not cancel out the pain of an unfulfilled promise or a shattered identity. Men, fathers, listen to me - sometimes you can't fix the trauma your family is facing with money, gifts, or a quick pep talk. Sometimes you just have to hold them while they heal.

Then you have Eli, the man of God. Hannah finally gets to the altar in Shiloh, and the preacher misreads her worship. He looks at a woman having a mental and emotional breakdown and accuses her of being drunk.

When you are fighting through trauma, you have to accept a hard reality:

Your inner circle might lack the capacity to comfort you.** Stop getting mad at people for not knowing how to handle your brokenness. They aren't God, and they cannot read your soul.

Your worship will look weird to religious people.** When you are praying out of trauma, it isn't cute. It's raw. It's real. People who haven't survived what you are surviving will always judge how you praise and how you pray.

Your validation cannot come from man.** If Hannah had waited for Elkanah to understand, or for Eli to approve, she would have died barren. Take your pain straight to the source.

POINT 3: THE POWER OF THE POUR

1 Samuel 1:15 KJV

And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.

This is the turning point of the text. Hannah doesn't clap back at Peninnah. She doesn't argue with her husband. She politely corrects the priest, but her real business is with God. She says, "I am not drunk. I am pouring out my soul."

There is a massive difference between saying a prayer and pouring out your soul. When you are dealing with trauma, self-sabotaging mindsets, and deep emotional scars, a cute, rehearsed prayer will not break the stronghold. You have to get to a place where you pour it all out. The anger,

the grief, the bitterness, the confusion.

Pouring out your soul requires absolute surrender. It means you stop trying to manage your image. Many of us are stuck in our trauma because we are too proud to admit we are shattered. We come to church wearing pretentious worship like a mask. We lift our hands while our minds are under severe attack. Hannah stripped off the pretense. She made a vow. She told God, "If you give me a son, I'll give him right back to you." Her prayer shifted from a selfish desire to be culturally accepted, into a Kingdom assignment. When your healing becomes connected to God's purpose, heaven moves.

POINT 4: THE SHIFT MUST HAPPEN BEFORE THE MANIFESTATION

1 Samuel 1:18 KJV

And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

This is the shout right here. I need you to catch this. Hannah gets up from the altar. She wipes her face. She goes back to the house. She sits down and eats her food. The Bible says her countenance was no longer sad. She got her joy back. She got her peace back. She got her swagger back.

But notice what had not happened yet. She was not pregnant yet. Her womb was still physically empty. Peninnah was probably still in the other room, ready to run her mouth. Her circumstances had not changed one single bit, but she had changed. The trauma lost its grip on her mind before the blessing ever manifested in her body.

If you are going to beat the trauma in your life, you cannot wait for the situation to change before you decide to heal.

You have to shift your posture in the middle of the pain.** You have to start walking like you are healed while you are still taking the medication, going to therapy, or crying yourself to sleep.

You have to change your countenance.** Stop letting the enemy read your discouragement on your face. You poured it out at the altar; stop picking it back up when you walk out the doors.

You have to go back to living.** The text says she ate. Trauma starves you of life. It makes you isolate. Healing gives you your appetite back. Get back to living. Get back to believing.

God is about to give you a Samuel out of this situation. The very area where the enemy tried to break your mind is the exact area where God is going to birth a miracle that will bless generations. Refuse to be bitter. Pour out your soul. Change your countenance today. The trauma did not come to kill you; it came to introduce you to a strength you never knew you had. Fight through.