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Hannah, A vessel of Honor
1Sam. 1:1-2:11

Hannah is an incredible woman who occupied a very small period of man's history but her dependency and faithfulness to God affected the entire nation of Israel through her son Samuel the prophet, providing important lessons for every generation of God's people.

She was a woman who longed for a child and to experience motherhood but was barren.

What a contrast to so many women of our day, who put off motherhood for being sexual active or a career, as they compete to be equal to a man.

Other women desiring to feel good about themselves to have a sense of self worth, enter the work force being unable to supervise and guide their children or meet the needs of their husbands.

Today the goal of most parents is personal fulfillment, they do not hesitate to remove whatever constraints children might impose on them, to enjoy and have a feeling of being fulfilled in their lives, at the expense of the children.

The story of Hannah is one of obedience and faithfulness to God, despite the circumstances of life, a sharp contrast to the so many women, certainly in the world but also in the church to day.

Hannah lived in the period of the judges.

1. The period lasted approximately 300-305 years.
2. The first twelve chapters of first Samuel are part of this period until Saul reigns as the first King of Israel, going from a theocracy to anarchy and finally to a monarchy.
3. The two common phrases in the book of Judges were:
 - a. In those days there was no king in Israel.
 - b. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
4. The period was a time of moral and religious decay and political chaos, resulting in social anarchy.
 - a. While other women were following the order of the day, Hannah followed the Lord, but it was not easy.
 - b. Ruth also fits in this period of the judges.

The story of Hannah, the faithful godly woman unfolds for us in three movements.

- I. The afflictions of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:1-7
- II. The petition of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:8-18
- III. The acquisition of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:19-2:11

I. The afflictions of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:1-7

A. Hannah's affliction was due to her marriage condition. vs. 1-2

1. She was married to a man named Elkanah, which means "God has possessed" or "God has created". vs. 1
 - a. He was from Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, which means literally, the two high places of the watchman; it is believed that they were two contiguous hills, on which watchtowers were built, and in which watchmen kept continual guard for the safety of the country and which afterwards gave name to the place. vs. 1a-b
 - * Five miles, north-west of Jerusalem.
 - b. He was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. vs. 1c-g
2. She was one of two wives. vs. 2
 - a. The one was named Peninnah, which means "coral", some say "pearl" or "jewel" and she had children.
 - b. The second wife was Hannah and her name means "grace" or "gratuitous gift", and she had no children.
 - 1) Bareness was a mark of shame, a sign of disfavor with God.

2) Bareness was a tragedy for every Israeli woman, for each hoped to bare the Messiah.

- c. The condition of two wives can only bring afflictions in any home.
 - * The past history of Sarah and Hagar, Rachel and Lea, a house full of jealousy, envy and favoritism should of taught them this basic lesson, particularly when one is unable to have children!
- B. Hannah's condition would not go away by her husband's favoritism. vs. 3-5
1. Her husband went up yearly to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of Host. vs. 3
 - a. The location of Shiloh was 9 miles north of Bethel.
 - b. The two son's of Eli were there, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the Lord.
 2. Her husband Elkanah would always give to Peninnah and her children a portion of the sacrifice. vs. 4
 3. Her portion was always double that of Peninnah. vs. 5
 - a. The reason was he loved her. vs. 5a-b
 - * It is impossible to love two men or women equally at the same time!

- b. The other reason was that the Lord had closed up Hannah's womb. vs. 5c
 - 1) She could not be satisfied with materialism.
 - 2) She could not substitute a double portion for being a mother.

C. Hannah's condition was made worse by Peninnah's antagonism. vs. 6-7

- 1. Peninnah was her rival "tsarah", which means adversary. vs. 6a
- 2. Peninnah went out of her way to provoke Hannah severely, in order to make her miserable, which indicates anger and indignation, causing her to rage. vs. 6a-b
- 3. Peninnah's motive was malicious, because the Lord had closed up her womb, being unsympathetic and uncompassionate, knowing she would only humiliate and shame her more so. vs. 6c
 - a. Peninnah remember means jewel, pearl or coral.
 - b. True to her name, as coral a very cutting and sharp person and as a pearl, the product of pain, yet having a sense of beauty on the outside.
 - * Is there a Peninnah in your life?
- 4. Peninnah provoked Hannah year by year as they went up to the house of the Lord. vs. 7

- a. Hannah was being attacked spiritually, when she should of been focusing on the Lord. vs. 7a-d
- b. Hannah was afflicted emotionally as she wept. vs. 7e
 - 1) The word wept means to bemoan and bewail in anguish and complaint, due to the provocation of her bareness!
 - 2) Women are moved and affected by their emotions more than men, for that reason the word must be the criteria for their decision making!
- b. Hannah was also afflicted physically as she did not eat. vs. 7e
 - * Our emotions will affect us spiritually and our physical bodies either in a good or bad way!

Illustration

Helen Keller said, "I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work and my God."

Application

- 1. You might have an unequally yoked marriage.
 - a. Be it for your disobedience, marrying a unbeliever and you are reaping to it.
 - b. Be it that you have come to the Lord after your marriage.

- c. Either way, you have to be an example and faithful to God's marriage covenant.
 - * "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror." 1Pet. 3:1-6
- 2. You may be in a difficult Christian marriage.
 - a. It could be a blended family with the problems ex-spouses, step-children, etc.
 - * What one can handle intellectually is quite different from the true life experience with all the emotions and turmoil!
 - b. It could be a husband or wife that is not a committed to Jesus and the church.

- c. It could be carnality, hypocrisy at it's worst or rebellious children.
- d. There is the practical things of dealing with people and situations from the Scriptures, this is our authority, but it does not mean people will listen and obey.
 - * "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2Tim. 3:16-17
- 3. You will have adversaries in life, people who provoke and do not have your best in mind.
 - a. You can allow them to cause you to sin.
 - b. You can allow them to cause you to run to God, the strong tower and fortress.
 - * "The LORD is my **rock** and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Ps. 18:2

The afflictions of Hannah caused her much suffering!

II. The petition of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:8-18

- A. Hannah's petition was in view of her husband being insensitive. vs. 8

1. Elkanah was completely oblivious to the provocation of Peninnah towards Hannah or plain indifferent to it, evident by his three-fold question. vs. 8a-d
 2. Elkanah was completely ignorant about the difference between a mother's love for a son and that for her husband. vs. 8e
* "Am I not better to you than ten sons?", she probably said under her breath, NO!
- B.** Hannah's petition was unto the Lord, who knows all things. vs. 9-11
1. She arose after worship and sacrifice, as Eli sat on the seat by the door-post of the tabernacle. vs. 9a
 2. She was in bitterness of soul and she prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. vs. 10
 - a. Her bitterness of soul that affected her emotions caused her feelings to cloud her ability to fix on the Lord, but now being open to the Lord and His will, she is brought into a meaningful interaction with the Lord. vs. 10a
 - b. Her prayer refers to intercession, to entreat or supplicate. vs. 10b
 - c. Her prayer was as she wept in anguish, which means a strong crying and tears, very fervently and affectionately. vs. 10b

- * Perhaps about the time of the evening sacrifice, 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God.
3. She prayed with personal commitment. vs. 11
 - a. Her prayer was accompanied with a vow to the Lord of Host.
* The title means the captain of the armies of heaven, nothing can defeat Him nor impossible for Him. vs. 11a-b
 - b. Her prayer was addressed to the only One who could look on the affliction of His handmaiden with understanding and remember her bareness. vs. 11c-d
 - c. Her prayer was very specific, that God would give her a man child. vs. 11e
* Too often our petitions are too general, shotgun style rather than bulls-eye prayers.
 - d. Her promise was that she would give him back all the days of his life and no razor would come upon his head. vs. 11f-g
* This was the vow of a Nazarite for life, even as Samson and John the Baptist. Num. 6

C. Hannah's petition was misunderstood by Eli the priest. vs. 12-18

1. Hannah was being watched by Eli the priest and he thought she was drunk due to the fact that her lips were moving but no sound came forth, for she spoke in her heart, therefore he rebuked her, asking her to put away her wine. vs. 12-14

a) How interesting that Eli would confront and attempt to restrain the people of God but not his own children, who were laying with the women and causing the people of God to abhor the offering, yet he did not restrain them. 1Sam. 2:17, 22, 3:1

b) God help us if we ignore, justify, cover up or are plain indifference to the sins or sinful lifestyle of our children, may we have the courage, commitment and love to confront them, restrain them and bring forth the necessary consequences as Christian parents!

1) Faithful are the wounds of a friend but deceitful are the kisses of the enemy. Prov. 27:6

2) Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction. Prov. 19:18

2. Hannah then told Eli her true condition. vs. 15-16

a. She said she was a woman of sorrowful spirit. vs. 15a-d

1) She didn't know why God had shut up her womb. vs. 5c

2) She wasn't understood by her husband. vs. 8

3) She was being misunderstood by Eli the priest of God now. vs. 12-14

b. She said she was not drunk with wine or intoxicating drink. vs. 15e

1) It would be an act of being irreverent towards God.

2) It would be worthy of the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, whom the Lord smote with fire. Lev. 10

c. She said she had poured out her soul before the Lord. vs. 15f

1) Not just an emotional release, but a total emptying of self, to purpose and desire only that what gives glory to the Lord. Ps. 22:14, 142:2.

a)) An emotional experience that brings about true change is legitimate!

b)) An experience of emotionalism that results in no true change is deceptive and worthless!

- 2) Prayer is for the aligning of our life with the will of God in order that the purposes of God can be accomplished in us and through us, not for our will, benefit or glory!
- d. She said she did not want Eli to think of her a woman of Belial but rather a woman who out of the abundance of her complaint and grief had spoken to God. vs. 16
- 3. Hannah received Eli's blessing. vs. 17-18
 - a. Eli proclaimed God's peace over her and that her petition might be granted, note it was not a promise that it would. vs. 17
 - 1) She experienced reality, looking to the hope of God's word, not her emotions, for nothing had changed, the condition probably continued, day after day.
 - 2) The idea of worshipped is to give the proper adoration to the superior before you, by prostrating oneself and do reverence, awareness of one's own unworthiness and inferiority.
 - b. Hannah left with the countenance of her face no longer sad. vs. 18
 - 1) This is truly the work of God by His Spirit, for her circumstances had not change, only her heart!

- 2) She finally went to the creator with her problem with the right attitude and for God's purposes, so she entered into a fellowship that changed her heart, which ultimately affected her countenance.

Illustration

Abraham Lincoln said, "I remember my mother's prayers, and they have followed me; they have clung to me all my life. All that I am and hope to be I owe to my angel mother."

* It was said of Hudson Taylor's mother that her closed door in the middle of the busy day had a world of meaning to the household.

Application

- 1. The scriptures tell us that prayer is a matter of heart posture, not physical posture necessarily.
 - a. Jesus told of a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to pray, one prayed with himself the other prayed to God. Lk. 18:11-14
 - 1) The Pharisee saw himself as self-righteous.
 - 2) The publican saw himself as unworthy and humble.
 - b. The position of the body can be on our feet, knees, backs, face to the ground, hands lifted up to heaven but if the heart is not humble,

only desiring to be seen of men, God does not hear, it is hypocrisy. 1Kings 8:22, 54

- 1) There is a place for some of these in public.
- 2) There are others for private worship to God.

2. Prayer is commanded not a suggestion.

- a. Jesus said, “Men ought always to pray and not lose heart”. Lk. 18:1b
 - 1) Prayer is an obligation to God.
 - 2) You live in an attitude of prayer.
- b. Paul said, “That we are to pray without ceasing”. 1Thess. 5:17
 - 1) Prayer is to be a regular practice.
 - 2) Prayer is to mark a total dependency.
- c. Paul say praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6:18
 - 1) Payer will open our eyes.
 - 2) Don’t trust what you see but what God reveals to you.

* The servant of Elisha seeing the Syrian army around the city feared, Elisha prayed, “Lord open his eyes”. 2Kings 6

3. Prayer protects me against anxiety.

- a. Jesus said we are not to worry about the things of life but to learn from the birds and lilies of the field, if God provides for them daily, how much more for us. Math. 6:25-34

* The birds and lilies of the field are use to teach us to depend on God.

- b. Paul taught we are to be anxious for nothing but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving are to make our request known to God. Phil. 4:6

* All is to be brought to God in prayer!

- c. Paul declares that the result is the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phi. 4:7

4. Prayer is in order to see God work.

- a. God told Jeremiah, “Call on Me and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things which you know not.” Jer. 33:3
- b. Our confidence is to be in the leading of God not our finances.
 - 1) The purchase of this building was not very logical but God directed us and the peace of God was very evident.
 - 2) The gymnasium was another direction of God without pressure.
- c. God alone knows how many husbands, wives or sons and daughters have been saved or returned, having gone back in the world.
 - 1) Mates have been prayed for years, 20, 50.
 - 2) Sons and daughters from horrible life-styles of sin.

- d. Jesus gave a condition to prayer and warning.
 - 1) Jesus said, “Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive”. Matt. 21:22
* The context is under the requirements of a disciple, one of denying self!
 - 2) Jesus said, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit is truly ready but the flesh is weak”. Mk. 14:38
- 5. Prayerless lives are a sin.
 - a. The nation of Israel came to a place where they wanted a king like all the other nations.
 - b. The people were confronted by Samuel of any charges they might have against him but they assured him they had none.
 - c. The prophet charged them with their wickedness and they asked Samuel to pray for them, to which he said, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. 1Sam. 12:23

The petition of Hannah aliened her with the will and purposes of God!

III. The acquisition of Hannah. 1Sam. 1:19-2:11

- A. Hannah experienced conception. vs. 19-28

- 1. She and her husband arose and worshipped early in the morning and returned home. vs. 19a-b
- 2. She was known by her husband sexually and the Lord remembered Hannah. vs. 19c-d
- 3. She conceived and bore a son. vs. 20a
- 4. She named him Samuel, due to the fact that she asked him of the Lord, his name means heard of the Lord. vs. 20b-d
 - a. Samuel would know all his life that he was a direct answer to prayer and the glory belonged to God.
 - b. Samuel would know the power of prayer.
* He told the people, “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord and cease praying for you”. 1Sam. 12:23
- 5. She did not go up to Shiloh again with her husband till she weaned Samuel. vs. 21-23
 - a. Elkanah and his entire house went up to offer at Shiloh yearly. vs. 21
 - b. Hannah ministered to the child for about three years before taking him to Shiloh Hannah knew he would appear before the Lord forever. vs. 22
 - 1) She counted the cost and stayed home.

- 2) She continued to provide spiritual input.
- a) According to Jarchi, weaning was at the end of twenty two months; but others say at the end of twenty four months, or two years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here.
- b) One individual, Comestor. observes that there was a three fold weaning of children in old times;
- 1) The first from their mother's milk, at three years old.
- 2) The second from their tender age, and care of a dry nurse, at seven years old.
- 3) The third from childish manners, at twelve years of age.
- * He believes that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was twelve years of age, being fit to serve in the temple and it may be so, people are divided.
- 2) Hannah was true to her name and a perfect picture of her person, it means grace or gratuitous; she

- would withhold nothing from the Lord she had vowed.
- c. Hannah's husband told Hannah, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word." vs. 23b-c
- 1) I believe that it went beyond the normal spiritual care of Deuteronomy in preparation by the hand of God. Deut. 6:4-9
- 2) For he was not only to be the last judge of Israel but the first prophet of many that would come to counsel and aid the Kings.
6. She kept her vow to the Lord. vs. 24-28
- a. Hannah went up to Shiloh with Samuel after she weaned him and presented him to the Lord in sacrifice. vs. 24
- b. Hannah then presented Samuel to Eli after the sacrifice. vs. 25
- c. Hannah reminded Eli of her prayer and vow that she would lent Samuel to the Lord as long as he lived. vs. 26-28a-b
- d. Hannah and Eli worshipped the Lord together not each other. vs. 28c
- 1) Now we see the purposes of God were accomplished. He needed a man to judge over His people

during this critical transitional period from anarchy to monarchy.

- 2) And His eyes were looking to and fro through the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him and he used a woman to get that man.

* “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, said the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jer. 29:11

B. Hannah expressed adoration. 1Sam. 2:1-11

1. Her joy was centered on the Lord not her situation any longer. vs. 1
* She had come to this place before she was granted her petition. 1Sam. 1:18d
2. Her awareness as to God’s uniqueness and otherness was acknowledged. vs. 2
3. Her exaltation of God’s knowledge of man’s inner thought and action reproved the proud in heart. vs. 3
4. Her recognition of God’s ability to destroy the mighty and strengthen the weak as well as causing barren to bear children is stated. vs. 4-5
5. Her proclamation of God’s sovereignty, His ability to put down the proud, exalt

the humble and strengthen the king, the Messiah. vs. 6-10

6. Her commitment was fulfilled as the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest and they went home. vs. 11

Illustration

Job like Hannah acquired from the Lord more than he had at first but not as a reward but as God’s love knowing that they were content with the will of God and open to the purposes of God.

* Oh Foolish woman, should I receive good at the hand of God and not evil.

* Even though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

Application

1. Are you a mother like Hannah who values the limited time you have with your children to direct their steps in the Lord?
 - a. “Behold, **children** are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.” Ps. 127:3
 - b. God holds parents responsible for their children. Eph. 5, Col. 3
2. Are you learning to rejoice in the Lord, who is to be your strength or your ability to control or change the situation or circumstance.
 - a. Our joy, like Hannah’s, is to be in the Lord.
 - b. Our strength, like Hannah’s is to be from the Lord.

- c. Our sacrifice, like Hannah's is of love, able to give up even the dearest things, knowing it is the purpose of God.

* Jesus prayed, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I **will**, but as You **will**." Matt. 26:39

- 3. Every believer, like Hannah, is able to reap fruit from our obedience to God, in the years to come.
 - a. She saw her son serving the Lord.
 - b. She continued to visit and instruct her child.
 - c. She saw God use her son as a priest and prophet.
 - d. She was acknowledged by Eli as a godly mother and father and received blessings for the loan of Samuel.
 - e. The vow was fulfilled, accomplishing God's will regarding the need of a man, giving worship to God.
 - f. She was blessed with more children, she had three sons and two daughters.
- 4. Do you worship God for and through everything?
 - a. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28
 - b. We are God's workmanship in Christ Jesus unto good works, created beforehand, that we might walk in them. Eph. 2:10

The acquisition of Hannah from God was abundant!

Conclusion

The story of Hannah which unfolds in these three movements is certainly a lesson to us on the sovereignty, wisdom and faithfulness of God on one side but equally on the other side, the obedience and commitment of each of us to the purposes and will of God.

- I. The affliction of Hannah caused her much suffering!
- II. The petition of Hannah alienated her with the will and purposes of God!
- III. The acquisition of Hannah from God was abundant!