

“I Am A Keeper”

Part II

WHY THIS SERIES....

The aim of this series is to highlight that faith is not only about how we begin,
but *learning to preserve* through every season of life.

Many people have enough faith to start, but struggle to **CONTINUE**.

We *start* praying, *start* believing, *start* serving, *start* giving,
start trusting and *start* walking with God.

BUT when **THE ANSWER** is delayed, **THE OPPOSITION** increases, **THE EXCITEMENT** fades,
or **THE CIRCUMSTANCES** become difficult...

CAN WE **KEEP** PUSHING AND **KEEP** BELIEVING

Last Week...

Keep Believing Through The Delays

Keep Waiting ~ Keep Watching

Keep Believing Through The Difficult Seasons

Keep Trusting ~ Keep Walking

Keep Believing Despite The Doubters

Tonight

Keep Pushing

Praying *U*ntil *S*omething *H*appens

Key Verses

1 Samuel 1:3-7 (NIV)

3 Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh,
4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion *because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb.* 6 *And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.* 7 *THIS WENT ON YEAR AFTER YEAR.* Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, *her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.*

1 Samuel 1:9-10 (NIV)

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up... 10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much *and prayed to the Lord.* 12 *As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth.* 13 *Hannah was praying in her heart,* and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. 16*I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."*

Introduction....

Most Believers Know What *They Should Do* As Believers
Come To Church ~ *Believe In God* ~ *Trust In God* ~ *Pray To God*
That Is Not Our Struggle

The Challenge Becomes Can You *Keep* Coming, *Keep* Believing, *Keep* Trusting, and *Keep* Praying

Therefore, God *TESTS OUR LEVEL OF FAITHFULNESS* in key areas
not to find out *if we have faith*, but to find out *if our faith will hold*.

He already knows you can start. He's watching to see *IF YOU ARE PERSISTENT*.

Will you *keep praying* when the prayer isn't working?

Will you *keep showing up* when showing up hasn't changed anything?

Will you *keep pushing* when pushing hasn't produced your desired results?

This is not a *one-time test* ~ It is a *year after year test*.

YEAR AFTER YEAR, HANNAH WENT TO THE HOUSE OF GOD.

YEAR AFTER YEAR, she brought her pain *to the same place.... Year after year*, she was provoked *in that place*

And *year after year... NOTHING CHANGED*

No child ~ *No breakthrough* ~ *No answer*

WHAT MADE HER KEEP COMING....

Keep Pushing Through The Predicament

1 Samuel 1:3-7 (NIV)

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4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, *and the Lord had closed her womb*. 6 *And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her*. 7 *This went on year after year*. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, *her rival provoked her* till she wept and would not eat.

The Culture/The Context

Hannah is barren in a culture that *measured a woman's worth by children*
Elkanah is trying to provide her with *more stuff that will not satisfy* or give her worth
There is always tension between the “*Favor of God*” vs. “*The Fairness of God*”

Why did God allow Peninnah to have *many children* and close up the womb of Hannah {*NOT FAIR*}

The Sovereignty Of God

When We Understand *The Sovereignty Of God*, It Helps Us *Push Through Difficult Situations*
What God closes, *ONLY GOD CAN OPEN...* and *understanding this...* changes *where you aim your frustration*.
Hannah Does Not Retaliate, Instead She *Continues Dialogue With The One Who Can Make A Difference*

*When you know who really holds the key,
you stop kicking down doors that were never locked by human hands.*

When you cannot change the predicament, keep bringing the predicament to the One who can.

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The Tension Between Faith and Feelings

Faith is the substance of things *hoped for*....the evidence of things *not seen*...

Peninnah is visible ~ she is present ~ I can hear her words

She is making me *FEEL* a certain way ~ *I Will Feel Better If I express myself or Do Something To Her*

Feelings react to what's visible and immediate ~ Faith responds to what's sovereign and eternal.

FAITH WRESTLES WITH THE ONE WHO'S REALLY IN CONTROL.

James 4:1-2 (NLT)

1 *What is causing the quarrels and fights among you?* Don't they come from the evil desires at *war within you*?
2 You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, *so you fight and wage war to take it away from them*.
Yet you don't have what you want because **YOU DON'T ASK GOD FOR IT.**

Keep Pushing Through The Pain

1 Samuel 1:10, 15 (NLT)

10 Hannah was *in deep anguish, crying bitterly* as she prayed to the Lord.

15 ... I am *very discouraged*, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord.

Praying Don't Eliminate The Pain ~ But It Gives You The Strength To Push Through

*Pain can either silence your prayer **or** deepen your prayer.*

*She prayed **while crying** ~ **while hurting** ~ **while provoked** ~ **while disappointed***

*You do not have to **feel strong to pray strong prayers**.*

Sometimes your most powerful prayers come from your most painful places.

God doesn't need your prayer to be articulate. He needs it to be honest.

God can handle the prayer that comes through tears.

2 Kings 20:5 (NLT)

5 "Go back to Hezekiah, the leader of my people. Tell him, 'This is what the Lord says:

*I have heard your prayer and **seen your tears**. I will heal you,*

Psalms 34:18 (NLT)

18 The Lord is *close to the brokenhearted*; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

YOUR TEARS ARE SIMPLY PRAYERS THAT YOUR MOUTH DOES NOT HAVE THE WORDS TO SAY.

Romans 8:26 (NIV)

26 In the same way, *the Spirit helps us in our weakness*. We do not know what we ought to pray for,

*but the Spirit himself **intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.*

Keep Pushing Through The Pain

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15 ... I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord.

You Don't Get To Choose When/Where Your Pain Occurs...

You Only Get To Choose What You Do When It Does...

One of the hardest things about Hannah's story is that *her pain followed her into the place of worship.*
The house of God *should have been* the place where Hannah found strength, encouragement, healing, and hope.
The same place where Hannah went to get healed was the same place where she kept getting hurt.

Hannah teaches us an important lesson:

Do not allow the people who hurt you in the house to drive you away from the God who can heal you in the house.

PENINNAH WAS THERE ~ BUT SO WAS GOD.

The pain was there ~ but so was the presence of God.

Hannah had *TO DECIDE* which one would determine whether she kept coming.
She says... *I will not abandon the place of healing because I experienced hurt in the place of healing.*

Psalms 73:16-17 (NKJV)

16 When I thought how to understand this, *It was too painful for me..*

17 *Until I went into the sanctuary of God;* Then I understood their end.

Keep Pushing Until Your Perspective Changes

1 Samuel 1:17-20 (NIV)

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and **may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.**"

18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes."

Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

Hannah prayed, **but when she got up from prayer**, she still did not have a baby.
Her circumstances **were still the same**... But **something in Hannah** had changed.

The answer had not arrived, but her attitude had changed.

The situation had not changed, but her spirit had changed.

We think **"Pray Until Something Happens"** means keep praying until God changes the circumstance.

But sometimes the first something God changes **IS YOU.**

Prayer Changes How You See It

Sometimes the evidence that prayer is working is not that your situation has changed,

BUT THAT THE SITUATION NO LONGER CONTROLS YOU.

Prayer Gives You A Peace To Deal With The Predicament Until It Changes

Philippians 4:6-7

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, **let your requests be made known to God; AND THE PEACE OF GOD**...will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Keep Pushing Until Your Perspective Changes

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18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes."

Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

A changed perspective, not a changed circumstance, is often the first sign your prayer worked.

My Word To You Tonight....

Keep praying *until* fear loses its grip.

Keep praying *until* anxiety releases you.

Keep praying *until* bitterness begins to break.

Keep praying *until* you stop trying to control what you have already placed in God's hands.

KEEP PUSHING UNTIL....

God changes *YOU* while you are waiting for Him to change *IT*.

In Conclusion...

Keep Pushing Through The Predicament

Keep Pushing Through The Pain

Keep Pushing Until Your Perspective Changes

MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREENWOOD

9500 GREENWOOD-SPRINGRIDGE ROAD

SHREVEPORT, LA 71129

PASTOR MARCUS ELLISON

HOME COMING & REVIVAL

RENEWAL FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD ~ ISAIAH 40:31

TUESDAY, AUG 11TH - THURSDAY, AUG 13TH

7 PM NIGHTLY

AUG 11TH
TUESDAY
NIGHT
7 PM

PASTOR
DERICK EASTER
NEW ST. HURRICANE B.C.
PINE BLUFF, AR



PASTOR
AIL HARRIS JR.
ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH
NATCHITOCHES, LA

AUG 12TH
WEDNESDAY
NIGHT
7 PM

AUG 13TH
THURSDAY
NIGHT
7 PM

MINISTER
MICHAEL HICKS JR.
MT CANAAN B.C.
SHREVEPORT, LA



HOME COMING
CELEBRATION
PASTOR MARCUS ELLISON
"I CAN ONLY IMAGINE CELEBRATION"

AUG 16TH
SUNDAY
11 AM

Emphasis Each Night

Tuesday Night

Spiritual Strength For The Journey Ahead

Wednesday Night

Worship Through The Warfare

Thursday Night

Ministering To The Next Generation

Sunday Celebration

I Can Only Imagine

If Every Member Attended

If Every Member Served In Ministry

If Every Member Gave Their Best Gift

If Every Member Invited Someone