

Today we move to a new series – Book of 1 Samuel. We will look at some of the great personalities of Scripture – Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, David, a great story of a man after God’s own heart. There will be some very good moments, and some very challenging ones.

So let’s go back first. When *1 Samuel* opens, Israel is not at its best moment.

This is around 1100 BC, at the tail end of the period of the judges—a time summed up in one haunting sentence: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

There is no king.

There is no national unity.

There is no consistent godly leadership.

The spiritual center of Israel was the tabernacle at **Shiloh**—but even there, corruption has crept in. The priesthood, represented by Eli’s sons, is abusing power instead of leading people to God.

Externally, the nation is under constant pressure from enemies like the Philistines.

Internally, it’s even worse—there is moral confusion, spiritual apathy, and a growing distance from God.

And then Scripture gives us this sobering line:

“The word of the Lord was rare in those days.”

God had not disappeared—but His voice was not being heard.

So the nation of Israel is in chaos. These are difficult times, CONFUSED times – “you live your truth, I’ll live my truth.”

You think Americans invented moral relativism? That junk has been around for 3,000 years.

And so that’s how the previous book of Judges ends. People are looking for earthly answers to spiritual problems.

They think – if we only had an earthly king like all of the other nations, our problems would be solved. (And God had been their king the whole time – but they wouldn’t obey him).

And so they pursue man’s way, instead of God’s way.

But when we get to 1 Samuel 1, the story shifts. God is going to renew the nation, but he doesn’t start with a king or an army.

He starts with:

1. A faithful woman who prays when no one else seems to be seeking God. And . . .
2. A young boy who learns to listen when others have stopped hearing.

So LET’S PRAY as we ask God to speak to us this morning –

Okay – 1 Samuel 1:1-8

Verse 5 – he would give her a double portion of food, which is a kind of weird way of showing affection. Sitting there with two wives, he’s like, give her a double scoop of mashed potatoes.

Verse 6 – this is not irritated, like, “Oh, she gets on my nerves.”

In Hebrew the words means “to thunder” or “to roar.” Penaniah was like that annoying beeping noise when a truck backs up – it just never stopped.

Verse 7 - Can you hear it? “Hannah, would you do the dishes tonight? I have four kids, and I’m just soooo tired. (And the point is, it was constant – how often? It says, “whenever.”)

So we read about a man who had two wives – one bears lots of children, the other cannot bear any. The one is mocking, rubbing it in.

First we see: HANNAH’S HURT

So here’s the thing – polygamy – multiple wives - is nowhere condoned in the Bible. Nowhere! People will say, “Well people in the OT had multiple wives – see the Bible’s all about polygamy.”

In Gen 2:24 God says, “a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his WIFE!” (Singular)

The definition of marriage, according to God, is one man/one woman exclusively – for life.

(Sometimes people get this idea that because something in the Bible, that means it’s ok, that it’s a good idea.) But let me remind you as a side note: The Bible doesn’t endorse everything it reports.

And so every single time in the Bible, where you get a look at a polygamous marriage, EVERYBODY’S MISERABLE. Everybody!

So that’s the general reason. But the more specific reason she’s so sad is this:

She’s not living up to the cultural idea

And the cultural idea for women was: have lots of babies. Here’s why:

1. The more children you had the better things were economically. Period. It was true of your family – the more people there were to work in the field, to work in your shop – there were more people to work in your business. The more children, the more money.
2. It affected your future security – the more children you had, the more likely you were to live to old age with a certain amount of comfort and security.
3. But most important, unless the women of the society were fertile, some bigger nation would come by with a bigger army and squash you, or colonize you. So the more children, the more militarily strong you were.

So having children was doing the best possible thing you could do you’re your society, your family – economically, politically, militarily, culturally – period, you were a hero.

So when Hannah is not able to do that, she is in great agony.

And so what Hannah faced is not such a big stigma in our culture today. But before we go any further, let’s stop and ask: where is this happening to you?

Because every culture has things that are important. In our culture, for woman, it may not be primarily your child-bearing abilities anymore, your looks, or how thin you are.

Consider this: Historians say that our society is the first one in history to have a pervasive problem of eating disorders among young women. And the reasons are complex, but one reason is SOCIETAL:

Our culture says, “This is how you are supposed to look to have value.”

Little girls grow up learning they are supposed to look like this, and if you don’t, you’re second class – and so we have a lot of young girls out there who are “roaring” inside with hurricane forces at work inside of them – with rivals on Instagram who continually provoke them.

It blows my mind just how much pressure women face to measure up! (Premarital counseling – scores of couples – the issue that shows up almost every time – “I worry about my body image.”)

And by the way, I’m only focusing on women because that’s our story, but young men are told the same thing too – your significance is in how athletic you are, what school you get into, what kind of earning potential you have.

And so – where are you inwardly roaring this morning?

One of the reasons I loved growing up in the 70s and early 80s was – there was no social media. Look at those old music videos – you don’t see perfect teeth, hair’s a mess, awful clothes – and it was all okay, because the music was more important than the look.

But with social media, that’s all gotten reversed. The best musician in the world doesn’t stand a chance today if he or she doesn’t look the part.

And it’s really sad!

Verse 8 - Well that’s kind of an insensitive thing to say.

And what we find out is = listen, I don’t think he’s an awful human, but what we learn is, even the people that love us the most in this life cannot save us. They cannot fix us. We have to ultimately run to God for salvation, and for restoration. I love my wife more than any human on earth, and she loves the Lord – but my wife cannot ultimately save me!

She cannot fix me. We have to have a relationship with God, and we will see that with Hannah right here.

First – Hannah’s Hurt. Now – Hannah’s Hope

Hannah makes all the right moves in the story – and here it is in verse 9 – she **stood up**.

Peninnah has told her that she’ll never be valuable if she doesn’t have kids

And Elkanah has tried to offer her a romantic salvation, telling her he can fill the void in her soul through his love.

Isn’t that what happens today? We live in a world full of Peninnah’s that tell us we’re only significant if we have these children, get this education, drive this car, look this way – and then we’re offered the romantic solution – if I have this man, this woman, this kind of romantic encounter – then I’ll be happy.

And maybe there's some Elkanah somewhere saying to you, "Don't worry if you don't feel good about who you are - my love is enough."

And it's all a bunch of bull! Because you're getting played by some dude.

And maybe it's not even romance - it's alcohol, or drugs, or shopping.

So when we read that "Hannah stood up" is not some random detail like, "After dinner Hannah stood up and went to the living room." The word means "decisive action." She stood up resolved. She made a different choice.

Here's what I love about Hannah - she rejects Peninah - "have kids and you'll be enough" - she rejects Elhanah - "My loves will meet all your needs."

So let me just say this: Hannah wants desperately what some husbands or wives are willing to leave or avoid - a family.

They get married. They have kids. He walks out. She walks out.

Hannah wants what so many people are willing to give up so easily. (And when they do that, it crushes everyone. People can be married for 20 years, one walks in and says, "You know what, I'm done." Throws it all away.

And those kind of voices are all around us. You don't need your family!

Or how about this - "just live together and it'll be fine. You can live together - you don't have to be married, and it will all be fine."

"Let's just live together - which involves NO COMMITMENT at all. There's always an exit door any time you want to take it.

And then some conflict comes along that rocks your boat - and if it's heavy enough, it will rock you right out of the boat, because there's nothing binding to hold you together.

It's like riding in a car where the seams have never been welded - and the first serious bump disintegrates the whole thing. Because your house is not built on a sure foundation, it's built on sand.

And here is God's Word, and it couldn't be any more plain - "a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife!"

Hannah "stood up." She made a choice. And what was it?

9b-11

She says, "If you give me a son, I'll give him to you all the days of his life" - quick historical lesson.

In those days, you couldn't just decide to become a priest - you had to be born into the priestly family, the Levite family.

If you weren't born into a priestly family and you wanted to become a priest, you could do so by taking a Nazarite vow - which meant that you gave away your whole life.

You renounced your family property, and you went to live and grow up at the temple. You switched families.

And so when she takes a Nazarite vow for this boy, she was renouncing hold on everything you would have wanted for your child.

Taking the Nazarite vow meant he would not grow up in her house

She wouldn't have the experience of having him around
She wouldn't get to show him off at baseball games
She wouldn't have him to take care of her in her old age.

So this wasn't just some sentimental thing – “Oh Lord, if you give me a son I'll give him to you.”

No – a Nazarite vow meant a complete renouncement of everything she had hoped to obtain in having a child.

12-14

Eli thought she was drunk. That's odd for a priest, to look and see a woman praying at church, thinking – what's she doing? She must be drunk.

Now you would think his first thought would be, “Oh, she must be praying.” Is shows you how low the nation had shrunk, the kind of degradation that had happened, that even the priest can't believe somebody would actually be in church worshipping.

So what kind of church do we have here – where people are praying, and he says, “you've got to be drunk.”

BUT – here's what that tells me – we can look at people sometimes and make very quick judgments. We can create

narratives about people. So if we see someone broken, someone going through something, someone that's emotional, even if they're living in a way that's wrong – jump to conclusions and say, “Well, they're in that situation because they're just a drunk.”

... lazy ... because made all these poor decisions.

When maybe it would be more advantageous if we looked a person in the eye and got to know the real story, and even if they're not doing everything right, at least we have some empathy because we understand how they got there.

So instead of going up to her and says, “Hey, why are you so upset.” He says, “Hey, there must be something wrong with her.” And he approaches her, and he's very insensitive – and we need to be very careful that we don't become people that look at the outside and instantly judge the inside. Right?

He starts to rebuke her.

But look at her spirit – she doesn't fight back – she doesn't put him or his church on blast. She's humble.

Verse 15-16

Here's the analogy she's drawing – I'm not drinking anything. I'm pouring my anguish out to the Lord. Not pouring something in.

17-19

Here's a woman who is anxious, who is depressed, she's been abused. She went to the Lord with these things. And what happened? She got her appetite back. She didn't

look look like a wreck – the Bible says she visibly looked like something had changed.

Proverbs 13:12 says, “In the absence of hope, the heart grows sick.”

When we have no hope, it’s no wonder we slide into despair. When we worry about the future, it’s no wonder – just being real – when we fill our minds with everything but God – just watch all the news headlines – if you watch enough 5 minute clips, you’ll be depressed all the time.

But if I get into the Word – if I put my hope in the one who holds the future – I don’t slip into that despair, that anxiety. Because I know how this book ends. So I put my trust in the one who holds the future. And that’s what Hannah did.

HER FACE IS NO LONGER DOWNCAST. SHE’S WORSHIPPING THE LORD.

So here’s what I want you to see (this is so good):

If you notice: this is before she is pregnant. We’ll see that in a minute.

But this statement about getting up and eating and her face no longer being sad, and worshipping - - this is BEFORE she gets pregnant.

Do you see what’s happening? She doesn’t:

PRAY – GET PREGNANT – HAVE JOY

She

PRAYS – HAS JOY – GETS PREGNANT

Now – how can she do that? Because her joy wasn’t in her circumstances, her joy was in the Lord.

She doesn’t find joy in “I’ll be happy if everything works out like I want it to.” She finds joy in the Lord.

And we see that – 1 Samuel 2:1-2 (you are a better source of identity, security, and happiness than having children)

Her strength is not in God, not in her children.

She goes on a prays about God’s unfathomable wisdom, his strength, his beauty, his holiness, his compassion for the small, the broken, and sinful people.

This, she says, is her ultimate treasure – and she has found that in God. She’s no longer depending on her family for that!

When the world was telling her – you’ll be happy if you have children, you’ll be happy if you find the right kind of romance – she finds her security and significance in God alone.

And you know what that means? She’s free! She’s free!

All her life she’s wanted a son because of some deficiency in her life. “It’s always been for me.”

And now – I’m asking for a son, for you! You alone are my treasure – and so this son will belong to YOU!

She redirects her desires. “If were asking for a child for me, then I couldn’t have any peace unless you answered the prayer the way I wanted it answered.

But if I'm asking for a children for YOU, then however you want to answer this prayer is fine for me.

Up until this time – it was always for me. NOW – I want to have a child for you.”

So we see – when we're more concerned about how things affect me – my own security - instead of does this relationship honor God – we're on shaky ground with God. Whenever we have a relationship that honors our own desire, but it doesn't recognize God's clear command – it never works out. It creates chaos. And it's the result of not trusting God and his plan.

It leads to insecurity, doubts, affects our witness, dismisses the clear will of God.

And the Bible records over and over again, the consequences of that. BUT HERE – Hannah trusts.

Here's the rest of the story -

19-20 / 21-22

In those days weaning was a process that could take 3-5 years. In those days, women breastfed much longer – there's no baby formula, right?

And here's what's interesting – this period was more than just nursing, it had a training component. She also using this time to teach him spiritual truths.

I love what Charles Spurgeon said: “Before a child reaches seven, tell him all the ways of heaven. Better still, the work will thrive if he learns before he's five.”

Hannah believed that – she's training her son to be God's little man!

Verse 23 - Now he's learning. Before it was, “Why are you all bummed out? Look at me, baby – I'm better than 10 kids.”

Now he wises up – “Whatever you think sweetheart – whatever you want to do. Do what seems best to you.”

24-28 (ephah – about 36 pounds)

SO – I WANT TO END WITH TWO QUESTIONS:

There is a parallel between Hannah's story and your story – because it's meant to lead us to something.

1. Are you living in obedience?

How many times do we go asking things of God – this, this, and this – and God's like, “Woaa, I want you to actually live like I want you to live first.”

We need to address sin and be obedient first. So we need to approach God, seeking His will, not ours.

2. Second question - Where are you looking for your meaning, your security? Your looks, your popularity, how many “likes” you get – whether you can have this or that? What you accomplish?

What do you care the most about obtaining?

And today – will you lay all of that down, and say, “God is enough! He's enough for me.”

And when you finally latch on to that – then you're free!

God's got this! If it happens, it happens – I'll pray about that. But if it doesn't – I trust that God in his infinite will didn't want that for me. And because I trust in him, it's okay!

I SOUGHT THE LORD AND HE ANSWERED . . .

Verse 19 says that before anything even happened, Hannah worshipped. Sometimes we think – I'll worship God because of what he has done for me.

No – we worship because of who he is, regardless of what he does for us. He's God. He's Creator. He's Lord of all.

SO I WANT TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS:

MUSIC

The Bible says in Philippians 4

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

There's a very important tool you need to learn: it's the tool of redirection. Or I'll give it another term – replacement.

The Bible calls it “casting” – 1 Peter 5:7 – “casting all your care upon him, because he care for you.”

Psalms 55:22 – “cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.”

You take your thoughts that are filled with anxiety, and you cast them on the Lord, and you redirect your thinking.

You replace your anxiety with thoughts of worship – God you're good, you're awesome, you've got this, you can do anything.

You start worshipping, meditating, casting it on the Lord – and the Lord guards your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

(TRY WITH ME – one thing you need to cast on him right now -)

She went home – her face was no longer sad.

Before she had a child, her prayer was: Why me Lord – why am I so bitter?

She ends with – “Why me, Lord – why am I so blessed? Out of all people, you picked me.

COMPLETE CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

Let's end with worship!