

# THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 1 Samuel 1:1-20

### “Facing Trials with Maturity”

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33:16

So, I want to invite you to make your way to First Samuel chapter one. If you brought your Bible, go ahead and make your way there. If you didn't bring a Bible, there should be one hiding underneath of your chair, maybe the chair in front of you if you want to grab one, or you can just follow along on the screens as well.

33:30

But this morning, what we're going to see in our passage, we are just starting this series of First Samuel, but we're going to see the origin of a key character, the book's namesake, Samuel, in this weekend's passage.

33:43

Now, this weekend, in our story that we're looking at in First Samuel one, we're going to be introduced to a woman named Hannah. We're going to see Hannah's pain as Hannah is dealing with some very difficult things in her life.

33:55

We're going to see her bring her requests to God in prayer. We're going to see God answer her prayer. So, we have this beautiful lesson this morning that we get to look at where we're going to learn how to face disappointment and how to deal with other difficult circumstances when they come up in our life.

34:13

All kinds of difficult things come. If you're here this morning and you haven't dealt with difficult circumstances, I'm sorry, this message may not speak to you a whole lot, but I feel like if you've been alive for more than about two weeks, you probably dealt with something difficult in life, right?

34:28

So, this morning, we're going to consider how we deal with our disappointment, how we deal with those difficulties when they come. So, I want to invite you to follow along with this being kind of a story -driven book of the Bible.

34:40

We're going to read through this whole story. It's a little bit bigger chunk than what we've done last year working our way through 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus, but we're going to read 1 Samuel chapter one, verse one, and we're going to go down through verse 20 together.

34:53

So, I invite you to follow along as I read. Verse one, It tells us there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim in the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph and Ephrathite.

35:10

And he had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Now, this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were priests of the Lord.

35:31

And on the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all of her sons and daughters. But to Hannah, he gave a double portion because he loved her, even though the Lord had closed her womb.

35:43

And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb, and so it went on year by year. As often as they went up to the house of the Lord, she, Peninnah, used to provoke Hannah.

35:56

Therefore, Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than 10 sons? And after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose.

36:12

Now, Eli, the priest, was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and she prayed to the Lord and she wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, Oh Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant, and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.

36:39

And she continued praying before the Lord. Eli observed her mouth and Hannah was speaking in her heart, only her lips moved and her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli took her to be a drunk woman. And Eli said to her, how long will you go on being drunk?

36:55

Put your wine away from you. But Hannah answered, No, my Lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I've been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman.

37:09

For all along I've been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation. Then Eli answered, Go in peace. And the God of Israel, grant your petition that you have made to him. And she, Hannah said, let your servant find favor in your eyes.

37:24

Then the woman went her way and ate and her face was no longer sad. And they rose early in the morning and worship before the Lord. And the family went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her.

37:37

And in due time, Hannah conceived and bore a son. And she called his name Samuel, for she said, I have asked for him from the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word.

37:52

God, we're thankful for this opportunity to be introduced to this woman, Hannah, this morning, as she is caught in this terrible situation where she just, God, it seems like she just can't see the light of day through her trials.

38:06

God, as she is so focused on this darkness, this despair that has overcome her and the problems of her life. God, we see her respond in the way that many of us need to learn to respond. God, she comes to you in prayer.

38:20

So this morning, as we consider Hannah's story, as we consider this story of Samuel's birth, we pray that you would help us to hear what we need to hear this morning from Hannah. What we need to hear this morning from how Eli and Samuel show up into this picture, God, how you are at work in the lives of your people.

38:38

So God, we pray that you would help us to hear and to consider and to grasp onto what you have for us here today. We pray that you would use this time to speak for your servants are listening. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

38:51

All right, well, as we work our way through these stories in this book of First Samuel and then later in Second Samuel, we're gonna kinda just kinda progress our way through the story. So we're gonna bite a little bit and talk about it and then we're gonna continue through.

39:05

So the first thing that we see as we work our way into this story is we see Hannah's pain, first mentioned in verses one through eight. We see Hannah's pain. So we enter this story and we're introduced to a family.

39:16

We meet this man, his name is Elkanah, he's the husband, and then he's described as having two wives. He's got Hannah and then he's got his second wife, Peninnah. That's important for us before we go too far into a book of the Bible that is described as narrative.

39:33

It tells us the stories of these people who live. This is a historical account. It's important for us to kinda start with, by laying the foundation with some basic Bible interpretation skills. Because there's times that we read the Bible.

39:48

Last year, we were looking at letters, First and Second Timothy and Titus. We looked at those books and what Paul is doing in those books, the author is he's telling Timothy and he's telling Titus how to live.

40:00

He's telling them what to do. He's telling them how they should respond to this circumstance or to that circumstance. But in First and Second Samuel, we're looking at this story. There are lots of things that are described and recounted in this book, and they're not given to us so that we should copy them.

40:17

They're not prescribed to us. There's a difference between things that are descriptive and things that are prescriptive. So I wanted to kinda just point this out. The Bible, we see both of these things in the Bible.

40:28

And there are some things that are prescriptive, right? That the Bible prescribes and tells us what to do. The Bible tells us how we should live in certain places in life. The Bible tells us that we should love God, that we should pray, that it tells us that we should go make disciples.

40:42

Those are things that the Bible prescribes for us, do these things, right? But there are other times when the Bible is descriptive, it describes what has happened. As we work our way through this story of First and Second Samuel, we're gonna see King Saul sets in his mind he's going to kill David.

41:00

Now, that is being descriptive, describing what Saul did trying to kill David. That's not prescribing to us that any person named Dave that you know you should go try to kill them, right? That would be a problem if we interpreted it that way, but rather what we see, we need to remember there's some things that are simply describing the sinful actions of people, and there are other things that the Bible is telling us do this.

41:22

What we see here in the story of Elkanah is descriptive. It tells us that he had two wives. The Bible is very clear that a monogamous relationship between a man and a woman, a husband and a wife is what God instituted at creation.

41:37

It's the way that God ordained the world to work, but it had become acceptable in Israel that a man might have more than one wife at this point in history. It's possible that Elkanah's having a second wife was due to the fact that Hannah was unable to bear children.

41:53

Hannah was his first wife. Hannah's described as being the wife that he loved here in our passage, but if Hannah was unable to have children, it's entirely possible that Elkanah did what several other people have done in Scripture.

42:06

If we go and look at their stories, that he was worried about how am I going to have a child, and he went and found another way to accomplish what he thought he needed to accomplish. What we're described as having this family here, Elkanah, his one wife, Peninnah, and her children, her sons and daughters, and then we've got Hannah here unable to have children.

42:24

As we continue through the story, we look now at verse three, and it tells us that this man, Elkanah, used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were priests of the Lord.

42:40

On the day when Elkanah went and sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, to his one wife and to all her sons and daughters, but to Hannah it says that he gave a double portion because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.

42:53

Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh. They went to the place where they were supposed to go to worship, and Elkanah in this moment does what we should do. Tells us that he prioritized the place of God in his life, that he gave his attention to God, that he was doing the right things, that he was faithfully doing the things that he was supposed to do.

43:13

This passage doesn't describe to us why Elkanah chooses to give a double portion to Hannah than what he gives to his other wife, Peninnah, but it seems like there's this indication that he's playing favorites.

43:25

He's showing this sign of favor for Hannah over Peninnah. There's a contrast between the way that he treats his two wives. We've got one that's receiving favoritism, one that feels like she's getting the short end of the stick.

43:41

It may reflect the root of the animosity, the rivalry that we see described in this passage between these two wives, between Peninnah and Hannah. Elkanah was showing favoritism towards Hannah, which likely contributed to why we see Peninnah respond the way that we do in verse six.

44:00

Guys, if you're taking notes this morning, this is your first application for you to write down. If you have two wives, don't show favoritism to one over the other. Remember, descriptive, not prescriptive.

44:13



You only get one. Sorry, guys. We continue. We go down to verses six and seven, but we see this ugly rivalry between Peninnah and Hannah start to flare up. Hannah was surely upset at her inability to have a child, but we see Peninnah just starts poking at that in these verses.

44:32

Verse six, it tells us that Hannah's rival, Peninnah, used to provoke her grievously, to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb. And so it went on year by year. As often as they went up to the house of the Lord, Peninnah used to provoke Hannah.

44:47

Therefore, Hannah wept and would not eat. Hannah's trial that's described here in these verses is one that's familiar to many women today. There are many women who deal with this same inability to be able to bear children.

45:02

And whenever Hannah would go out into the marketplace, whenever she would go to the church or wherever it was when she would be around other families, the sound of children, that sound that she most desperately desired in her own life, those sounds to come from her home, they serve to remind her of her pain.

45:22

And so Peninnah, this other wife who seemingly hates Hannah, tells us that she cruelly kind of pokes Hannah in that soft spot, in that sore spot. It causes Hannah this great pain as she is reminded time and time and time again of the reality she wasn't able to have the children that she so desperately wanted.

45:43

As they were going to the house of the Lord, Hannah was overwhelmed by her pain in the house of God to be able to worship. Hannah is experiencing only distress in this moment. You know, I want to just take a little side detour here because hearing that from Hannah's story, it reminds me of so many conversations that I've had.

46:06

My own experience talking with people and hearing this same comment from several different conversations throughout the years. That is that the church can at times be the most difficult place for people who feel attacked by life's circumstances.

46:21

The church can be difficult to come in and to sit perhaps by yourself, to sit and to look around and to see everybody else that says, oh, we are just happy and healthy and wealthy. Everything's wonderful for us.

46:32

And maybe you come in and just, you feel alone. You realize the pain of life. And even though church is the place where those people most desperately need to be, it's perhaps the last place that they want to be in those moments.

46:48

And Christians, we should be reminded in this story to be thoughtful of the afflictions of others. We need to be sensitive in our words and in our actions. We need to look for opportunities to provide heartfelt support, to provide sympathy to people, to those who grieve.

47:05

There are times in life where it just gets difficult, right? We all have experienced those moments when life gets hard, when you get a bad medical diagnosis, when you're disappointed because you can't have children, when you find out that something didn't break your way, when you lose your job, whatever.

47:20

There's a million different things that pop up in life. And in those moments, the place where we most desperately need to be, sitting in church, listening to the word of God,

being surrounded by a church family who loves us, those are those moments where sometimes it becomes the most difficult church.

47:40

We need to be sensitive to those moments for people. We need to look for ways to provide support and care for those people. We need to acknowledge the fact that everything is not always happy and healthy and wealthy, because if you stand out by the front doors for more than a couple of minutes, you go over to the cafe, you just stand around and talk to people or listen to other people's conversations, you will hear time and time and time again, people go, yeah, how are things going for you?

48:05

Oh man, I'm just blessed. Man, everything's just great. The kids are awesome, life's great, we're rich, we're happy, work's wonderful. Everything's great, right? You talk to somebody in the hallway, they don't have any problems.

48:21

We pretend that life's perfect to hide our pain, but what we do in those moments when we hide our pain is we place these barriers. We inflict pain actually in the lives of other people who sit and who hear those statements and they go, well, I wish my life was like that, I have so much pain in life.

48:40

We create these separations between us and between other people. None of us are living the life that we project on social media, right? We put the pictures on social media, everybody's happy, everything's wonderful, no marriage has ever had a fight on social media, right?

48:56

Everything's perfect, but life gets hard sometimes, doesn't it? There are fights when you sit down with your spouse and you have to figure out where the money's gonna come from. There are problems, there are moments where life just gets heavy.

49:12

What I would describe as those moments are those gray days, those gray seasons, right? When things get a little difficult, Hannah is coming to the house of the Lord and instead of it being a place that brings comfort and peace for her, it brings pain.

49:29

As Peninnah reminds her, God hates you because you don't have a child. Let's continue in our passage. We see Elkanah try to reach out in verse eight and try to help. In verse eight it says that Elkanah, Hannah's husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep?

49:47

Why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than 10 sons? Hannah is weeping, is described as refusing to eat and being downcast. All what I would describe as symptoms of depression and out of a genuine concern, her husband comes to her and he tries to help, right?

50:06

And wives, I'm sure there have been moments where your husband has come and tried to help. Maybe it was helpful, right? Maybe it wasn't. But how comforting it is for someone simply to be there. Elkanah comes, he senses Hannah's pain and he simply comes and tries to help in any way that he could.

50:24

One of the best ways for us to help is not necessarily for us to find the right words to say because there's circumstances in life there are no right words to say. When you've lost a loved one, there is nothing that someone can say that just magically makes it all better.

50:38

Sometimes there's not words for us to say, but simply being there, sometimes the most meaningful thing that we can do. Our mere presence with the sick or the troubled or the grieving is often more powerful than any words that we could express.

50:53

In fact, we look at verse eight, we see Elkanah's words actually weren't that helpful, right? They might even be considered self-centered. We see that he shows up, but hey Hannah, you're dealing with this problem.

51:03

And he asks her, am I not worth more to you than 10 sons would be? Rather than telling her, you're worth more to me than 10 sons would be. He turns this on her and says, am I not enough for you? He made it about him.

51:17

Anybody ever been in a difficult circumstance in life and you had a friend show up or a family member show up and they wanted to help and you knew their heart was in the right place, but somehow your problem immediately became about, you know, I'm dealing with the same thing and all of a sudden your problem becomes about them.

51:35

I'm sure you guys have never done that, but other people have done that probably. We need to be there and we need to focus on their thing. We need to help them in their moment of weakness. But Elkanah shows up and he tries to help.

51:51

As we continue through this passage, we see in verses nine through 11, Hannah, she turns her attention, not just from her pain, but now she turns her attention to prayer. In verse nine, we continue working our way through this story.

52:05

It tells us that after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah, she rises up. Eli, the priest, was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord, but Hannah was deeply distressed and she prayed to the Lord and she wept bitterly.

52:21

Hannah beautifully models the response that should be second nature for all of us, but so often, it becomes a second thought. It's a delayed response for us. Hannah, in her pain, in her moment of weakness, she takes her situation before God in prayer.

52:40

Hannah's described in these verses as being deeply distressed. That's not some fleeting thought of, well, that's a bumme type of a, you know, you just need to dust yourself off and get over it. That's not a fleeting thought.

52:52

This is one of those moments where those inner voices become really loud and the weight of her problems has become overwhelming for her. We have those moments, don't we? Where the voices that are in our head, those voices of anxiety or depression or fear or doubt or whatever it may be, those moments come and those voices come and they start speaking in our own heads and they become so loud.

53:17

It's the only thing that you can hear. It's the only thing that life seems to revolve around in that moment. And Hannah is described here, Hannah's situation, she's described as being deeply distressed.

53:32

Reference is the fact that she didn't want to eat. She couldn't live, do the normal things in life. That sounds to me like a pretty deep depression or anxiety issue. Verse 10 tells us that Hannah wept bitterly.

53:45

That's not just somebody had a bad day. This is something that was overwhelming to Hannah. But Hannah should be a model for us to remember when we have those moments, because we have those moments. Maybe it's today that you came in here and you drug yourself to church this morning.

54:01

Maybe it's coming for you a week from now or a month from now or years from now. But Hannah should be a model for us when those gray seasons of life come, when we face times of anxiety and depression and doubt and worry, because how does Hannah respond when she faces those things?

54:19

What does she do? It tells us that when the burdens of life became overwhelming, she gets up, she goes into the house of God and she prays. She does what Paul tells us to do in Philippians chapter four.

54:33

When we become anxious or fearful, Paul has given us a command, but it's a command with a promise. Philippians chapter four, verses six and seven, it tells us do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

54:56

Now there's times in the Bible where it tells us do this or don't do that and we kind of get good pieces of wisdom that we can hold on to and we know that if we live life God's way, it's gonna benefit us.

55:08

But there's also times where God gives us a command and then he ties a promise to it. This is one of those moments. This isn't just something, hey maybe things will work out for you if you do it the way that I tell you to.

55:20

Philippians chapter four tells us do not be anxious, but if you will instead of being anxious, instead of worrying, instead of living in your doubt and your depression, instead of living in that space, pray.

55:34

And if you will pray, verse seven tells us that the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and your mind. In those moments when life gets heavy, I think something to guard your heart and your mind is probably the most necessary thing that any of us could have.

55:53

We need the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. I don't know why I'm okay in this circumstance. It doesn't make any sense to anybody else, but we have prayed and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guards our hearts and our minds.

56:08

That's a command, but it's a command with a promise. God tells us when life gets heavy, come to Him. That's what Hannah does. That's what we see in verse 11. She continues, it says that she vowed a vow and said, Oh Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me, not forget your servant, but you will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and no razor shall touch his head.

56:37



I missed that one, but the razor thing. You might assume that a broken heart like Hannah's would leave little space for theology. I don't want to talk about the things that we think are true about God, the things that we know are true about God.

56:55

I just need to focus on my problem. I just need to deal with this thing. But it's times like this. It's times when life gets heavy. It's times when the voices in Hannah's own head and Hannah's own heart gets so loud that she needed to remember the truths that she had learned about God.

57:15

I want you to consider the different tone of two different ways that people could pray, that Hannah could have prayed and come to God in these moments. Because there's some people who come to God with this apathetic, are you there God kind of a prayer?

57:32

If Hannah had come into the temple and had kind of offered this basic, I don't know if you're there, but I've tried everything else, so I guess I'll pray too. Might as well. She's effectively tossing a coin into the fountain or making a wish before she blows out her birthday candles.

57:50

That prayer lacks faith. It comes not really thinking that anything is going to happen, not really bringing your request to God. It's just kind of checking off a box of, well, I've tried everything else.

58:03

It's the way that some people would describe their prayers. But then there's this theologically rich, well -informed prayer that Hannah offers as she comes to God. And it shows us in verse 11, there's some things that she acknowledges to be true.

58:19

She comes to God and she says, oh, Lord of hosts. That's a term that refers to the sovereignty of God, that he is in control of all things, that there's nothing that happens outside of his hand. She comes to God and says, God, you created the stars.

58:34

You created the world. You spoke the world into existence. You created me. You're my loving Father who knows me and knows what I need. If we come to God with this attitude of God, you're strong enough to accomplish anything that I need in life.

58:51

Anything that you want to do, you are more than capable of doing it. And I need your help right now because I don't know what to do. You hear the difference between those two prayers? God, I don't know, maybe do something.

59:06

And a person who knows who God is, who knows that God loves them, who knows that God is able to accomplish what he wants to accomplish in whatever our circumstances are. That person, the second person knows that God is big enough to help and they know that God is a loving Father and is going to do what's best for him.

59:27

Hannah comes in these verses. She brings her specific request before God. And we see it clearly in verse 11. She knows who she is. Three separate times in one verse, we see Hannah in her short little prayer.

59:40

She refers to herself as your servant. Three different times, she humbles herself before God and says, God, I am just your servant. But if you would, you hear my prayer. She doesn't come making demands, but she brings her request humbly before the Lord.

59:57

But she also remembers who God is as she addresses him as the Lord of hosts. The one who's powerful enough to be in control of all things. But even as she comes humbly before the God of the universe, she doesn't just come in kind of shyly, like, you know, kicking dirt around on the ground and, you know, God, if it'd be okay, maybe you could help.

01:00:21

She doesn't come in shyly. She comes in and she clearly makes her request. She clearly asks God for what she believes she needs, what she wants in her life. There are many people who will turn away from God when they're experiencing difficulty in life.

01:00:38

When life gets heavy, many will just simply resign themselves that that's their fate. Well, God's in control and I guess we just need to deal with it. Some Christians will offer the advice to friends to just move on and thank God for that trial.

01:00:57

We should be thankful to God in everything that we face. When those trials come, we can thank God because God does bring those things into our life. But that doesn't mean that we have to be resigned to our circumstances.

01:01:10

That doesn't mean that we simply have to sit back like a log in a stream just being carried wherever the current takes us. In the book of James, further back in the New Testament, James, I believe, gives us better advice because in James chapter 5 it tells us, is anyone among you suffering?

01:01:28

Well, let him pray. Let him pray. Of all the things that Hannah could have done, she could have gotten angry, she could have grown bitter, she could have worried. Instead of

doing those things that would have been very natural for her and her circumstances, instead, she does the very best thing.

01:01:44

She simply goes and takes her request to God in prayer. There may be times that God's doing something in our life though. There's times where God hears our prayer and sometimes the answer is no. Sometimes the answer is not now, but there's also times where in James chapter 4, I think James chapter 4 verse 2 is a little more applicable for us. Because James 4, too, says you do not have because you do not ask.

01:02:10

There's times where we do not have because we do not ask. Hannah doesn't leave that as an option. She goes, she takes her request to God. She comes to him and she says, God, I know that you love me and I know that you're big and I know that you're powerful and I know that you know what's best, but God, I need you right now.

01:02:32

We see Hannah's pain. We see Hannah's prayer. And now in the last several verses of our passage, we see God's response. We see Eli show up, the priest show up as this small picture of how morally and spiritually bankrupt Israel had become because what we see here in verse 13 and continuing is that we've got a priest who is unable to recognize the difference between a drunk woman babbling in the corner and a woman who is pouring out her heart before God.

01:03:02

But let's look at verse 12 and see how Hannah's prayer is received as she offers it there in the house of God. Verse 12, it says that Hannah continued praying before the Lord. And Eli, the priest, observed her mouth.

01:03:16

And Hannah was speaking in her heart. Only her lips moved and her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli took her to be a drunken woman. Eli said to her, how long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.

01:03:27

Hannah was speaking in her heart. It indicates that Hannah was praying silently by herself, something that, as he was very familiar to us today, wasn't a common practice then. But as Hannah offers her prayer before God, Eli concludes that she's a drunk woman.

01:03:45

John Woodhouse, a commentator, I was reading this week. He complains about Eli talking about this passage. John Woodhouse's right to complain. He said, if Israel had a leader who could not tell the difference between a godly woman's heartfelt prayer and drunken rambling, no wonder Israel had a leadership crisis.

01:04:05

The priest couldn't tell the difference between a woman who was drunk and babbling in the corner and someone who was pouring her heart out before God. So Hannah hears Eli's accusation. And kind of sets the story straight in the next few verses.

01:04:21

She continues in verse 15. It says that Hannah answered, no, my Lord, I'm a woman troubled in spirit. I've drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I've been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman.

01:04:35

For all along, I've been speaking out of the great anxiety and vexation. Then Eli answered, go in peace. And the God of Israel, grant your petition that you have made to him. Hannah's self-description as being someone who was pouring out her soul before the Lord indicates that rather than leaving those emotions to fester, rather than sitting

with her fear or anxiety or depression any longer, she expressed her deepest desires before God.

01:05:03

Hannah tells Eli, no, no, this isn't just drunken rambling. I am in pain and I'm asking God for help. Eli, it tells us in verse 17. We don't know if this is just Eli saying, okay, sure, sounds good. You can go now.

01:05:20

Or whether Eli is providing a blessing to her. Some people read it differently. But I think, seems to me like it's a positive response from Eli, because we see Hannah, her spirit is lifted when she hears Eli's response.

01:05:36

Hannah replies to Eli's comment as we see this conclusion in verses 18 through 20. It says that Hannah said, Let your servant find favor in your eyes, and then the woman went on her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

01:05:49

And the family arose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord. Then they went back to their house at Rama, and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time, Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel.

01:06:04

For she said, I have asked for him from the Lord. Hannah is seemingly encouraged by Eli's blessing. It tells us that she responds favorably. It says that her face was no longer sad. It tells us it seems to indicate that her problem has been resolved, that she starts to see potential for God is going to answer my prayer.

01:06:26

She gains confidence in the fact that God has heard her as Eli the priest responds to her. It's evident that Hannah took Eli's words as a response from the Lord, because regardless of the flaws that are in Eli, that we're going to see in the coming weeks and months, there are some pretty major flaws in Eli and in his sons, Hophni and Phineas.

01:06:46

But nevertheless, Eli was the priest. Eli was the one who spoke on behalf of God at that time. And Eli's response to Hannah tells us that God heard Hannah's prayer. God heard Hannah's prayer. God responded in his perfect way.

01:07:02

God was going to do so in his perfect timing. Seeing this answered prayer, it reminds me of Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6 is from Jesus' famous sermon on the Mount. Jesus is teaching the crowds of people.

01:07:17

And in Matthew 6, we see this little reminder that's probably familiar for many of us. But Jesus says in verses 25 through 27, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you'll drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

01:07:32

It is not life more than food and the body more than clothing. Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

01:07:46

Which one of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to the span of his life? You know, Hannah didn't just choose to sit there and to be anxious or to be depressed. She took her problems and she brought them before God.

01:08:00

God loves his children. We see that over and over and over and over, and I'm going to get tired of saying over and over and over if I keep going enough times for it to actually reflect it. Hundreds of times, thousands of times, we see in Scripture that God has an intense and a serious concern and care for his children.

01:08:23

God loves his children more than anything else in all of creation. That's why God tells us, Jesus himself in Matthew chapter 6 tells us, do not be anxious about things that you can't control. Jesus is there teaching the crowds and he says, why are you anxious?

01:08:42

You sit here and you worry about having food and having clothes, but look at the birds. God takes care of the birds. Why would you worry that God is going to take care of you? If God can take care of the birds of the air that fall and die and nobody even notices, is God not going to take care of his children?

01:09:01

Jesus tells us, don't be anxious about things that you can't control. Why would you be anxious about something that you can't have any impact on? It tells us in verse 27, which one of you by being anxious can add a single hour to the span of their life?

01:09:19

Why are you going to sit around and worry about something that you can't control? Don't be anxious about things that you can't control. Go to God and trust him as your loving Father, because you know what?

01:09:29

In those moments where we can't control it, there's somebody who can. We'd probably be better served talking to him about it than just sitting and worrying about it ourselves. There's two things that happen when God's people pray to him in faith.



01:09:44

The first one is that prayer changes us. We see that in Hannah's story. Hannah has a dramatic, dramatic change of demeanor. Her spirit completely changes in these verses that we've read this morning.

01:09:58

Hannah entered into the house of the Lord. She enters broken spirited. She enters depressed, coming in, focusing on her problems, focusing on the fact that she can't have this child that she so desperately wanted.

01:10:13

But as she brings her prayer to the Lord, as she rises from her prayer and tells us in verse 18, that she went away, that she ate, that her face was no longer sad. She experienced this renewal of her faith.

01:10:26

Her prayer changed her. It changed her outlook on her circumstances. It changed the way that she was perceiving what God was doing in her life. because there's times where God's at work and we just don't look for it.

01:10:42

So when we pray and when we come to God, sometimes God goes, pay attention, because I'm over here doing something. Sometimes prayer changes us. But not only does prayer change us, prayer also changes our circumstances.

01:10:55

Prayer changes things. God is pleased to act in response to our prayers. You know, there are some people who react to the knowledge of God's sovereignty by becoming fatalistic. We just think, well, God's got, the whole movie is already all set and we're just watching it play out.

01:11:15

Nothing that I do is gonna change anything. God's in control, who cares what I do? God's decided everything in advance. Hannah didn't think that way. In fact, this story seems to indicate that that's not how it works at all.

01:11:30

Hannah understood that God's sovereign will is achieved through the actions of men and women. We wanna pray God, save this person. God, help this family member that I love so much. Help them to know about Jesus and help them to have a relationship with him.

01:11:44

We should pray those prayers. And also we should go tell them about Jesus because God uses people like me or like you to be the mouthpiece that goes and shares that good news. We should pray. We should also act because God uses the actions of men and women to accomplish his sovereign will.

01:12:06

Some will wonder what it means for God to respond to our prayers because in this story, we see Hannah, she prays, she cries out before God and it says that God answered her prayer that she went home, that she knew her husband and all of a sudden the baby shows up.

01:12:23

Her prayer was answered with a yes. But sometimes in life, many of us in this room have prayed before and we've prayed God work in this situation. God help this to get better. God help this person to get well.

01:12:37

God work and fix whatever it is. And it doesn't seem like how hard or how passionately it doesn't matter. How hard we pray, it doesn't seem like it ever matters because it seems like the answer is no, time and time and time again.

01:12:54

What do we do when God seems to answer our prayers with a no? What do we do when it seems like he doesn't answer our prayers at all, when we feel like we're just praying, praying, praying and God never responds.

01:13:08

We pray for that sick family member to be healed and they're not and they pass. We pray for a child like Hannah did and year after year, month after month, we realize no child has come, no child has come, no child has come.

01:13:21

Pray for a life circumstance to be changed and it doesn't change. There are times when our prayers are not answered but does that mean that God didn't hear us? Does that mean that God doesn't care? May mean that they weren't answered how we wanted or it may mean that they're not gonna be answered when we want but that doesn't mean that they're not being answered.

01:13:42

God always answers prayer. If God is our loving father, that means that they're always answered but sometimes that means that they're answered in the way that's best for us, not in the way that we think they need to be.

01:13:55

I don't know about you but I look at my circumstances and when I come to God in prayer, it feels like I know everything and how it needs to play out and what needs to happen and who needs to be healed and what job I need and how much my salary needs to be.

01:14:09

All those things, everybody needs to be healthy and happy and we've got the idea all figured out, right? We just bring those things to God and if God would just sign off on our requisition, things would be great.

01:14:26

But then I'm reminded, I'm a dad, right? I've got five kids and there's times where my kids come to me, they bring their request to me and oftentimes I don't give them what they ask for. In fact, most of the time it feels like I don't give them what they ask for because the answer is no often, right?

01:14:49

Dad, can we have candy for dinner? No, we can't have candy for dinner. It's because a small human thinks that's what they need. That's what they want. That's gonna be what's best for them but a slightly bigger human realizes, no, no, no, there's problems with that, right?

01:15:05

You're gonna have growth deficiencies, you're gonna have a bellyache, things are gonna be bad if you eat candy for dinner every night. So as the loving father who knows what's best for them, my answer to them is no in that moment.

01:15:18

Maybe it's a piece of candy. If that analogy makes sense to us, that a slightly smaller human looks to a slightly bigger human and I as their father know what's best for them and I'm able to give them what they need instead of what they want.

01:15:37

I think it should remind us in those moments when we come to God that a simple human, perhaps doesn't know as well as the king of the universe who sees eternity past and eternity future. God's not bound by time.

01:15:52

God knows everything. God knows every outcome of every circumstance, of everything that could ever happen. And God knows what's best for us. And God gives us what's best for us because if he's a loving father who wants what's best for his children, sometimes we come to him and we pray, God give me this.

01:16:11

And the answer needs to be wait. Sometimes we may come to God and say, God give me this and the answer is no. And we know hindsight's 2020. We can look back on things and go, oh, I see it now when we look back.

01:16:26

But in our present circumstances, it's hard for us to grasp. But we do need to grasp and hold on to in the midst of this story with Hannah though, is that God knew what they needed. God knew what Hannah needed.

01:16:40

He knew what was best. And in Hannah's case, God heard and answered her prayer, granting her petition. She has this son. Verses 19 and 20, it tells us that she went home, she knew her husband and she had a son named Samuel.

01:16:56

As we continue through this story, we're gonna continue to follow this story of Hannah over the next several weeks. We're gonna continue to follow Samuel in the coming months. But for now, what I want us to take away is simply to be reminded that the prayer of faith of this woman, it impacted history.

01:17:17

The prayer of this woman changed history. And God is sovereign and in control of all things and God is certainly working in the midst of this as well. But Hannah doesn't have a son until she prays and she comes and she brings that to God.

01:17:31

And then a year later, whatever it is, it says that she goes home and she gets pregnant. She has a son after she brings that request to God. But I want you to remember, this isn't just Hannah had a child.

01:17:46

Hannah's bringing her request before God changed the course of human history because Hannah's son, Samuel, becomes the one who would be the kingmaker in Israel. We see him put Saul on the throne as the first king of Israel.

01:18:01

We see him put David on the throne as the second king of Israel. King David kind of plays a big role in the whole story. If you were with us during the months of Christmas, you remember us talking about that Messiah, that promised one that was going to come out of David's family line.

01:18:19

The Messiah that came that changed the world. That the reason that we're here is because Jesus was that, that root from the stump of Jesse, that promised one who is going to come from the city of David, a savior who is Christ the Lord.

01:18:36

That same savior, God can do whatever God wants, but it sure seems like he doesn't show up on the scene without Hannah being faithful to bring her request to God and to ask God to give her this son. The faith of a praying woman impacted history.

01:18:56

We serve a God who hears and who answers when we pray. So our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service is over. They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that we've got going on.

01:19:07

After the first service, I think every single person was down here. So we're gonna lock the doors. You guys can all come down here and pray for a while and then we'll let you, I'm kidding. Our prayer team will be down here.

01:19:17

We've also got our prayer wall out the back doors. If you look to your right, we've got a wall there that you can write your prayer request down. We would love to pray for those. Our prayer team would love to pray for those as well.

01:19:27

Perhaps you don't have time to come down front, but I just wanna invite you to pray with me now as we remember that God answers prayer. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for the opportunity we had to gather here together this morning to consider Hannah's story and to consider how Hannah responded to her circumstances.

01:19:48

Hannah responded to her pain, her depression, her anxiety, whatever it was that she was dealing with as we see described here in our passage. Hannah responded to her pain by turning to you and you answered.

01:20:06

God, you changed Hannah and you changed Hannah's circumstances. God, help us to be people of faith who will realize that when we sit with our own problems and we think we can just control it by sitting and worrying about it more, we're being foolish.

01:20:25

But when we bring our petitions to you and we bring our requests to you and we say, God, we need you because we can't do it. When we humble ourselves like Hannah did, God, you answer the prayers of your servants.

01:20:43

God, we pray that you would help us to, God to be people of faith who would bring our requests, who would believe in the power of prayer, and who would believe in your power as our King and our loving Father.

01:20:57

God, help us to look to you in those moments. Help us to come to you and help us to realize what an incredible blessing it is that we can come to the King of the universe and know that you hear us. Father, we thank you for loving us and we thank you for hearing our prayers.

01:21:13

We thank you for answering them. It's in Jesus' name, we pray, amen.