

Hannah

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[0 : 00] Chapter 1 and certain sections of the second chapter as well. 1 Samuel. Last week we tried to do a brief character study on the first woman of whom we find mentioned in the Bible, Eve.

This evening we look at another woman of whom we read in the Old Testament scriptures. Hannah, the mother of Samuel. According to one writer, Hannah is the mother who personifies ideal motherhood.

Most of us will be familiar with the story. We're told that Hannah was the favourite wife of a man called Elkanah.

Elkanah belonged to the Levitical line and Elkanah was someone who loved God. And yet his life was not altogether right with God.

We can argue along these lines because he was a polygamist. He was married to more than one woman. And we discover that one of his wives, Penina, made life very difficult for Hannah.

[1 : 22] Her life was not an easy one, even within the confines of her own home. But her life is a very instructive life. And I believe a very inspirational life.

And a life that is well worthy of our consideration this evening. The name Hannah means gracious or graciousness.

And that quality of character is certainly to be seen in this woman as we read these opening chapters. I want this evening to look very briefly at five things about Hannah.

Or five things that we're told of here that I hope will be of some help to us. I want to look to begin with at her holiness. Her sanctity.

Then I want to look in the second place at her heartache. Her sorrow. Thirdly, at her hope. Her supplication as she approaches God in prayer.

[2 : 31] Then I want to look at her honesty. She's a woman who means what she says. And that's shown by the sacrifice that she's prepared to make. And finally, I just want to look or listen for a moment to her halel.

Her song of praise. Which we have already read in chapter 2. So, we look at this character under these headings tonight.

And the first thing that I want to mention is her sanctity or her holiness. Hannah appears to be a woman of unblemished character.

A woman whose reputation seems to be untarnished. She went up, we read, year after year to the house of the Lord.

She observed the religious ordinances of the day. And she clearly had a relationship with God in her life as an ongoing reality.

[3 : 38] In the midst of her difficult and distressing domestic circumstances. This woman was clearly in an ongoing relationship with God.

She knew who to turn to for Grace to help her in her time of need. Of course, Hannah felt her circumstances very, very keenly.

We read here that she knew what it was to weep and to be offered food. On account of the taunts and the sneers of Penina.

She was clearly someone who was devoted to God. Difficult and dire. For whom circumstances were.

She was someone who lived, as it were, among thorns. But who comes across as being like a lily among thorns.

[4 : 45] She is someone who in that respect is a picture of the church of Christ in the world. Living in a hostile environment. Yet retaining and maintaining an ongoing relationship with God.

She is an example to all of us who profess the name of Christ. She ought to be an inspiration to us to follow after holiness.

To seek to be like Christ. She was a holy woman. She had this sanctified aura about her.

Even in the midst of all her distress. And that's precisely what God is looking for in his church in the world.

He wants us to resemble himself more and more. No matter how provoked we may be. By those who are hostile both to us and to God.

[5 : 47] She wants us. God wants us to be like Hannah. No matter how misunderstood we may be. Even by those who say that they belong to us.

Even her own husband. Didn't understand her altogether. Even her own husband. Couldn't really understand why she was grieving so much.

Hannah. Hannah. Why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhaunted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?

Even her own husband. Failed to understand her fully. Man of God. Though he certainly was. And Eli.

In the temple. Failed to understand her as well. He thought she was drunk. When in actual fact. She was praying. And he rebuked her.

[6 : 49] In his ignorance. And said. How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine. And yet for all the opposition. That she suffered at the hands of Penina.

And for all that she was misunderstood. By her husband. And by Eli the priest. She still retained this holiness.

That is I believe so. So transparent. In her character. As we read about her. And that is surely. What God requires.

Of all who profess his name. No matter what opposition. We may encounter. No matter how misunderstood. We may be. No matter how much.

Some may seek. Even to silence us. And question us. As to. Why we're. The way we are. God wants us. No matter.

[7 : 50] What our circumstances. To keep. In communion. With himself. And to follow after holiness. Without which no one.

Shall see. The Lord. God. So we have. Hannah's holiness. Her sanctity. But we have something else. Hannah's heartache. Hannah's.

Sorrow. Hannah had a husband. Who loved her. Hannah. Knew the Lord. And loved him. And yet. For all that. Hannah. Had her own share. Of heartache. Hannah. Hannah. Was no stranger. To sorrow. To be loved by God.

And even to be loved. By. Our fellow men. In no way. Leaves us. Immune. To heartache.

[8 : 45] And sorrow. And Hannah's sorrow. Hannah's heartache. Is so obvious. As we read. The story. She knew sorrow.

She knew heartache. For three reasons. Firstly. Because she was. Childless. It was the ideal.

For every Jewish woman. To have children. Among the Jewish women. The maternal instinct. Was strong. She believed.

As the psalmist tells us. In. The psalm that we'll be singing. As we. Bring the service. To a close. That children. Are God's heritage. Among the Jews.

It was a shame. It was even a disgrace. For the woman. To be fruitless. And she knew sorrow. And heartache. On account of that.

[9 : 44] In our. Day. And in our time. The same sense. Of shame. Is not associated. Necessarily. With being barren.

And yet. For many. It's hard. To take. And there are many. Who. Attempt. In our day. In different ways.

To address this. And. Even to get around it. And sometimes. We within the church. May also. Imagine.

That because. The Lord. Has not. Blessed us. In temporal things. And some. May even. Literally. Lament. Over barrenness. As she lamented. Yet.

There is the temptation. For us. To. To be so. Caught up. With sorrow. On account. Of our. Physical circumstances. That we forget. That the scriptures.

[10:39] Have a lot. To say. Concerning. Spiritual. Fruitfulness. And that the scriptures. Assert. That although it is blessed. For a person.

To be. Fruitful. Physically. And literally. Although that ought. Always to be. Seen. As a blessing. From God. And something.

For which. All whom the Lord. Has made fruitful. Ought to give thanks. Yet. The scriptures. Remind us. That to be. Spiritually. Fruitful. Is much more.

Important. And infinitely. More glorifying. And honoring. To God. The Bible. Tells us. That God. Wants his.

People. To have. Spiritual children. He wants us. To be. Spiritually. Fruitful. He wants us. To add. To our faith.

[11:35] To add. To our faith. Virtue. And to add. To virtue. Knowledge. And to add. To knowledge. Self-control. Or temperance. And to add.

To temperance. Patience. And to add. To patience. Godliness. And to add. To godliness. Brotherly kindness.

And to add. To brotherly kindness. Love. And the Bible says this. God. If these things. Abound. In us.

We shall be neither. Barren. Nor unfruitful. In our knowledge. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. What ought to concern us.

This evening. Is that we be. Spiritually. Productive. That the fruit. Of God's spirit. Be seen. In our lives. Hannah.

[12:32] I knew sorrow. Because. Literally. She was barren. We ought to know. Even deeper sorrow. If spiritually. Speaking. Our lives.

Are barren. As we live them. Out. In this world. God. And that ought to be. A source of great grief. To so many of us. That our lives.

Appear to be barren. In so many ways. That is something. That we ought to grieve over. Much more. Than anything physical. That may be our lot. In providence.

And our primary concern. Must be. That we produce. Or have the fruit. Of the spirit. Produced in our lives. To the glory. Of God. And so she knew.

Heartache. Because she was barren. And she knew. Heartache. Because she wasn't only barren. She was mocked. For her barrenness. Because the Lord.

[13:27] Had closed her womb. Her rival. Kept. Provoking her. In order. To irritate her. Her rival. Kept. On. As it were.

Twisting the knife. And kept on. Reminding her. And kept on. Sneering. And commenting. And mocking. Pointing the finger. And having a laugh.

Even. At Hannah's expense. And that obviously. Caused. This. Woman of God. Great hearted. And the same. Is often true. Of Christ's church. In the world. We may be the object. Of the mockery. And of the ridicule. And of the sneer. And of the taunting. Of the world.

The world. May point the finger. At us. As Penina. Pointed the finger. At her. And at itself.

[14:25] The fact. That we are. The laughing stock. Of. Our enemies. Or to cause. Great grief. To all. Who truly. Know the Lord.

And you know. There may be times. There may be times. In the Christian experience. Of some. When they even. Envy the world. Because they don't have.

Loose in their lives. Because they don't know. What it does to be. Mocked. And sneered. And provoked. Because they. Are the instigator.

Shoffered. Those who may be the victims. May on occasion. Even feel envious. Of them. And it's only. When the child of God. Sees. Hers and her own situation.

And the world's. Circumstances. In the light. Of eternal realities. That we realize. What a privilege. It is. To suffer. In this manner.

[15:25] For the Lord's sake. But it is. Something that has often. Been the lot. Of the child of God. In the world. To know. Heartache and sorrow. Because of the.

Provocation. Of the world. And so she knew. Heartache. She knew sorrow. Because she was barren. She knew heartache.

And she knew sorrow. Because she was. Provoked. By her enemy. And I believe. She knew too. Because she comes across. As Hannah. Being a very.

Sensitive person. Who knew. What it was. To feel. Her circumstances. Keenly. She knew. What it was. To weep. She knew.

What it was. To be. Offered food. And these things. Are not necessarily. Signs of weakness. In Hannah. They are rather.

[16:19] Indictive. Of how deeply. She felt. Her circumstances. As they were. Fear. And sometimes. We too.

As the Lord's people. Can know sorrow. Because of our. Sensitivity. To sin. And to every attack. That is made upon us. In a sinful manner. By the world. And even perhaps. By the church itself. Hannah. Felt. Bitterness. Of soul.

Before. The Lord. Dead. And that. Added. To her sorrow. No end. And it may be. That there are those.

Here this evening. Who can follow Hannah. At that level. Who knows. Something. Of what it means. To be. In bitterness.

[17:13] Of soul. Before the Lord. For the Bible. Doesn't say. Woe. To them. That are. In bitterness. Of soul. Before the Lord.

The Bible. Doesn't say. Woe. To those. Who are sensitive. To those. Who feel things. Deeply. Before the Lord. But the Bible. Says. Woe. To them. That are at ease. In Zion.

To those. That know nothing. Of what it means. To be exercised. Or of what it means. To be. Going through. This sort of. Spiritual sorrow. Which Hannah.

Went through. Blessed. Are those. Who mourn. Blessed. Are those. Who weep. Blessed. Are the poor.

In spirit. That's. The language. Of Jesus Christ. On the mouth. Of Beatitudes. That's God's word. Tonight. To anyone.

[18:09] Here. Who may like Hannah. Know sorrow. Of soul. And know. Brokenness. And even. Bitterness. Before the Lord.

Blessed. Are those. Who mourn. Blessed. Are those. Who weep. Blessed. Are the poor. In spirit. Hannah's holiness.

Hannah's heartache. Hannah's sanctity. Hannah's sorrow. But we also have. Hannah's hope. So clearly seen. In her supplication. In the way she prays.

To God. We read in verse 10. That in bitterness. Of soul. Hannah wept much. And prayed. To the Lord. We read in verse 12.

That she kept on. Praying. To the Lord. We read in verse 13. That Hannah. Was praying. In her heart. We read in verse 15.

[19:07] Hannah say. I was pouring. Out. My soul. To the Lord. Her trials. Sent her. To her Lord. Her problems.

Led her. To pour out. Her heart. Before him. She was driven. By the enemy. To the place of blessing.

Though she was childless. She was not prayerless. Though she was barren. Yet she believed. Though she knew pain.

Yet she prayed. She laid her needs. Before the Lord. And she spoke to him. In her soul. Her sorrow. As it were. Brushed its bones. As she approached the Lord. In prayer. And yet even as she prayed. As I've mentioned already. She was misunderstood.

[20:03] By the leader of the. Worship of the temple. She was misunderstood. By Eli. As she prayed. She didn't. Use any theological language.

Of which we're told. She didn't stand up. And speak eloquently. She didn't. In any way. Make a show. Of. Her knowledge.

All she did. Was pray. And she knew. As she prayed. That even if she'd be.

Misunderstood. By man. God would understand. And God would answer. She had things.

In her heart. That she couldn't. Share with man. But she shared them. With the Lord. And therein. Lay her hope. That the Lord. Could understand.

[21:01] And we may be like that. There may be times. When we have things. In our hearts. That we can't share. With man. We can't even share. With our nearest. And dearest. She couldn't share them. With Elkanah. Her husband.

She couldn't share them. With her priest. We might not be able. To share them. With members of our family. We might not be able. To share them. Even within the church. But we can pour out.

Our hearts. Before God. Knowing that the spirit. Of God. Makes intercession. For us. With groanings. That cannot be added. That he knows. Our minds. And our hearts. And he knows. What things. We ought to pray for. And he prays. In actual fact. On our behalf. There are times. When. We know. That man. Can't understand. Us. And we may not even. Be able to understand. Ourselves. At certain stages. And in certain circumstances.

[21 : 56] But the Lord. Understands. The Lord. Knows. And the Lord. Wants us. As he wanted. Hannah. To open. Our hearts. Before him.

And one other thing. Before moving on. A warning. I believe. Is contained here. To the church. Of God. How quick. We are. To judge others. By the way. They pray. By the language. They use. Or whatever. And how easy. It is for us. To misunderstand. And to be completely wrong. In our judgments. Eli. Thought she was drunk. Eli. I told her. To get rid of her wine. God. We can be so.

Judgmental. And so. Of the mark. In the way. We view. The spiritual. Exercises. Of others. This wasn't.

[22 : 54] The done thing. But it was. What God. Wanted her to do. And she did it. And she did it. Because she had this hope. She poured out.

Our heart. In prayer. That the one. To whom she prayed. Would not only hear. But understand. And answer. Her petition. She believed that.

And she said to him. She promised him. As she prayed. Oh Lord almighty. If you will only look. On your servant's misery. And remember me.

And not forget your servant. But give her a son. Then I will give him. To the Lord. All the days. Of his life. And no razor.

Will ever be used. On his head. You give me. What I want. And I promise. I'll hand him over. To you forever. I promise that. And I promise.

[23 : 51] That he will be devoted. To serving you. All his days. Now sometimes. We may make. Such statements. Rushly.

Before the Lord. Lord give me this. And I promise. I'll. Whatever it is. We promise. I promise. I'll. I'll be a good boy. From now on. If you only give me.

What I want. Give me what I want. And I promise. This that and the next thing. How careful we are to be. We can't. Bargain with God. And we should.

Stop. And faint. Seriously. Before we make. Any promises. Of whatever kind. To the Lord. In prayer. Because the Lord. Will not.

Hold us. Dilpless. If we make. Promises. To him. That we have no intention. Of fulfilling. He hears. Our promises. And he will call us.

[24 : 45] To account for them. We should pray. As the psalmist prayed. That. Having made our vows. He would help us. Each day. To perform the same.

Hannah promised. But she didn't just pray. And promise. She proved. That she meant. Every word of it. Because.

When the Lord. Granted her. Her request. She gave Samuel. Back. To the Lord. I believe.

That she proves. Here. That she has. Hope. In her heart. That the Lord. Has not only. Heard her prayer. But is going to answer it. For all that Eli.

Didn't understand. Nonetheless. God. Used Eli. To strengthen. Her hope. Three.

[25 : 44] Like God. Said to her. Go in peace. And may the God of Israel. Grant you. What you have asked of him. And you know. Verse 18. Verse 18.

To me. Proves. The fact. That she believed. With all her heart. That God. Had already answered. Her prayer. I think.

I think. This 18th verse. Is one of the most. Marvelous. Testimonies. Of faith. In the whole Bible. She said. May your servant. Find favor. In your eyes. Then.

Listen to this. This woman. Who'd been weeping. This woman. Who'd been offered food. Then. She went. Her way. And she ate.

Something. And her face. Was no longer. Downcast. There was a visible. Change. In her character. And in her countenance.

[26 : 37] And in her conduct. I should have said. Really. Why was there. This change. In her conduct. And in her countenance. Because she believed.

That the Lord. Was going to give her. Her heart's desire. She'd cast her cares. On the Lord. And she leaves. Her cares on the Lord.

And then she carries on. And. Has relations. With her husband. Which I believe. Is important. In its own place. The fact that it's revealed. Shows. That she was prepared.

To play her own part. And to trust the Lord. To do. As she believed he would. She didn't go home. And sit. Waiting for a miracle. To happen. She went home. And carried on. Her. Relationship. With her husband. As per usual. And the miracle happened.

[27 : 38] God did the extraordinary. Through the ordinary. As he so often does. And so her hope. Is well founded.

As she prays. And promises. And promises. And proves. That she believes. That God is going to answer. And her honesty.

Before God. I think is so obvious too. In the sacrifice. That she goes on to make. In the course of time. Hannah conceived. And gave birth to a son.

She named him. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Samuel. Means. One whom the Lord has given.

One. For whom I asked. And whom I have received. Asked of the Lord. Received from the Lord. And she openly. Acknowledges that fact.

[28 : 37] By naming him. Samuel. Asked of the Lord. And she doesn't go back. On her promise. She fulfills her promise.

Having paid her vow. Having made the vow. She went with her. Husband and family. Annually. Well. She didn't go at that stage.

But. She allowed them to go. Annually. To fulfill the vow. And as she waited. She was waiting. For the time. When she would have to.

Fulfill her vow. A vow. That was much more costly. At a personal level. Than any vow. That Elkanah. And his family. Went up to fulfill.

Annually. They went up. To offer the annual sacrifice. Year after year. But she didn't go. Why not? Because she was.

[29 : 34] Preparing herself. For that moment. When she would sacrifice. As she had promised to do. Her own son. To the Lord's service. After the boy is weaned.

I will take him. And present him. Before the Lord. And he will live there. Always. And Elkanah. Elkanah.

Said to her. Do what seems best to you. Stay here till then. Only may the Lord. Make good his word. And then we read. Of how. After the child was weaned. And people argue.

As to the exact age. That he. That he might have been. She did. As she had promised. To do. Her honesty. Before the Lord. Is proved.

In that she does. What she has said. She will do. She goes up. To Shiloh. To the house of the Lord. And there she says. To Eli.

[30 : 31] I am the woman. That you thought was drunk. When I prayed here. I am the woman. Who stood here. Beside you. Praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child. And the Lord.

Has granted me. What I asked for. So now. Having made my vow. I am prepared. To fulfil it. I give him. To the Lord. For his whole life.

He shall be given over. To the Lord. And he worshipped. The Lord. There. And we read later on. We actually read it.

A lovely little touch. Of how. As Samuel. Was ministering. Before the Lord. Each year. His mother. Made him a little robe. And took it.

To him. When she went up. With her husband. To offer the sacrifice. Annually. And there she. Again. Annually. Proved her honesty.

[31 : 26] And proved. That she meant it. When she said. That Samuel. Was the Lord's. For life. And the Lord. Honoured her. Beyond her.

Greatest. Expectations. Having given over. Her firstborn. To the Lord. Did he then leave her. Barren. For the rest of her days. Did he then leave her. Childless.

And again. A play thing. For Penina. To. Make fun of. What did the Lord do. The Lord.

Granted her. Five more children. And her relationship. With Samuel. Was retained as well. The Lord.

Gave her. More. Family. Three sons. And two daughters. So she had the joy. Of this. New family. Given her by God.

[32 : 23] And the joy. Of seeing Samuel. Growing up. In the presence. And in the service. Of the Lord. And what's the lesson. For us. Very simple. And straightforward.

God honours. Those who will honour him. God expects us. To fulfil our vows. Made before him. And if we do.

He will never let us down. He will give us more. Instead of less. The more we are prepared. To hand over. All that he's given us.

To himself. The more we'll receive. From his hand. And I think there's another. Lesson here too. For us. I think there's a reminder.

To us here. And we don't really have time. To go into it tonight. Of the gracious influence. Of this mother. On her son. And it's often been the case.

[33 : 20] That some of the. Greatest men. In the church of God. On the human level. Can trace. Their spiritual greatness.

Back. To a holy mother. John Wesley's mother. Is called. The mother of. Methodism. Augustine's mother.

Prayed for his conversion. Long before. It came about. And there have been many. Who. Since the days of Hannah. And Samuel.

Can testify. To the influence. Of our godly parent. We have Timothy again. In the New Testament scriptures. What about us? The Lord wants us.

To be honest. Before him. The Lord wants us. Whatever promises. We make. To fulfill them. Before him. And to him. And the Lord.

[34 : 16] Will never let it down. Anyone. Anyone. Who's prepared. To give us all. To the Lord. Will receive. From the Lord. Much more. Both in this life.

And in the life. To come. Everlasting life. For the sake. Of the sake. Of the one. Who has left. Father or mother. Or any other relation. For my sake.

And the gospels. Who will not receive. Much more. And in the life. To come. Those everlasting blessings. Which are the portion. Of God's people. How honest are we.

In fulfilling our vows. Before the Lord. Are we prepared. To sacrifice. Our all. For the sake. Of the one. Who sacrificed. His all.

For us. And finally. And just in a word. Her hallelujah. Her song. Of praise. It's recorded. For us there.

[35 : 11] In chapter 2. I don't have time. To go into it. But in this song. She expresses. Her gratitude. To God. She seeks. To ascribe. All the glory. And all the honor.

And all the praise. To God. The joy. Of the Lord. Is her strength. It's a song. That is in so many ways. Similar to Mary's. Magnifica. Recorded. For us in Luke.

Chapter 1. The Lord is magnified. And his people. Are strengthened. In himself. Acknowledgement. Is made. Of his greatness. And of his goodness. And the gratitude. Of God's people. Is thereby expressed. All the people. All the people of God.

Have had a new song. Put in their hearts. And in their mouths. By the Lord. And he wants all his people. To express. In song.

[36 : 07] Of heart. And with lip. That new melody. Which he has given them. As his own people.

He put a new song. In my mouth. Our God. To magnify. The song of salvation.

Is heard coming. From Hannah's heart. The song of salvation. Is heard coming. From Mary's mouth. Is this song of salvation. Heard coming tonight.

By the Lord. From your soul. And from mine. There's the story told. Of a woman. Who was prone. To use the word. Hallelujah. As she worshipped. God in church. Only to be informed. In one particular church. That. They didn't use. Such language.

[37 : 04] In that place. We don't say. Hallelujah here. Well every church. Of God. If it is.

A true church. Of God. We'll say. Hallelujah. And we'll sing. Hallelujah. Because. Hallelujah. Means. Praise. Jehovah. Praise the Lord.

And if you're. A child of God. And if I'm. A child of God. And if we're. A congregation. That belongs to God. Then we're. Asked. To praise. The Lord. May we all do so.

In time and eternity. For his glory. Thank you.