

Hannah's Problem and Hannah's God

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Our reading today is 1 Samuel 1. There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zupite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah, son of Jehoram, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zup, an Ephraimite.

He had two wives. One was called Hannah and the other Penanah. Penanah had children, but Hannah had none. Year after year, this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Penanah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah, he gave a double portion because he loved her and the Lord had closed her womb.

And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.

Elkanah, her husband, would say to her, Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons? Once, when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up.

[1:25] Now Eli, the priest, was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's temple. In bitterness of soul, Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon 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 for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, How long will you keep on getting drunk?

Get rid of your wine. Not so, my Lord, Hannah replied. I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer. I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.

Do not take your servant for a wicked woman. I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief. Eli answered, Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.

She said, May your servant find favor in your eyes. Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. Early the next morning they arose and worshipped before the Lord, and then went back to their home at Ramah.

[2:43] Elkanah lay with Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So in the course of time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, Because I asked the Lord for him.

When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord, and to fulfill his vow, Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always.

Do what seems best to you, Elkanah, her husband told her. Stay here until you have weaned him. Only may the Lord make good his word. So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh.

When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, As surely as you live, my Lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord.

[3:46] I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life, he will be given over to the Lord, and he worshiped the Lord there.

May God bless to his people, his word as we've read it, and as we'll hear it preached in a moment after we pray. Houston, we have a problem.

Heaven, we have a problem. In fact, as this chapter opens on a new book of 1 Samuel, we find that there are actually two problems.

And interestingly enough, the solution to the one problem will also be the solution to the other problem. So there's two problems. And number one, there's a problem in Israel.

These were days of spiritual decline in Israel, and they're summarized just at the end of the book of Judges as saying because there was no king in Israel. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

[5:02] And Eli, Eli the priest is an old man. He doesn't have many more days left of service in Israel. And he's got two sons who are also priests, Hophni and Phinehas, but they're not the kind of men that you would like to turn the spiritual leadership of Israel over to.

In fact, they were wicked men without regard for the Lord. And that's shown in two ways in this book. They treat the Lord's offerings with contempt as if they were little things.

And so when someone would bring an animal sacrifice, Hophni and Phinehas would demand the best portions of the meat first for themselves. And the second way they showed their wickedness was that they slept with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the place where God met with his people.

And all of Eli's lame rebukes did nothing to turn his sons from their sin. Now, when the priests have no fear of God before their eyes, it does not bode well for the nation over whom they rule.

So that's the pressing problem as this new book opens up. There's a need, a great need, for spiritual leadership in Israel. Now, the other problem is not that of a national problem, but it's rather a domestic problem.

[6:35] It's the problem in Hannah's family. Now, I'm preaching on Hannah this morning for the encouragement of mothers, mothers young and old.

I don't believe that there's any mothers here this morning that would like to trade places with Hannah as we find her in this opening chapter. And yet it's from her that we find many good lessons for mothers this morning.

Hannah has a peck of problems. In the first place, we learn that she's married to a Levite who is a polygamist. Kids, that simply means she has more than one wife.

This one has two wives. And it shows us again how every man was doing what was right in his own eyes. How far they had strayed. Here's a Levite, a servant of the Lord with two wives.

In the beginning, it was not so, Jesus says. And this departure from God's plan for marriage spells trouble.

[7:39] Before we go any further. Trouble with a capital T. It's always been trouble. And this home would prove no exception to the rule.

So her husband has another wife, Penina. But worse still, Penina had children. Lots of them. And Hannah had none.

And right away we say, oh no, this is going nowhere good. We've seen this before, haven't we? We remember the struggle between Jacob's two wives, Leah with many children and Rachel with none. Hannah. And we see the evil things that came out of those women in that rivalry. Hannah's barren. It may be hard for us in our culture to identify with Hannah in this instance. So she doesn't have children, we say.

[8:41] Lots of couples don't have children. But in that culture, it was a shame to be without children. It was a social stigma that was attached to it. Remember when that old barren woman Elizabeth in Luke chapter 1 finally became pregnant in her old age.

She praised the Lord and she uses these words. She praised the Lord for having taken away her disgrace among the people.

She was a disgrace in their eyes. Why? Because she could not bring forth children. An heir to her husband.

And so it was viewed as the Lord's curse or disfavor. Now sometimes it was just that. We remember Michael, David's wife, who made fun of him for dancing before the ark.

And she was struck barren the rest of her life. But not always was that the case. That it was a sign of God's disfavor. But it seemed that society didn't appreciate that subtle nuance.
[9:52] And just viewed everyone that was bare, every woman that was barren with disgrace. Now it was bad enough in Israel then to be barren. And to be unable to produce offspring for your husband.

But to have her overly fertile rival rub it into her face was more than Hannah could bear. We can see Penina saying to Hannah.

Could you please get me some firewood that I might start making supper? My legs are so swollen. You know how it is when you get pregnant.

Oh, that's right. And I forgot. You don't know what it is to be pregnant. Do you? She was an obnoxious, mouthy thorn in Hannah's side.

Now, though Hannah had no children, she did have the love of her husband. In fact, it seems like he loved her more. Some scholars say he probably married Hannah first. But because she couldn't bear children, he then married Penina to raise up a seed to him.

[11:04] And it seems that he perhaps overcompensated because she didn't have children. He showed more love to Hannah. Giving her a double portion, as we'll see. And so on. And that only provoked Penina all the more to jealousy against Hannah for the love that Elkanah had for her.

So she lost no opportunity to remind Hannah of her barrenness. And the text tells us that she especially would use the times of religious feasting at Shiloh to throw salt on this wound of Hannah. They'd go to Shiloh to worship. And they'd all be gathered there together as a family to eat the sacrifice. Some of the sacrificial food would be given to be burned up to the Lord.

Some for the priest. And some to be eaten by the worshiper. And so here they are, gathered around to eat the sacrifice. Before the Lord is this act of worship to him.

And Elkanah would divide out the portions. And he would give portions to Penina and all her children, her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her and the Lord had closed her womb.

[12:24] And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. Interesting.

Doesn't even call her by name here. Doesn't say Penina. It says her rival. Does that give you a feeling of the tone in this family? It's a rivalry going on.

And it says that it was not only persistent. She kept provoking her. It was also intentional. She did this in order to irritate her.

It wasn't that she just clumsily said some things that happened to irritate her. She meant it to get to her. It seems that she has no greater pleasure than to bring sorrow to her rival.

Dale Ralph Davis, commentator, imagines the table conversation there. As the portions have been given to Penina and her children and then to Hannah.

[13:32] And Penina speaking. Now, do all you children have your food? Oh, dearie me, there are so many of you. It's hard to keep track of you all.

Mommy, Miss Hannah doesn't have any children. What did you say, dear? I said, Miss Hannah doesn't have any children. Oh, Miss Hannah.

Oh, yes, that's right. She doesn't have any children. Doesn't she want children, Mommy? Oh, yes, she wants children very much.

Don't you, Hannah? Well, doesn't Daddy want Hannah to have kids? Oh, certainly he does. But Miss Hannah keeps disappointing him.

She just can't have kids. Why not? Why? Because God won't let her. Does God not like Miss Hannah?

[14:30] Well, I don't know. What do you think? And oh, by the way, Hannah, did you hear? I'm pregnant again. This woman will not give it up.

You'd like to take a drumstick and shove it down her throat. This is the way she provoked her. Continually, intentionally trying to irritate her because she did not have children.

Now, are there any ladies ready to trade place with Hannah this morning? She's got a problem. She's barren and she's got an overly fertile rival who won't give her rest.

It went on like this year after year, the text says. Do you feel the emotion in that? Year after year. This is the scene that happens up at Shiloh.

Whenever Hannah, verse 7, whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. And with every verbal jab that Penina made, Hannah's stomach would turn and tighten until she lost all appetite.

[15 : 45] And finally would break down and weep and refuse to eat altogether. So this annual time of feasting and worship before the Lord would invariably end with Hannah in tears.

Almost makes you want to not go up to the place of worship. If that's going to be what waits for you there. Mothers, do you ever stay away from worship because there's somebody at the worship place that you're not getting along with?

Ever even tempted to say, I don't want to go because I don't want to have to face her. Learn something from Hannah on the importance of public worship.

Think if you had to bear with that every Sunday, every time you came to worship God. And yet there's Hannah. Year after year, she's there. Now, her husband loved her.

And he didn't like to see Hannah sad, weeping. So he does what every husband would do. He tries to encourage her. And he would say to her, verse 8, Hannah, why are you weeping?

[17 : 05] Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons? I realize you want sons, but you have me.

An important principle of biblical interpretation is this, that not everything in the Bible is meant to be imitated by us. Some things are to be avoided.

And men, I think this is one such passage. This is not for our emulation this morning, to come and encourage our wives in this way.

He seems completely unable to sympathize with his wife's predicament. He just doesn't get it, does he, ladies? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?

Be careful, Elkanah. You may not be prepared for the answer she will give you. Bless his heart.

[18 : 11] He meant well. He meant well. But he comes short of comfort and actually probably made her feel worse.

So there's Hannah's problem. She's made barren by her God. She's provoked to tears by her rival. And she's misunderstood by her husband.

Now, twice, once in verse 5 and again in verse 6, we're told that God had closed Hannah's womb. That's a very clear statement of God's sovereignty.

God is being God and he closes Hannah's womb. He decides she will be infertile. The reason Hannah can't have children.

You can go to all the doctors and they may be able to explain to you why she can't have children.

But here we see behind it all is a sovereign God who had decided to make Hannah infertile.

[19 : 13] The Lord had shut her womb. Now, Hannah's not the first nor the last barren woman to be mentioned in the Bible, is she?

Barren women were often used to raise up key people in God's plan of redemption down through history. You remember Sarah and her continuing barrenness and what a trial that was to the faith of Abraham as she waited and they waited for this promised seed from whom would come a multitude of descendants and one who would bring blessing to all the nations.

But they had no child. She was barren until Isaac was born to her in her old age. And then Rachel's barrenness, you remember, finally ended with the birth of Joseph who turned out to be the one who delivered the whole family, that infant nation from starvation.

And it was from the barren womb of Manoah's wife that God brought forth a deliverer, Samson. And the old childless Elizabeth brings to birth John the Baptist, forerunner of the deliverer and savior.

Now, there's a lesson here. Don't miss it. Man's helplessness is often the starting point of God's deliverance. God likes to show that his salvation in any situation does not depend on man and man's help and the situation being just right for him to work in.

[20 : 50] He doesn't need situations to be just right. I mean, what can be more indicative of helplessness than a dead womb? What's he got to work with?

Deadness. And so the barren womb becomes a symbol an illustration of utter helplessness.

And when God is about to do some new thing for the deliverance of his people, he often uses the dead womb, our complete inability, as his starting point.

It's his planned procedure. He wants it that way. He delights to work after it has been demonstrated that the help of man is useless. You don't get anywhere leaning on man.

And once that fact has been seen, then God loves to come along to barren wombs and give them children. It's his preferred methodology.

[21:54] And the sooner we realize it, the better off we'll be. The barren womb then becomes a drum roll for the entrance of the one who saves.

So mothers, are you going through some problem in which you feel utterly weak and helpless? As helpless as Hannah felt in the task of bringing children forth for her husband.

And you feel utterly out of your league and you say, I don't have the wherewithal to meet this problem. You see, it's that very sense of frustration and inability and weakness.

It is often the prelude to God entering the scene in almighty power and doing a work that he alone gets glory for.

It was that way in our initial salvation. It was when we were without strength that Christ died for the ungodly. We didn't have any power to save ourselves. And then he saw us in our distress and flew to our relief.

[23:03] For me, he bore the shameful cross and carried all my grief. And that's the way God is. He delights to come to the help of the helpless, to do awesome things that we did not expect.

Well, learn something from Hannah's God. Draw encouragement. Perhaps you're in a dark hour.

Well, in the darkest hour, we see that we're just one moment away from God coming and working in power for his people.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves, aren't we? Because Hannah is still chin deep in her problems. Let's notice her response, then, to her problem. What can we say about her response to this problem?

Well, first of all, I'm impressed that she hasn't strangled Penina. We read of no revenge. We read of no payback words trash-talking Penina.

Plenty of the other, but no evil for evil. We're impressed that she hasn't let this thing keep her from public worship. But we must say, we're not here to worship Hannah this morning.

[24:22] She's no superwoman, and though she holds her tongue, she does let this problem get to her. She lets it steal her joy and peace and contentment.

She is often undone and incapacitated from worship because of this distraction. It's less than a perfect response is what I'm saying.

And perhaps you mothers can identify with her. You've been there in the problem, and though God has given grace to deal with it, your responses have not been perfect.

But my question is, what do you do then? When the problem has robbed your peace and joy and contentment, what then? Well, she takes it to the Lord in prayer.

And for that, she gets an A+. Is any one of you in trouble? James asks. He should pray. He should pray. And Hannah prayed.

[25:29] She took her burden to the Lord in prayer. Mothers, mothers, mothers, are you learning to take your burdens to the Lord in prayer? And to leave them there.

What is bothering you? What is it that is bringing you to tears at times? Are you telling it to Jesus? Are you taking it to Him daily? Casting your burden upon the Lord?

Well, Hannah prayed, and our attention is directed to one particular time at Shiloh when Hannah prayed. prayed. Now, that's not to suggest that she never prayed about this problem before this.

I can't imagine that she could exist without daily taking this to the Lord in prayer. I can't imagine that she could keep from killing Penina without praying continually.

And so, we're not saying this is the only time she's prayed about this, but the text does seem to direct us to this one particular time of prayer at Shiloh.

[26:34] And it was something of a turning point in her life in dealing with this problem. And it happened in prayer. Don't undercut prayer.

And what can be a turning point in your life, moms, in dealing with your problems by bringing it to the Lord in prayer? Verse 9, when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up.

And now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's temple, and in bitterness of soul, Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. She poured out her soul to the Lord out of her great grief and anguish.

So it's something of a watershed moment in Hannah's dealing with the issue. What was different this time than before? We don't know. Was it that she had new faith, new boldness in prayer, a new

surrender to God?

Perhaps, but perhaps not. Was it that now she added a vow? Perhaps. Verse 11 tells us of that vow. She says, O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon 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 for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.

[28:02] That's a mark of a Nazarite, one who would be set apart to God, and that was to be the case with her son. If God gave her a son, she would give him back to serve at his temple all the days of her life.

Mothers, what do you want for your children? You want them to be successful, smart, happy, to receive honors, to be healthy, but more than anything else, you want them to belong to the Lord and to be devoted to him all the days of their life.

Now, I'm struck with four things about Hannah's prayer. First of all, her surrender to God in prayer, just what we've seen. Lord, if you will give me a son, I'll give him back to you, and he'll be yours. Number two, her view of God in prayer. Here she is, and who's she talking to? She's talking to the Lord Almighty. Okay? The Lord Almighty.

That's the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies of heaven and earth. He commands them all. So, whatever God wants to do in his universe, he can just dispatch an angel and it's gone and the problem is solved.

[29:20] That's our God, and that's her view of God. She sees him as Lord Almighty. Does she really think for a moment that this Lord Almighty with the angels doing his back and call, that he actually knows and cares about a woman's desire to have children?

Yes, she does. Yes, she does. And she spreads her heart's desire before the Lord, believing that not only is he powerful enough to help me, but that he cares about me enough to help me.

She knew her God. He's awesomely great, and yet he's awesomely compassionate. He's almighty in power, and he's intimate in concern.

Now, mothers, is that your view of God? Do you know that God? Do you know that that is your God? He's great enough to do anything that you need done, and he is intimately concerned with what concerns you.

Psalms 113 is a psalm that celebrates God's answer to Hannah's prayer. In fact, there's a page right out of Hannah's prayer in chapter 2 of 1 Samuel that makes it right into Psalm 113.

[30:47] But in that psalm, there's a unique bringing together of two attributes of God. There's first of all the fact that he's glorious and exalted over all. And then there is the second aspect of his intimate concern for his people.

And we have these two coming together in Psalm 113. The Lord is exalted over all the nations. That means he puts down one ruler and raises up another. He's got all the nations doing his will. The Lord is exalted over all the nations.

His glory is above the heavens who is like the Lord our God, the one who sits enthroned on high. He's on a throne because he's ruling on high. Who stoops down to look on the heavens that we have to look up to.

He stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth. Such greatness and yet such intimate concern.

He's so high and yet he stoops so low. How low does he stoop? The psalm tells us how low he stoops. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the dunghill.

[32:01] That's how low he stoops. And he seats them with princes, with princes of their people. So he finds them low, he lifts them high.

He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord. That's the way Psalm 113 ends. He's so exalted and yet he stoops to hear and answer the desire of the heart of a barren woman to have children.

I say, isn't that beautiful? That is our God. That's your God mothers. Call upon him. See him as such. Do you believe he really has concern for the things on a mother's heart?

A mother's heart? Do you believe that he really cares about the thing that had you in tears last week? Do you really believe that his heart is moved with your yearnings for your children, however old they may be?

You must. You must believe it. That's the God of scripture. That was Hannah's God. You may think these things are so small in the overarching scheme of things, but not to God.

[33:28] Does Jesus care? I know he cares. His heart is touched with my grief. When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Jesus cares.

How do you know that? Because he tells me so in his book. Cast all your cares on me because I care for you. I care for you, Hannah, and your desire for children.

Cast your care on me. Well, it's that view of God that gives Hannah in the third place such openness in prayer. Do you see how open she is?

She can come to this God and just unload her heart. She has nowhere else to turn. The woman she shares the house with would only mock her. Her husband, bless his heart, was woefully inadequate at comforting her.

And even the priest, as we'll see, misunderstands her for a drunken woman. So she turns to the very one who struck her with barrenness. And she believes that if he has that power to close my womb, then he has power to open it again.

[34:38] and she believes that he is concerned about her problem, and so she comes and pours out her heart to the Lord. What woman will open her heart up and empty it before the throne of grace?

I'll tell you, one who believes that God is almighty in power, but that he is also personally and intimately concerned about her. Oh, believe it, dear sister.

Believe it. Tears are a language that God understands. He is able to sympathize with those in their weaknesses.

One at the Father's right hand. He bears a part in every grief. And so as David said, I pour out my complaint before him.

Do you do that, mothers? Do you pour out what's wrong? I tell him all my trouble. He's a God who invites that. You can do that with God.

[35:45] You can bring all your heart and just empty the picture. Empty. Tell him. Tell him what's on your heart. Mothers, do you tell him what you're frustrated about?

Tell him all about your anger, your disappointments, your heartache, your grief. You're that open with God? He wants you to be. He wants you to be.

Hasten to your heavenly father's throne and sweet refreshment find. Now, this wasn't a momentary prayer. It wasn't that she just prayed in five seconds and was done. Rather, she kept on praying, the text says.

She's so desperate for the blessing. Her heart is engaged. There's no wondering thoughts here.

And so as she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli is observing her mouth. But he noticed that though her lips were moving, there was no sound.

or voice being heard. And so he thinks she's drunk and he chews her out for it. How long will you keep on getting drunk? Notice, he assumes she's an alcoholic.

[36:46] She's always getting drunk. How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine. You're drunk so much of the time you can't even come to worship without your drink and your hangover?

Poor, poor Hannah. the men in her life just do not seem to understand, do they? First misunderstood by her husband, now her priest.

Yes, God's ministers can misunderstand the sheep. They can look at a situation and come to altogether the wrong conclusion.

They can totally misread situations and say hurtful things because of it. The very one set apart to minister comfort can actually contribute to the pain.

Pray for your ministers. Seems that Eli could put up well enough with sons who were cavorting with women at the temple, but he still got riled up over an inebriated woman at worship.

[37:55] Evidently, this kind of thing was not unheard of. It's what he assumes she is. He's seen drunk women in worship before. You understand just how low spiritual things were in Israel.

Well, moms can be misunderstood. They can be slandered. They can be falsely accused for the decisions they've made by those who are on the outside who don't have a clue what all they're going through.

So you've just been called a drunk. How are you going to answer that? What piece of your mind will you give him for that? Well, verse 15, she denies it.

Not so, my Lord. I am a woman who's deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer. I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Don't mistake me for a wicked woman.

I've been praying here out of my great anguish and grief. Do you hear her tone? Not so, my Lord. There's respect.

[39:00] For a man who's just accused her of being drunk, yes, for the priest that God has put in that place, there's respect.

There's denial. Not so. There's respect. My Lord. Amazing control of her tongue. And then she explains to him to help him understand.

My eyes are red and swollen not from wine, but from weeping as I'm pouring out my heart to my God. Mothers, there is grace in God to make the law of kindness drip from your lips even when you are provoked.

You'll find it in Hannah's God. But then she had a lot of practice at home, didn't she? A lot of opportunities with Penina.

Yes, and your children will give you lots of opportunities to control your tongue. And your blundering husband will add a few more opportunities for you to control your tongue.

[40:09] Matthew Henry says when we are falsely accused, we have need to set a double watch before the door of our lips that we do not pay back evil for evil. Well, bless her heart, she remains calm enough to explain to Eli the real situation.

And Eli realizes his mistake and changes his tune completely and sends her off with a priestly! blessing, pleading for the God of Israel to grant her what she asked of him.

And in that we see her trust in God, in her prayer, because it says she went on her way and ate something and her face was no longer downcast.

Her returning appetite is a sign of heart work that was done in the place of prayer. The burden was lifted, the knots in their stomach were untied, the tension relaxed.

She's resting on God. She believed that the Lord has heard her and she's content to leave it in his hands. And oh, what peace we often forfeit.

[41:20] Oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer and leave it with him. How we should come from the place of prayer with joy and peace that comes from believing, with contentment.

I've just had a hearing with the God who rules over all things and the God who is intimately concerned with me, his child.

I've spread my case before him. I've presented my request. I've pleaded for his mercy. And oh, that's enough for me. It is well with my soul.

My God has heard me. He knows my heart's desire. And he'll do me good according to his own wise heart and almighty hand.

She was anxious. She was sad. She was troubled. But she leaves with peace and with rest. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer.

[42:34] With thanksgiving, let your supplications be known unto God. And so she unloads her cares and leaves with the peace of God that passes all understanding, even though her circumstances have not changed a lick.

She's still barren. Penina still has it in for her. But she has peace. She's put the petition in his lap and she's content to surrender and to trust him with it.

Her trust in prayer. Well, look at God's answer to her prayer. They went back home. The Lord did remember her, but it was in the course of time that Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son.

It may have been some time. We don't know how long that course of time was before she conceived when she was still barren and Penina still aggravating. When she gave birth to a son, she named him Samuel because I asked the Lord from him.

She held the baby and said, this is the fruit of my prayers. Is it worth praying? This is the fruit of my prayers.

[43:47] And every time Samuel's little name was called, she would be reminded, I have him because God answered my prayer. And so God receives glory for his gift of little Samuel to Hannah.

Mothers, do you have a testimony of answered prayer? Do you have anything over your children that you can write, Samuel, because I asked. Because I asked.

And God was so kind to have answered. Samuel. Well, she followed through on her vow.

She waits until he was weaned, probably around three years old in that custom. And then she takes him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh and gave him to the Lord as she had promised.

You know, we give nothing to God but what he first gives it to us. And so she brings the son that God gave her and she presents him. back to the Lord. You notice she brought bulls and she brought sacrifice.

[44 : 58] Even our gifts need to be sanctified by the blood of sacrifices to be acceptable to God. Reminds us that the Lord Jesus purifies all of our worship, makes us presentable to God.

So she comes and she says, you don't recognize me, Eli. I'm that woman. Three years ago I was here. Remember my big eyes, red face.

I was praying and this, this is what I got for praying. The Lord has given me a son and now I give him back to the Lord all the days of his life.

She tells others that they too might enter into the praise and thanksgiving. and so at three years old, as young as he was, the scriptures say, she leaves him at the temple with Eli.

Now moms, you know that took a lot of trust to leave your son with anyone, much less an Eli who had raised two sons that turned out to be hellions.

[46 : 11] and you say, here, I give my son. But notice she doesn't give her son to Eli, she gives her son to the Lord and entrusts him into the Lord's care and into the hands of his priest Eli and she goes back home.

Oh, mothers, how many times do you need to give your children to God? Not just when they're first born, Lord, take him, take her and use her as you please.

Over and over. He's yours. She's yours. Take her and make her your own to serve in your kingdom. You know, Hannah would be very disappointed with us on Mother's Day if she found out that we were just focused on her. because, you know, as you go on and read chapter 2, and I'll assign that for you mothers for this afternoon after the festivities are over to get alone with God and read chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, Hannah's song of praise.

Her prayer of praise to God. It's all about God. And she dumps all the honor on her Lord, this almighty Lord, who is so intimately concerned with her.

[47 : 38] And so, we must close with our eyes on the God of Hannah's problem. He's the one who brought the problem into Hannah's life, who closed her womb.

He's the one who lets a loose cannon like Penina to have at her. Have you thought of the role that Penina plays in this whole thing?

Perhaps Hannah had not got so desperate in prayer had it not been for the goads of Penina. Perhaps it was the constant irritation of Penina that sends her running desperate to the throne of grace.

I must have help, Lord, I can't live with this problem. And so, the very problems in her life are used by God to sanctify her and bring her to the throne of grace.

Blessed troubles, blessed troublemakers, if they bring us to Christ. Yes, this is the God of Hannah. He's sovereign over all these situations in her life.

[48 : 45] And so, it's to the Lord she runs in prayer. And he shows himself not only to be concerned but to be almighty. And she gives him a son. And he gives her the faith and the surrender to give him back.

And for her surrender he gives her five more children. You read that later in the book. He didn't have to do that. He didn't promise. He's just that good.

That's our God. Praise the Lord. He indeed settles the barren woman in her home as the happy mother of children. But there's more.

There's more to this story than just a barren woman having a son and her rival eating crow. God. Because the answer to Hannah's problem is the answer to the nation's problem.

This little Samuel will grow up and become a righteous prophet of God that would be greatly used to bless the nation in a critical point in her history.

[49 : 52] It would be under Samuel's guidance notice that the throne of David would be established in Israel. The very throne upon which the coming Messiah was to one day sit.

And blessed God now does sit enthroned at his right hand. That throne was established in the days of Samuel.

And it all started from a barren womb. What has he got to work with? Nothing. But then again he's the God who calls the universe into existence out of nothing and calls those things which be not as though they were.

This is our God and he's demonstrating his power and his might in acting for the deliverance of his people. this isn't just something he did for Hannah ladies.

Oh a nice story about Hannah but I've been praying I sure haven't got that blessing that I've been wanting. No it's not just a story about Hannah and as you read chapter 2 1 to 10 you'll find out that she makes the connection between the events in her life and the character of God.

[51 : 15] This is the way our God is. He delights to take those that are low and to exalt them. He delights to take those that are high and to humble them. He delights to take the weak things to shame the strong to take the foolish things to shame the wise to take the lowly despised things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him.

This is the way God is. So cast yourself and your cares upon him. him. He is not changed. He is this God.

Call upon him in your trouble. Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for every bit of your word. Thank you for the reality of it. It doesn't hide things from us. It shows us life as we really experience it. And yet it shows us a God who is so different from us, who is so almighty and so intimately concerned.

We bless you today. We thank you for your love and concern for mothers here. Thank you that that love was demonstrated at Calvary to its uttermost.

[52 : 42] Christ. Amen. And we pray that every mother might come to know this God through faith in Jesus Christ. And we pray for children that are the broken hearts of these mothers this morning, that they too would be brought by your mighty and powerful hand to repent of sins and to trust in this Savior.

do it and we'll give you all glory and praise. We come in Jesus' name. Amen. Number 574 is our closing hymn.

We read of our Lord Jesus in the garden saying, not my will but yours be done. And indeed, Hannah had to come to that place, that turning point where she just left it in the Lord's hands. hearts. And so, may we this morning, mothers, fathers, children, whoever we are, say, have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way.