

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 12TH-13TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

HANNAH'S PRAYER (1 SAMUEL 2:1-10)

Samuel's mother, Hannah, was unable to have children until she prayed to the Lord and God opened her womb (1:1-18).

- In response to God's giving her a son, Hannah brought Samuel to the house of God in Shiloh and dedicated him to the Lord (1:19-28).
- On the very day that Hannah offered Samuel to God at the tabernacle (never to live at her home again), she offered God a prayer of praise.

There are many similarities between Hannah's prayer and the prayer of Mary in Luke 1:46-55 ("the Magnificat").

- In one way, this prayer/song was about God's intervention in Samuel's miraculous birth, in another sense, the prayer/song serves as a thematic and structural introduction to the book of 1 Samuel--- the one, true God intervenes in the affairs of humanity by His mighty power.

Hannah showed a depth of commitment and love for God in that on the day when she made the biggest and most difficult sacrifice of her life, she rejoiced in the Lord (vs. 1).

- Worship is what we bring to God regardless of our emotions (or lack thereof) because we acknowledge that He is worthy (worth-ship).
- True worship centers on the worthiness of God, and true worship transforms us.

Hannah's heart rejoiced in the Lord because her strength ("horn", like an ox or steer) had been given to her by God (vs. 1), and God had given Hannah a clear vindication against the one who was abusing and provoking her (Peninnah).

- There is no one else holy like the Lord---and God knows how to humble those who are arrogant, boastful, and proud. God sees all and will judge our actions (vs. 3).

God will humble the strong and exalt the weak (vs. 4).

- Those who are "full" and "have many sons," but are arrogant and trust in themselves will eventually be humbled and brought to nothing.
- But those who are "starving" and "childless" but trust in the Lord, will someday hunger no more and give birth to seven children (vs. 5).
- The Lord is just, and He will repay (Rom. 12:19).

God is completely in control and sovereign over life, death, poverty, wealth, exaltation, and humiliation (vs. 6-7).

- God has a plan for each one of us because He's in control of the very foundations of the earth (vs. 8).
- In God's plan and journey for us, sometimes He sets us low and sometimes He lifts us up--- just as He did for Hannah.

When we're in weak, low, painful, or lonely places now we are to wait humbly before the Lord and let Him lift us up in His timing.

- The temptation is for us to try and exalt ourselves, but we'll see in 1 Samuel how God will humble those who do so: "...a person does not prevail by his own strength" (vs. 9).
- Those who oppose the Lord in their pride, disobedience, and rebellion will be judged (vs. 10).

God rewards faithfulness, and He disciplines disobedience and sin.

- "He will give power to His king..." (vs. 10a) -- as Hannah was speaking these words, Israel didn't have a king.
- Hannah was speaking in the prophetic: God was speaking to her and through her about the coming exalted King whom God would empower and who would make all things right.

"HE WILL LIFT UP THE HORN OF HIS ANOINTED..."

"Anointed" = mashiach in Hebrew, Christou in Greek (Messiah or Christ).

- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Hannah could see in her story how God would provide for His people by sending the Messiah.
- This Messiah would be the judge of all the earth and would execute total justice as He would deliver the people of God from their sin.

WICKED SONS (1 SAMUEL 2:11-21)

Samuel's family went back to their home in Ramah, but the boy Samuel stayed in Shiloh and served the Lord under the leadership of the priest Eli (vs. 11).

- Eli had two sons (Hophni & Phineas) who were wicked men who didn't respect (or "know") the Lord (vs. 12).
- Respecting and knowing God isn't passed down generationally: it is an individual responsibility.

Eli's two wicked sons showed their blatant disrespect of God in stealing what was offered to God (vs. 13-17).

- When the sacrifices were brought to the tabernacle, a portion was to be given to God, a portion was to be given to the priest, and a portion was to be kept by the one who brought the offering.
- The priest was to receive a portion of the breast and the shoulder of the animal sacrificed.

The sons of Eli would claim other parts of the meat for themselves that belonged to the Lord and that belonged to the one offering the sacrifice.

- If a worshipper protested on the basis that this wasn't right, they would go so far as to use violence or threats of violence to get what they wanted (vs. 16).
- This kind of corruption and extortion caused worshippers to hate tabernacle worship (vs. 17).

This sin was, "very severe" (vs. 17).

- God wants the people who serve Him in the house of worship to be holy and to minister before Him with fear and trembling.
- Sin, misbehavior, greed, deceit, and corruption from spiritual leaders within the Church of Jesus Christ affect far more than just the leaders themselves---it causes disdain, hatred, and contempt for the very institution itself.

In contrast to the wickedness of Eli's son, we see the purity of the boy Samuel serving God faithfully in the Lord's presence (vs. 18-21).

- Churches will always have, "sons of Eli," but God always has His, "Samuels."
- Meanwhile, God blessed Samuel's mother with more children and with a Godly son who grew up in the presence of the Lord (vs. 20-21).

- You can't outgive God!

JUDGMENT DISREGARDED (1 SAMUEL 2:22-26)

Not only were Hophni and Phineas embezzling temple sacrifices and extorting worshippers, they were also committing sexual immorality/adultery with the women who came to worship at the tabernacle (vs. 22).

- Scandals like this are far too common in our day and age, but this is a deplorable, wicked, inexcusable abuse of power and a damnable sin in the eyes of a Holy God.

Eli was old (probably far too old to effectively manage the priests, 3:2), and he was told about the sins of his sons (vs. 22).

- Rather than doing what he should've done as a father AND as the high priest (which was terminating their employment and kicking them out until they repented), Eli gave his sons a puny and ineffective lecture (vs. 23-25).
- It was a true warning, but an ineffective one.

Eli said to his sons, "if a man sinned against another man, God could meditate for him. But if a man sinned against God, who could intercede for him?" (vs. 24-25).

- These grown adult men were setting themselves up for the judgment of God, yet they completely disregarded the warning of their aging father.
- Eli did speak truth to his sons, but it was too little and too late without any real accountability.

Leadership that lacks boundaries, and accountability for those who trespass boundaries, is not leadership at all.

- A lack of discipline and a permissive, enabling approach often just implicitly sanctions misbehavior, sin, and immoral actions.
- As spiritual leaders, parents, or employers we must be willing to confront sin and misbehavior with clear accountability and consequences.

Eli's sons ignored their father's warning and continued to sin against God, and so God desired to bring them to justice (vs. 25).

- Even if you may "get away" with sin, if you don't repent and turn from it, you are setting yourself up for the judgment and wrath of God.
- In contrast, as Samuel grew in stature, he also grew in favor with the Lord and with the people (vs. 26, Luke 2:52).

JUDGMENT DECLARED (1 SAMUEL 2:27-36)

God sent an unnamed prophet ("a man of God") to Eli to reveal His judgment against Eli's house.

- God is slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and He will go to great lengths to get our attention and call us to repentance.
- It's not that God is not warning us or calling us to repentance, it's that in our hardness of heart we often refuse to listen, humble ourselves, repent, and obey Him.

The man of God pronounces judgment to Eli in that Eli's family will be cut off from the office of high priest (vs. 30).

- Even though God had given the priesthood to Eli's descendants, Eli had honored his sons more than he'd honored the Lord (vs. 29).
- Eli was more afraid of offending his sons and having them not like him than he was of offending and dishonoring the Lord.

"THOSE WHO HONOR ME I WILL HONOR, BUT THOSE WHO DESPISE ME WILL BE DISGRACED..." (VS. 30)

Far too many people seek the Lord's blessing and honor upon their lives without first seeking how they can honor the Lord in their lives.

- If we honor God, He will honor us; but if we despise, disrespect, disobey, and dishonor Him we will be disciplined and judged.

The sign and the promise of God's sure judgment that this man of God gives to Eli is that both of his wicked sons would die on the same day (vs. 34).

- In the place of Eli and his house, God declared that He would raise up a faithful priest who would walk completely in God's will, acting in accordance with God's heart and purposes (vs. 35).

This promise was fulfilled in Samuel, it was fulfilled in Zadok (the priest who replaced Eli's family line in Solomon's day), and it was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus (priest in the order of Melchizedek, Heb. 7:12-17).

- Because of the greed, sexual immorality, and refusal to repent for Eli's house, there was coming a day when the descendants of Eli's family would be reduced to begging (vs. 36).

1) GOD IS HOLY, AND GOD IS JUST.

- "The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy." Prov. 28:13
- God sees, knows, and fully understands our every action, thought, motive, and behavior. He is holy, righteous, and displays perfect justice.

2) GOD HOLDS "ELI'S" ACCOUNTABLE.

- Eli is held responsible for honoring his sons more than honoring the Lord because of his permissive and enabling negligence.
- Proverbs 24:11-12 tells us that our negligence and inaction in the face of evil will be judged by God.

- As spiritual leaders, parents, and employers we must be willing to confront sin and misbehavior.

3) GOD WILL HUMBLE "SONS OF ELI" WITH JUDGMENT.

- There will be eternal punishment for our sins if we refuse to turn from them and let Christ pay for them---and not a single deed will go unnoticed (Rev. 20:12).
- Sin also has consequences in this life: God will humble us if we're proud and unrepentant.

- What warnings has God been sending your way? Are you listening to them?

4) GOD WILL HONOR "SAMUELS" WITH FAVOR.

- No matter how young or insignificant we may feel, we honor God when we serve Him with faithfulness, purity, integrity, and obedience.
- The only way we can stand before God to serve Him in total purity is receive the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf (Gal. 3:27, 2 Cor. 5:21).

- The Holy Spirit then empowers our obedience, which God will reward both in this life and in the next.