

Hannah's Story

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Date: 20 September 2026

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[0:00] We're kicking off, really kicking off. Last week was an intro to 1 Samuel, I've got the email and read through that story before today.

But man, there is something so wonderful and beautiful and faith-filling when you sit in Hannah's story. Even if you're a dude, you can look at Hannah's story and be like, man, that is a bold, courageous, awesome, strong woman of God.

She can teach us some things, even us guys. So 1 Samuel, it opens with this. Chapter 1, 1-2, there was a certain man of Ramathaim, Zophim of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zoph, and Ephrathai.

And all that gives context clues that this guy was kind of a big deal. He was from tribal aristocracy, a wealthy man. And he had two wives. The name of one was Hannah, the name of the other, Peninnah.

And 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 Phinehas, were priests of the Lord.

[1:33] And on the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah, he gave a double portion because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.

And so here we see, intro to this book, a family of devoted worshipers that faithfully worshiped God in the place of his presence. The tabernacle that was located at Shiloh, the tabernacle preceded the temple in Israel.

But what they did is they came and they showed up to this place to worship. And what we're gonna see in what they did and how they worshiped is they give us a demonstration, they give us an idea of what worshiping God has been about and what God has always wanted.

Worshiping involves presence, posture, and participation. Presence, we gotta show up. Together, it's communal. And even though it was a full day's journey for them from probably where they lived all the way to Shiloh where the tabernacle was, nevertheless, they made that journey.

But travel with family on dusty roads, and again, they had to bring animals and grain and wine for the sacrifice and offerings they were gonna make, that didn't make it easy.

[2:49] You had all the kids to think about, all that stuff, traveling that long. So presence was important, even if it was costly to get there. And then posture, the posture of their worship.

They came with reverence, they came with humility to draw near to a holy God and a holy place. That's how they came to God's place, to worship him. But then the third thing that we see, which is most interesting, that is good for us to realize too, because I think there's a sense of like, yeah, showing up, being present for worship, that makes sense to us.

That's posture, we kind of get that. But participation. They came with things, they came with gifts, they came with the offerings to give to the priest to make costly sacrifices, right?

And not only that, but portions of those sacrifices, certain sacrifices and certain of those offerings, those were set aside, and they were eaten together, right?

So Elkanah and his family, they would make that sacrifice, and a portion, they would have this beautiful meal that they would eat together in God's presence. And that signified God's favor and his acceptance over him.

[3:52] That's what you did. When you shared a meal with somebody, it said, hey, we are on good terms. And so we see all these things. We see presence, posture, and participation in all that they do in their worship.

See, what we can learn from these guys right from the outset in the way of the Israelites is the way that we continue on in a very different manner, so to speak, in the new covenant that Christ has established.

Nevertheless, what we see, worshiping God even for us today is not consumerism. We don't come to church because we're thinking about, well, what's in it for me? Now, again, there's some blessings to come to church for.

We know that like, man, God has grace for us, and there's things that we get to experience and know, and we get the blessing of being around people, and all of that is good, but it's more than that. We don't simply come to church because it's convenient or because something makes it worth our time.

Worship is the practice of bringing yourself to God, but you bring something important with you. Today, we don't offer animals like they did back then. We offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, it says in Romans 12, right?

[5:00] We're a living sacrifice, and we're not dying, but we're bringing ourselves and putting ourselves on the altar and say like, Lord, here is my life. Use it, consume it as you will. May it be a fragrant offering to you, pleasing to you, glorifying you, all of those things.

We offer, we are the offering. And we do that, we give it to God, ourselves to God, in recognition of what he has given us in that once for all sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation.

That has brought upon us God's favor and has given us everlasting life. It's a proper response. And when we think about that, it gets you the posture of our hearts towards God.

Yeah, we come with reverence because God is holy and powerful. We offer to God our thankfulness and humility, like the Psalms talks a lot about, bring your sacrifice of praise, bring a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the house of the Lord.

Because we look and we see what God has done for us, we recognize his provisions and our dependence upon him. But also, we don't just bring thankfulness, we don't just bring gratitude, we can also bring our troubles and our sorrows.

[6:11] Because that's okay if that's where life has you. Look what we see with what Hannah brought with her, along with those sacrifices. In verse six, So we see Hannah in a very different place, posture-wise.

We see Hannah bringing something very different to maybe what the rest of her family was bringing. But to worship, you must bring the real you to God. Verse five said, The Lord, it was the Lord who had closed Hannah's womb.

And that was Hannah's theology. She would have believed that too. But here's the thing, if you're Hannah, how do you worship a God who denies you the joy of being able to bear children in a society where for women, childbirth was the primary means of honor and contribution in that place. To have that taken away from you. And add that to the wound, a rival who would rub salt in that wound every time you came to worship.

I mean, Penina was like, my goodness. Like at the time that in God's presence and in that place, he's just like taking a dig at her every single time. Imagine you coming to a church service where people mocked you for something.

[7:45] You know, maybe it was the way you looked. Maybe it was a handicap. Maybe it was because it's obvious that you're of low economic means. What if people, you came in and people noticed that and just mocked you for that?

Or that you're told that your sadness is a bother and would you please stop it like Hannah's husband did. Verse eight, O'Connor's on record for all time.

saying this, Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than 10 sons?

Uh, bro. See, Hannah didn't pretend and try to put on a good face. Says in verse seven, she wept and would not eat.

But yet, despite her circumstance, despite those things, she kept showing up. She kept showing up to the house of the Lord. And when she showed up, she brought what she had.

[8:50] And actually, I would say she brought what God had given her. And at that moment, it was her barren womb and people's bitter words. That's what she was bringing to God. And that's what God wants from, wanted from her worship and it's what he wants from ours.

Return to God according to what he has given you. All that Hannah could bring was weeping and a troubled and sad heart. And that wasn't her lacking faith. She's coming to God with great faith and great humility and great reverence and great honesty.

And that's why Hannah couldn't stomach the sacrificial meal because it was, that meal, remember, it was the sign and the symbol of God's favor and peace over somebody. That he had accepted you and he was for you.

And she was experiencing none of those things at the time. So instead of pretending and feasting in God's presence, Hannah fasted. She fasted in God's presence.

But her fasting wasn't like a stick it to the man. She wasn't shaking her fist at God. How dare you? Why are you doing this to me? No, no. She was just bringing what she had because when the meal was over that she didn't participate and as soon as she could she slips away and she runs to God in her desperation.

[10:03] Verse nine, after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord and Hannah was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord.

She ran to her God and wept bitterly. Hannah is a great example of walking in faith with God and what that looks like. Worship builds faith to ask boldly for only what God, for what only God can do. And even though Hannah couldn't at that time find God's favor or maybe she wasn't seeing it in her life, she trusted that she had God's ear. And what she knew is that the tabernacle where she was at was the thinnest place between heaven and earth to get to God.

That surely in this place God would hear me, God would see me, God would know my tears. And Hannah believed in this God, the God of Israel, the God who had done miraculous things bringing Israel out of Egypt parting the Red Sea, the God of Sinai, the God who opened Sarah's womb and Rachel's womb.

God had done it before he could do it again. And that is faith. That is what faith in God looks like. As one pastor put it, when God's people are without strength, without resources, without hope, without human gimmicks, then God loves to stretch forth his hand from heaven.

[11:24] And this is how Hannah prayed. She vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, God of cosmic resources, you have everything at your disposal, all the angel armies, all power is yours.

If you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and forget 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. See, faith in that God, Hannah cries out to the Lord of hosts. Faith in the God who has immeasurable power leads us into praying bold prayers for impossible things.

But Hannah didn't just pray to a God who was all-powerful. She knew her God is one who has infinite capacity for loving kindness, mercy, and steadfast love.

See, worship builds confidence in God's compassion and favor that fuels hope and joy. You and I, when we think of Hannah's prayer and we see what she was doing and imagine, like, being there, you couldn't hear it, right?

[12:40] Eli couldn't hear it, but you could see it. Whatever she was doing, it was very visible, not audible, but visible, and it caught Eli's attention as he was reclining on the doorpost of the temple.

And Eli sees something going on. She's acting in a way, but he kind of misreads the moment. He doesn't get what's going on and to him, probably, if we're honest, he's looking and he's like, oh man, another sauced woman.

Somebody who had just a little too much wine at the sacrificial meal. And now she's profaning this holy place. I gotta go and I gotta correct this thing. And so he says such things to her, but Hannah explains herself.

And after hearing her explanation, Eli does what a good priest is supposed to do. He invokes the heart of God toward his people. Eli answered her in verse 17 and said, go in peace.

And the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him. You could say that Eli finally saw Hannah. And what did he, what happened to him as he saw her?

[13:47] He's moved with compassion to the depths of his being and so he responds with a blessing. He sends her away in a blessing. That's what he does.

You know what's beautiful about this? Up to this point, nobody seems to get Hannah. Finally, Hannah has an ally who is really caring for her. That's one of the great blessings that you and I

have of worshiping in community.

We come in and people get to see us. We get to see others and we get to move toward them with compassion to care for them because God never intends for us to carry our burdens alone.

Being in a community that is contending with us is a wonderful thing. Going through difficult times is hard enough. Going through them alone in isolation, man, that's a desperate place to be but God never intends for us to live that way.

You may have family and friends just like Hannah does who add burdens rather than carry them but God's people, his church, one of the things that we get to do when we come together where it's here or maybe it's during community group through the week, maybe it's having just coffee with a good friend, we get to come and we get to carry each other's burdens.

[15:06] Here's the power of Eli's compassion and blessing to Hannah. She goes out changed. Right? Says, she doesn't have a sad face anymore. Isn't that a beautiful thing?

Her appetite's back. She's hungry again. She's ready to eat. And remember, this transformation happens to Hannah and it's not because she suddenly realizes like, ooh, I think something's growing in my belly.

Like, she's not pregnant yet. What she's, what has happened to her is that she's had a God encounter and she's had a good community encounter. And those two things lift the soul and they feel worship.

So, friends, if you find yourself weary, if you find yourself in a place of weakness or bitter or broken or tired or trouble, you can lighten that burden by coming to God, praying to Him.

And praying to God with your community, you can confess those things, share those things with your community and together we can bring those things to God and we can speak to God together with them.

[16:15] Contend for each other. And like Hannah, you can be happy. You can be, well, maybe even not happy. Even if it's not happy, you can have that burden lightened a little bit.

It won't be as heavy as you're waiting to see God's favor. And that's what Hannah did. She was not sad in the face anymore. But she was still waiting for God's favor, for God to work.

We don't know how long that Hannah had to wait. All we get is this. Verse 19, they rose early in the morning, worshiped before the Lord. One final hurrah. And then they went back to their house at Ramah.

And Elkanah knew his wife, Hannah. Hopefully I don't have to explain that one. And the Lord remembered her. And in due time, Hannah conceived and bore a son.

And she called his name Samuel, for she said, I asked for him from the Lord. In due time. Wherever you read the words in the Bible, the Old Testament, they like to use this, the Lord remembered.

[17:17] It doesn't imply that God had somehow forgotten something. It wasn't like God was busy over here, worrying about all these things. And then suddenly, you know, the prayers of the saints got loud enough where he's like, oh shoot, sorry guys, I totally forgot about this over here.

400 years of slavery, Israel, my bad, didn't realize. No, when it says the Lord remembered, it means God's timing had arrived for him to take action.

That's what that always means. In due time, God's favor gives birth to God's work of salvation.

That's what that means. And when that happens, those who have worshiped with sorrow and pleas of help, when God's salvation comes, when that favor happens, it turns to worship with great joy.

God's favor fills our worship with unspeakable joy. Hannah keeps Samuel for about another three years as she's weaning him and then she honors the vow that she made to God.

I'm gonna hand him over to you, Lord. He's gonna be yours. And so, now that the time has come, she comes to the tabernacle to worship and return what she has received. Now, remember Hannah at the beginning of the story.

[18:31] She brings what God had given her to the tabernacle. She brings a sacrifice, she brings her barren womb, and she brings her troubled, sorrowful soul. And now, she experiences God's favor upon her in a special way.

Now, now she brings a sacrifice, and she brings a son, and she brings a song of exaltation, a song of exceeding joy, and she's bringing them to her God.

She's bringing them to her Lord, Yahweh, the God of Israel. And when you look at Hannah's song from chapter two, verses one to eight, sorry, one to ten, that song can be divided into three sections.

Verses one to three, Hannah is singing about God's salvation for me, personal, salvation for Hannah, how we worked in her life. And then she moves into verses four to eight, God's general rule over this world.

And then, verse nine to ten, she starts to prophesy about something she could not have known about. She starts talking about God's final salvation through this anointed king that was to come.

[19 : 38] And what I want us to realize is what Hannah gives us here is she gives us, she is a, like a professor of theology here for us, okay?

What she writes in this hymn of this song of praise, we need to take and understand and hear for ourselves because these things, those three things are foundational to keep our worship from faltering.

And here's the thing, when we talk about God's salvation for me and when we understand God's general way he governs and rules this world and then his final salvation that is to come, only God can reveal that to you.

You don't come to that of yourself. And these are foundational things but we are those who respond in worship because God has revealed these things to us by his grace. He has to make the first move.

And so she leads us, Hannah's song leads us into the depths and heights of God's sovereignty and salvation and her song begs the question, who would you rather be governing and judging this world and your life and all of its outcomes?

[20 : 48] Would you want to leave that up to chance, to the fates or self-determinism like is it my power to control how things are gonna work out by our personal actions and our own efforts?

Or do we look to false idols? Do we look to man, the God of the nations? Or do we look to the true and living God, the God of the Bible, the God that Hannah believes in and sings about here?

Chapter 2, 1 to 3, my heart exalts, my heart exceedingly rejoices in my covenant God. My horn, my strength is exalted in the Lord.

My mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation. Hannah's getting personal here. She's feeling God's favor over her life and how he has impacted her.

There is none holy like you, Lord, she says. So this is my conclusion. Based on what I have experienced of you, there is none holy like the Lord. There is none besides you.

[21 : 50] There is no rock. There is no sure thing. There is no strong foundation like our God. Talk no more so very proudly. Let not arrogance come from your mouth for the Lord is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed.

Hannah is testifying in these verses, look at what the Lord has done for me. I cannot boast in myself. I can only boast in him. I can boast in what he has done for me.

And we worship. This is the foundation of worship. We worship with joy because God's salvation is personal to you and to me. Hannah had a testimony to share. So do we.

What has Jesus done for you that only he could do? In light of his holiness and his strength and his power and his grace and his mercy, in light of the salvation that he works for us, doing what we cannot do and what no man can do for us, in light of those things, guess what?

All are humbled. None can boast in themselves. And this God who acts into your personal story acts consistently in his sovereign rule beyond you over all this earth, over every story and every outcome.

[23 : 01] And who's better to do that for he is the one who knows and weighs our actions. Hannah goes on to say this in verse four. The bows of the mighty are broken but the feeble bind on strength.

Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has born seven but she who has many children is forlorn.

The Lord kills and brings to life. He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes rich or sorry, makes poor and makes rich. He brings low and he exalts.

He raises up the poor from the dust. He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the lords and on them he has set the world.

Personal revelation, personal encounters and experience of God's salvation lays the foundation to prepare us to move into let me say the more difficult and complex waters of God's providential rule over every nation, over every person in this world throughout history.

[24:12] We worship trusting that God's governance over all things is good. He is the one who makes the barren womb but he's also the one that can open it.

He humbles the proud and exalts the humble. He has the final word on life and death. Now you and I we can sit back and we can judge things by what we see and we can judge God by what we see. What we can tell and read about from history, what we can see from what the news is telling us all the time and it's headlines. But here's the thing God sees way more than you and I can.

He can take in more knowledge and understanding than we could ever possibly dream of and you know what he knows the intricate details the behind the scenes stuff that we don't know about.

He knows man's heart. He knows people's desires. He knows what is evil and what is wicked and what is righteous and lurking in any of those places. We don't. And he's also the God who is eternal.

[25:19] He has the benefit of seeing the beginning from the end guys. That's what he says about himself. He knows what's going to come to pass in years or generations from now and he can say based on what is happening right now I already know what the outcome is going to be and what the impact is going to be generations from here.

Think about this the God who raised up Babylon to take his people into exile. God did so. He said he rose them up. He rose that people up because that was a part of his plan for Israel.

That was a part of his greater redemptive plan. He raised up kings like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus men who were pagans who worshipped false gods who did terrible things and he did so because they were his instruments in a unique way in his great work of salvation for that time and yet later on we see for both of those kings that as he brings them up so he brings them low.

He judges them for their evils because they were sinful and they refused to repent. And both of those things were according to his purpose and his plan. Here's the thing.

We can't lift our eyes too high and judge God by the present state of affairs among the nations. But one thing that we do know we worship because everything is moving according to a certain end which is according to God's plan.

[26:41] Hannah prophesies this verse 9 to 10 he will guard the feet of his faithful ones but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness for not by might shall a man prevail the adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces against them he will thunder in heaven the Lord will judge the ends of the earth he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed and yet Israel had no king.

Hannah sings about a time when God will break the power of his adversaries of his people adversaries he will judge the whole earth and give authority and power and exalt the throne of his anointed king and though she doesn't know it she is prophesying beyond Saul she is prophesying beyond David and Hannah wouldn't be the last person in scripture of somebody giving their one and only son in due time God the father created heaven and earth would give his only begotten son Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins and because of that the adversaries of God the adversaries of his people are defeated and those adversaries are sin and death in Jesus this anointed king that was to come our barren souls that were spiritually dead they are made alive in Jesus we are changed from God's adversary far from him blind spiritually dead in darkness we are changed from that to God's beloved children who we get to enjoy

God's presence we get to enjoy him and know his love and that is God's favor over us over all who believe and that kind of favor gives us hope and joy for our worship despite what might be happening in our lives despite the sin and the suffering that you may be dealing with today because of that truth because of that anointed king because of that reality we can worship we can come to him and we have hope beyond hope what can you bring to God today in this place of worship what he wants from you is give him what you got if you're just Jesse all's I got is sin that's okay give him your sin bring that to him he said hey your sin you could be stained with sin but you know what I can wash you white as snow I can purify you come to Jesus maybe you're coming with difficulties and suffering come to him come to the one who cares about your suffering he does bring it to him bring your sorrow bring your tears you don't have to pretend give them to him and trust that he will take action in due time and realize this in due time may mean sometime in this life or it just might mean in the life that is to come when all bad things are made untrue or all things are ultimately healed and then

I want to offer you today what burden are you carrying alone what burden can you share with some other believers here today brothers and sisters in Christ there will be a time at the end of the service there will be people to pray with and I would encourage you to come up and get prayer for any of those burdens!

but as we come and respond if I could have the band come up right now we're going to take communion in a moment and communion is for followers of Jesus if you're here and you're not yet a follower of Jesus don't come to the communion table come to Jesus just as you are come he just wants you bring what you got and maybe what you got is a lot of confusion but a little bit of faith maybe what you got is a heart that just feels guilty of your sin and you know it Jesus wants you to bring that to him because when you say Lord I am a sinner and I need your salvation he will respond to that he will save you from your sins and your salvation is ensured on that solid rock of Jesus Christ and there's going to be a prayer on the screen for you to pray if that's you if you're already a follower of Jesus we're going to prepare ourselves for communion right now and communion reminds us we come to that point of remembering and looking upon those signs and symbols of our Savior's sacrifice in our place

[31:10] Jesus died once for all the final sacrifice there is no more sacrifice to make that is our great Savior's unchangeable favor over us your place with God your security with God your status with God is secured in that by faith in that friends come to him enjoy him receive his favor right now pray with me Jesus we thank you we thank you for this beautiful favor that is so evident that you came that you died for our sins but you're also the king that is seated on the throne ruling and reigning and we get to put our faith in you and follow you and trust in you and worship you

Lord God return to you the things that you have given to us Lord take our sorrow take our sin take our pain take our hurt take our fears take our doubts we give them to you and Lord I pray that you would in your favor replace those things with the revelation of your personal salvation over us with the understanding that you are a God who does good things and governing all things well and that you are bringing all things to a beautiful end everlasting life in you forever and ever we thank you for that amen may may may may may may may may