

1 Samuel

1. The Beginning of Complete Dedication

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A. INTRODUCTION

1 and 2 Samuel form one book in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts. They were not divided into two books until the Old Testament was translated into Greek around 150 B.C. We don't know who wrote the books; certainly, Samuel was a major contributor, but much of the book takes place after his death in 1 Samuel 25. They are called the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, not because he wrote all of them, but because they describe his great ministry in Israel and the legacy of it.

"Samuel the Prophet" practically bridges the gap between Samson the Judge and David the King. Samuel was the last judge and the first prophet recorded in the Bible.

In this book, 1 Samuel, we find three main characters: they are Samuel, Saul and David.

B. THE FAMILY FEUD

1 Sam 1:1-2 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Elkanah was a descendant of Zuph, and his family line shows he was a Levite (1 Chronicles 6:16-30). He is called an Ephraimite here because his family lived in a Levitical city in boundaries of Ephraim, not because he was of the tribe of Ephraim.

Polygamy was a fact of life in that whole part of the ancient world. However, the Bible never puts polygamy in a favorable light; strife and conflict always characterize polygamous families in the Bible.

The Bible shows everything about people, good and bad. If he had problems, the Bible tells us that he had problems. Elkanah had a major problem, he had two wives. This guy was not thinking straight. Jesus emphatically told us against polygamy. In Matthew 6:24, "No can serve two masters."

1 Sam 1:3 This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there.

They were to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle of God, and the priests of God, which at this time, were at Shiloh. Shiloh was the central city of Israel, the religious center, for almost four hundred years. Today, if you visit Shiloh, you can see nothing.

1 Sam 1:4-5 And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb.

1 When Elkanah brought his family to the tabernacle for sacrifice, he would eat a ceremonial meal at the tabernacle with his family, giving portions to his wives and their

children. He showed his favor and love to Hannah by giving her a double portion. No one who offered a sin offering ate any portion of it; but of the peace offerings or offerings of thanksgiving, the offerer received a substantial portion.

1 Sam 1:6-7 And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

Barrenness in ancient times was the ultimate tragedy and shame for any married Israel woman, since her husband's hopes and dreams depended on her providing him with a son to inherit his name and estate.

It is possible for problems at home to make our time at the house of God miserable. There is Hannah, at the house of the Lord, with a full, blessed, double portion in front of her, and she can't enjoy it at all.

Despite the pain of Hannah, God had a purpose in it all. The Lord had closed her womb. God would use the closed womb of Hannah, and the pain from being childless, to accomplish something great in her life and in the whole plan of salvation. Even though things were hard, God was still in charge.

If you are in depressions due to the problems at your home, this is the right place to be. You need to hear the Word of God and receive directions from the Lord. Satan will do anything to keep us from coming to the Lord and find rest in Him.

C. A MOTHER'S VOW

1 Sam 1:8-11 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

Elkanah really loves Hannah. Yet, like many other men, he is somewhat insensitive to her. He does not recognize that she had needs that he could not fulfill (such as the desire to be a mother).

Husbands, we cannot be fixers of all the family problems. We cannot fix everything happening in our homes, especially our wives' problems. Instead of trying to fix something, saying something, our wives often want us just to listen and be there for them.

Hannah was in bitterness of soul and great anguish. However, she did the right thing. Hannah took those bitter and anguished feelings to God in prayer. She committed the whole situation to the Lord.

Hannah begins her prayer by calling on the Lord of hosts. The title Lord of hosts is used some 260 times in the Old Testament, and has the idea "Lord of the Mighty Armies" as her protector.

Hannah promises her son to the work of the Lord, vowing that he will be a Nazirite from birth.

According to Numbers 6, the vow of a Nazirite included the following:

1. Abstinence from any product from a grape vine, signifying distance from all fleshly pleasures.
2. Taking no part in any mourning for the dead, nor to come near a dead body, because the dead show the corruption and the fruit of sin. Also, because the Nazirite had greater concerns than the ordinary joys and sorrows of life.
3. Never cutting the hair, because it was a public, visible sign to others of the vow.
4. Typically, the vow of a Nazirite was taken for a set and rather short period of time. Samuel and Samson (Judges 13:5) were unique, because they were Nazirites from birth.

It seems that Hannah was making a deal with God in her prayer. It is not necessarily right thing to do. She didn't have to. Often God doesn't allow us what seems good things to have. But in His infinite wisdom, He put us into the position where we have to come to Him with absolutely broken hearts knowing that there is nothing we can do.

God always answers our prayers. Yes, No or Wait. God cares about our spiritual characters like Jesus more than earthly comfort. When we get His "Wait," from the Lord, it is still answer for our prayers.

Prayer is not what God get to do what I want, but aligning ourselves with God's will. How do we get align with God? By praying continuously and seeking His way and face and studying the Word of God which is the Bible daily.

D. CHILD DEDICATION

In Calvary Chapel, we do not practice infant baptism. The reason is that the baptism is a personal public commitment to identify himself and herself with Jesus and to follow Him. Infants cannot make up that kind of decision by themselves nor their parents can. However, we practice infant / child dedication. The parents are declaring that they will raise their child in godly way to honor Him in the children's lives. If you choose to dedicate your children, we would be honor do that for you in our services.

1 Sam 1:12-14 And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

Eli misunderstands Hannah here. The fact that Eli suspecting Hannah as another drunkard doesn't speak well for what were happening around the tabernacle.

1 Sam 1:15-18 And Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him." And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Hannah took Eli's word and went home without worry. She chose to believe the word that came to her from God. Are you sad today or discouraged? The key is not seeing the answer or proof physically, but the key is to hear the Word of God and choose to believe like Hannah did.

Worry is assuming responsibility that is beyond our control and capability.

1 Sam 1:19-20 Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from the Lord."

Hannah could genuinely worship the Lord in faith, while the promise was still not yet fulfilled. What a glorious lesson of faith for us to learn!

1 Sam 1:21-23 Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever." And Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish His word." So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

In that culture, a child was not weaned until two years old, or sometimes three. It is reasonable to assume that Hannah was in no hurry to wean Samuel!

1 Sam 1:24-28 Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord." So they worshiped the Lord there.

She kept the promise with the Lord. How difficult this must have been! Not only hard for Hannah, but hard for Elkanah also. Their willingness to fulfill the vow, even at great personal cost, is evidence of godliness in both Elkanah and Hannah.

The idea is not that Hannah "owns" the child and is "lending" him to the Lord. Instead, the idea is that the child is her "prayer," or the fulfillment of her prayer to the Lord.

E. APPLICATIONS

We find two important things from the first chapter of the 1 Samuel: they apply very well especially for this starting church:

1) A Praying Church

we need to seek God's face more than His hands.

Prayer is our way of communication to the Lord. The Word of God, the Bible is one way of His communication methods to us. We should not think that we can make a deal with God or strongarm Him to do things the way we want. Some people think that they can put 25 cents worth of prayer into the gigantic vending machine in heaven that called God and push a button of the one we want and expect that we will receive what we want, when we want and how we want. God is not a bellboy in heaven and anxiously waiting for us to order for Him what we want. True concept of prayer is seeking His face and way, so that we can align ourselves with His will and His way in our lives.

2) A Complete Dedicated Church

It is not much for God to expect us to be completely dedicated to Him. Some may say that we are not going to have fun, if we follow God. That is anything but true. If we follow Him with all of our hearts, souls, minds and bodies, we will have more joy, peace and love in our hearts than we can possibly imagine.

As we learned, the Nazirite vow involved a designated period of time during the Old Testament time. We no longer have that kind of rules to follow since we have grace of God. But the Christian life is the same as the way Samuel lived. Not just a period time we act like Christians on Sundays and Wednesdays, but it is a lifestyle once we become born again Christians.