

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
I Samuel - Chapter 1
The Power of Worship

1 Samuel 1:1-20 (NIV)

There was a certain man from Ramathaim(rama-thy-am), a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah (El-ka-nah) son of Jeroham (year-ro-haam), the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite (eff-ra-mite) [2] He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. [3] Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni (koof-ni) and Phinehas (Peen-haas), the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. [4] Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. [5] But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. [6] And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. [7] 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. [8] 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?" [9] Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's temple. [10] In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. [11] 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." [12] As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. [13] Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk [14] and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine." [15] "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. [16] Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." [17] Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." [18] 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. [19] Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. [20] 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."

1. The sermon used a term “Devastation of Worship.”
 - a. Define this term and discuss examples.
 - b. How do we avoid experiencing the Devastation of Worship?
2. Hanna was tormented because of not being able to bear children.
 - a. In our society what stigma, if any, do you think is attached to being a childless woman? Why? Has it changed from what it used to be? And why?
 - b. Why is it difficult emotionally and even spiritually to be faced with constant reminders of things we wish we had but do not?
3. Do taunts from family members hurt worse than others? Why or why not....what about taunts from church family members?
4. Why did Hannah’s demeanor change so dramatically after she prayed? Give testimony to a time when something has weighed on you so heavy and God provided relief immediately even before the situation changed.
5. Explain this to a new/non believer who asked the question....Why/How is prayer powerful? When you answer this question do not give a lot of churchy jargon but give logical theological based answers that someone new in the faith can follow.
6. After worship Hanna began to walk in victory before victory showed up.
 - a. How would you explain this to someone with testimony of your own?
7. Explain the following statement: Worship is an outward manifestation of our belief about God.
8. The sermon says true worship is to touch God. Have discussion in the group of that experience and how that changes a person?
9. What ongoing trial or grief can you commit to God in prayer?
10. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

Personal reflection

What deep desire do you need to turn into earnest prayer and leave before God?

A. The Prayer of Hannah and the Birth of Samuel: A Lesson on Total Dedication, 1:1-28

(1:1-28) Introduction— Society, Corruption— Israel, Corruption of— Lawlessness, of Society: society had become a cesspool, a pit of depravity and corruption, when Samuel was born. His day was a time when people had slipped into an immoral, lawless, abusive, violent, compromising, and permissive lifestyle. The depth of their moral decay was seen in cases such as gang rape, homosexuality, wife abuse, child abuse, murder, kidnapping, widespread polygamy, greed, injustice, idolatry, and civil war (see outline—' Judges 17-21 and notes—' Judges 17-21 for more discussion).

But in the midst of such an immoral and lawless society, there were a few persons who lived for God. Their lives demonstrated the light of God's Holy Word. They loved the LORD and obeyed Him, keeping His commandments. Such a person was Hannah, Samuel's mother. This chapter begins the story of Hannah and her son Samuel. This is: *The Prayer of Hannah and the Birth of Samuel: A Lesson on Total Dedication, 1:1-28.*

1. The family into which Samuel was born: His parents were carnal bigamists who conformed to the culture of their day (v.1-2).
2. The deep sorrow and broken heart of Samuel's mother, Hannah: She was helpless, hopeless, in anguish and agony (v.3-8).
3. The answer to the distressful circumstances of Samuel's mother: She prayed and trusted in God (v.9-18).
4. The result of the prayer and faith of Samuel's mother: God heard and healed her affliction-gave her a son, Samuel (v.19-20)
5. The faithfulness of Samuel's mother: she nursed the child and kept her promise to dedicate Samuel to the LORD (v.21-28).

1. (1:1-2) Society, Carnal Practices of— Samuel, Family of, Carnal— Carnal, Example of— Bigamy, Example of, a Priest— Elkanah, Samuel's Father— Hannah, Samuel's Mother— Peninnah, Second Wife of Samuel's Father: there was the family into which Samuel was born. His parents were bigamists, parents who conformed to the carnal, social order and culture of their day. Note this fact in the two verses of this point:

1. The father of Samuel was Elkanah, a priest with no apparent religious function (1 Samuel 1:1). We know that Elkanah was a priest from the genealogy of Samuel (1 Chronicles 6:25-27, 31-36). The family was of the Kohathite branch of the tribe of Levi or priests, and the family was to become ancestors of skilled musicians, musicians who served in the Tabernacle and temple (1 Chronicles 6:16, 23, 31-33).

The family lived in Ramathaim Zophim, which is another name for Ramah, a town about five miles north of Jerusalem (1 Samuel 1:19). Ramah was not one of the priestly cities that had originally been assigned to the tribe of Levi, but for some reason a branch of the tribe moved to the hill country of Ephraim (see outline—' Joshua 21:3-42 and note—' Joshua 21:3-42 for more discussion). Just when is not known, but in the book of *Judges* there is the story of a priest coming from Bethlehem to Ephraim to serve a large property owner named Micah (Judges 17:1-13). We know from this passage that at least five generations of priests had lived in Ephraim (1 Samuel 1:1).

2. Elkanah was a bigamist, marrying two wives: Hannah and Peninnah (1 Samuel 1:2). By taking two wives, he conformed to the culture, the carnal, fleshly society of his day. The fact that a priest committed bigamy shows just how carnal, fleshly, and lawless God's people had become during Samuel's day. It was common practice for a man to take a second wife when his first wife could not bear children. Hannah had obviously been the first wife of Elkanah, but she could not bear a child; consequently, he married Peninnah who was able to bear him children. Apparently Elkanah lacked faith in the LORD, failing to trust Him to give Hannah a child.

DEEPER STUDY #1 (1:1-2) Bigamy— Polygamy— Monogamy— One Wife— One Husband— One Spouse— One Flesh— Family, Union of

2. (1:3-8) Sorrow, Example of— Heart, Broken, Example of— Distress, Example of— Agony and Anguish, Example of— Trouble, Example of— Family, Divided— Hannah, Distress and Sorrow of: there was the deep sorrow and broken heart of Samuel's mother, Hannah. Her sorrow and broken heart were caused by strife within the family. The family was deeply divided, in particular the two wives. This is clearly seen in the Scripture and outline:

1. The family was devout, deeply religious. Year after year the family made an annual trip to Shiloh to worship the LORD (1 Samuel 1:3). Remember, the Tabernacle and Ark had been at Shiloh for some time now (4:3-4; Joshua 18:1; Judges 18:31). All Israelite men were required by law to attend the three major religious festivals each year, three festivals that were always held at the central worship center (Exodus 34:23; Deuteronomy 12:5-7; Luke 2:41). Keep in mind the immoral and lawless society during the days of the judges. Few were obeying the law of God; consequently, there were probably few attending the religious feast in obedience to God's commandment. Thus, Elkanah's faithfulness and devotion to the LORD stood out as a strong testimony to his neighbors, setting a dynamic example for them. Note this fact as well: Elkanah was faithful in worshipping the LORD at the Tabernacle despite the hypocrisy of Eli's two sons who were serving as priests. Elkanah did not use their immoral, reprobate behavior as an excuse for not worshipping the LORD (see outline- 1 Samuel 2:12-36 and notes- 1 Samuel 2:12-36 for more discussion).

2. The family was deeply divided despite its religious devotion (1 Samuel 1:4-8). The basic cause of the division was the bigamist relationship created by Elkanah. In ancient days, it was important for a man to have a son to perpetuate his name and to inherit his property. Thus, it was a devastating blow to Hannah when she could not bear a son for her husband. The great tragedy was that Elkanah and Hannah failed to trust God, for it was the LORD who closed her womb. And if He had closed the womb, the LORD could just as easily have opened the womb and caused Hannah to conceive a son. But their lack of trust led Elkanah to marry Peninnah. Consequently, when Peninnah bore children, she began to taunt, provoke, antagonize, and belittle Hannah. No doubt, Peninnah was filled with jealousy because her husband loved and favored Hannah more.

Apparently, the taunting and provoking of Hannah usually reached its peak at the annual festival attended by the family. Elkanah always gave a double portion of meat to Hannah because of his special love for her (1 Samuel 1:4-5). Of course, this only provoked the jealousy of Peninnah even more and caused her to badger and poke fun at Hannah until Hannah broke down in tears and could not eat (1 Samuel 1:7). Year after year, Hannah experienced a deep, grieving sorrow, anguish, and agony. Her heart was plainly broken. No matter how much Elkanah attempted to console and comfort her, Hannah could not be consoled. She was gripped by a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, suffering deep pain, feeling that she was cursed by God and that she had failed her husband.

Thought 1. So many hearts are broken today, filled with sorrow, grief, agony, and anguish. So many people are suffering hurt and pain, gripped by a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. A broken heart may be caused by the inability to bear a child or by the loss of a child. But sorrow and pain can also be caused by the loss of a job, financial difficulties, disease, injury, death, or a host of other disturbances and problems that arise in our lives. Just as Hannah suffered deep sorrow and a broken heart, so we too can suffer the pain and agony of trials and the helplessness and hopelessness of circumstances. Listen to what Scripture says:

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

DEEPER STUDY #2 (1:3) LORD of Hosts— LORD Almighty (YHWH Sebaot) God, Names of— Names, of God

3. (1:9-18) Prayer, Example of— Trust, Example of— Distress, Solution to— Sorrow, Solution to— Discouragement, Solution to— Agony and Anguish, Solution to— Hopelessness, Solution to— Helplessness, Solution to: there was the answer to the distressful circumstances of Samuel's mother, that of prayer and trust in God.

1. Hannah's bitter misery peaked at one of the festivals, and she rushed to the Tabernacle to pray and seek the LORD (1 Samuel 1:9-11). In deep anguish and bitterness of soul, Hannah wept and cried out to the LORD. In her prayer she made a special vow to the LORD, addressing him as the "LORD of hosts," the Almighty LORD who controlled all the events of human life (1 Samuel 1:11). She first requested that the LORD give her a son, and then she made an astounding promise: to give the son back to the LORD. She promised to dedicate the son to God so the son could serve the LORD all the days of his life. This vow was known as the Nazarite vow, a very special vow of *separation to the LORD*. By promising never to cut his hair, Hannah was fulfilling one of the requirements of the Nazarite vow (see outline— Numbers 6:3-12 and note— Numbers 6:3-12 for more discussion).

Note the renewed commitment of Hannah: she calls herself God's servant (1 Samuel 1:11). She asked God to look upon her affliction and to remember, not forget, His servant. Hannah was suffering deep, intense pain and anguish. Her heart was broken. She desperately needed the LORD to meet her need. She was doing all she could, praying and seeking the face of the LORD for help.

2. But note what happened: Hannah's lips were moving in silent prayer, and Eli, the High Priest, misunderstood and condemned her (1 Samuel 1:12-14). Eli had been sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple when Hannah rushed by him into the Tabernacle. Seeing her lips move silently, Eli wrongly concluded that she was drunk. He protested against her behavior in the Tabernacle and strongly rebuked her. In the corrupt, degenerate days of the judges, it was perhaps a common thing for the religious festival to become a drunken party. Thus, Eli simply assumed that Hannah was drunk.

3. Hannah clarified the situation, denying that she was intoxicated. She had not been drinking wine nor any other strong drink. She was merely pouring out her soul to the LORD, seeking for Him to meet her desperate need. In deep anguish, she continued to insist that she was not a wicked woman, that she had been praying out of painful agony and sorrow.

4. Hearing this, Eli gave great assurance and peace of heart to Hannah. He told her to go in peace and then asked God to grant Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 1:17-18). From this point on, Hannah experienced a deep-seated assurance and confidence. Real peace gripped her heart. She went her way and ate. And note: her countenance was no longer sad or downcast (1 Samuel 1:18).

Thought 1. Prayer is the answer to distressful circumstances. When we are in deep sorrow and our hearts are broken, prayer is the answer. When we are gripped by anguish, agony, grief, helplessness, or hopelessness—prayer is the answer. When we are sad, downcast, discouraged, or disheartened—prayer is the answer. Very simply stated, no matter the trouble or problem, situation or circumstance, trial or tribulation—prayer is the answer.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

4. (1:19-20) Prayer, Results of— Hannah, Deliverance of— Deliverance, Example of— Hannah, Prayer Answered: there were the results of Hannah's prayer. God heard and healed her affliction (1 Samuel 1:19-20). He remembered Hannah's prayer and quickened, empowered her body to conceive. Hannah bore a son and named him Samuel, which means *God heard*. Why this name? Because Hannah asked and God heard her prayer. And through the experience, Hannah learned a wonderful truth: God answers prayer. Samuel was a gift from the LORD: the LORD had given Samuel because she had prayed (1 Samuel 1:20).

Thought 1. God answers prayer! From the beginning of human history, no matter what the distressful circumstance—sorrow, agony, anguish, discouragement, grief, sorrow, hurt, pain—no matter what the problem or trouble, God has always answered the prayers and met the needs of His dear people. And he will meet our needs when we are gripped by sorrow or a broken heart. No matter what trials or temptations we may face, God will answer our prayers and meet our needs.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Psalms 28:7).

"But I am poor and needy; yet the LORD thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Psalms 40:17).

5. (1:21-28) Faithfulness, Example of— Hannah, Faithfulness of— Dedication, of Children— Samuel, Dedicated to God— Promise, Duty: there was the faithfulness of Samuel's mother. She nursed her child and kept her promise to dedicate him to the LORD.

1. Hannah was committed to weaning the child above all else, even above attending the annual festival (1 Samuel 1:21-22). When it came time to make the annual sacrifice to the LORD, Elkanah set out for the Tabernacle, but Hannah remained behind because she had not yet weaned the child.

2. But Hannah was committed to fulfilling her promise to the LORD. This is seen in her promise to dedicate the child right after he had been weaned.

3. Note that Hannah was totally supported by her husband in the decision to dedicate Samuel to the LORD. This is significant, for by law a husband's support was not required when a wife made a voluntary vow. The husband had the right to nullify the wife's vow (see outline—' Numbers 30:10-15 and note—' Numbers 30:10-15 for more discussion). But not Elkanah: he was committed to the LORD and loved his wife too much to refuse her desire. Thus, he supported his wife even though it meant giving up the first-born son of his beloved wife. After Samuel had been weaned, they took the baby to the Tabernacle along with a bull, a half-bushel of flour, and some wine for the dedication service (1 Samuel 1:24). Upon arriving, they had the bull presented in sacrifice to the LORD (1 Samuel 1:25).

4. Then the momentous event took place: she and her husband dedicated Samuel to the LORD's service. Taking Samuel to Eli, Hannah reminded the High Priest of her agonizing prayer for a child some years earlier. And she proclaimed the glorious answer to her prayer: the LORD had given her what she had asked for, a son.

Hannah then demonstrated a strong, selfless devotion: she gave Samuel to the LORD, to serve the LORD during his whole life. She had promised to present Samuel "before the LORD" so that he could live in the sanctuary and

in the presence of the LORD forever (see 1 Samuel 1:22). This phrase, "before the LORD," is one of the most prominent statements made about the life of Samuel. Samuel was to live "before the LORD" forever (2:11, 18, 21; 7:6; 10:19; 11:15; 12:3, 7; 15:33).

Thought 1. Hannah, Samuel's mother, is a dynamic example of faithfulness to God. She was faithful to her commitments. When she made a promise to God, she kept her promise. She did exactly what she said. Her word was her bond. She was faithful to the LORD, and her faithfulness speaks volumes to us.

When we make a promise to God, we must fulfill our promise. We must keep our word, do exactly what we say. Often during a crisis, we will make some vow to God, a promise...

- to give up something
- to change our lives
- to make some gift to the church
- to repent and return to the LORD
- to receive Christ as our Savior
- to serve the LORD in the ministry

The example of Hannah is a strong example for us: we must be faithful to the LORD. We must keep our vows, our promises to the LORD. We must be faithful in following through for the LORD.

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

"But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).