

1

LIFE LESSONS – 1 SAMUEL: Calling Out To God¹ 1 Samuel 1:1-20

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you here this morning. If you are a guest with us, thanks for joining us on this Lord's Day. We would love the opportunity to get to know you more. You can help us connect with you by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me, and I look forward to following up with you.

Or feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area. There we have a gift we would love to put in your hands as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. We are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Before we jump into our study this morning, I want to take a little time and talk through our plans to celebrate our 40th anniversary as a church. Trinity turns 40 years old this year! Isn't that worthy of celebrating?! I want you to be informed so that you can fully participate in all that we have planned.

When we began thinking through The Lord's work over 40 years, we came up with 3 ways to celebrate that: Serve week, Celebration Dinner, and Sunday Celebration. And I want you to be a part of all three.

So, let's talk about Serve Week for just a moment. We felt as though the best way to celebrate 40 years of ministry in our community is to minister to our community. That's what church is all about, right?! When you came in this morning, there was a brochure on your seat. Take that out with me if you will. I want to hit some of the highlights.

Now, let me start off by saying that we are not asking you to serve in every project. Okay? We have worked with our local missions partners to identify needs they have and ways we can help them minister to our community. But, I am asking you to sign up for 1 of these projects. If you want to participate in multiple projects, have at it! And to give a little incentive for signing up,

2

everyone who serves during Serve Week will get a free 40th anniversary t-shirt. How's that for twisting your arm?

So, let's hit the brochure highlights. First is our Serve Week Rally on Sunday, January 22 at 5:30pm. That is something that everyone needs to be a part of. At that rally, we will give you an overview of the week, we will break up into breakouts for training on the specific project you are signing up to be a part of. That way you will know what you are doing and how you need to go about doing it. We will serve you dinner that night as well.

Monday, January 23, the project is passing out Spring Semester Survival kits to students at NTCC. I'm going to be a part of that one. The survival kits will have snacks, some school supplies, and information about the BSM and our church. It'll be a ton of fun and a great way to connect with college students.

Tuesday, January 24 will have two projects going on. One will be serving at the BSM bible study that evening and the other is helping Titus County Cares pack backpacks for their backpack ministry.

Wednesday, January 25 is an opportunity to serve Titus County Cares during their food distribution.

Then on Saturday, January 28, there are several projects for you to choose from. Expectant Heart needs help cleaning and sorting supplies. Hope Ministries has painting, and maintenance projects lined up. Rhute Haven needs help sorting donations and with food prep. And Safe-T needs help at their Thrift Store.

Now, you'll notice that some of these projects occur during the day. If you can plan and take off for an extended lunch break, join in! If you are retired, these projects are perfect for you! If you can't serve during the day, pick a project that does work with your schedule.

You can visit our website at trinitytx.org/serve or scan that QR code to register and find more information. So, that's Serve Week. We would also be happy to answer any questions you have about Serve Week.

The second way we are going to celebrate is over a dinner on Saturday, January 28 from 5-7pm. That event will be held at the Pilgrim Hangar out at Mt.

Pleasant airport. Tickets for that are available for purchase for \$10 each. That will help us offset some of the cost for that event. It promises to be a great time. Everyone is invited to attend, and we will have former pastors and staff members in attendance. We will recognize charter members there. We will also have special music from Living Water Quartet, and a great meal. We need your help so that former members of Trinity that have moved away know about this as they may want to come in for that. So that is the dinner on Saturday, January 28 from 5-7pm.

The third way we are planning to celebrate our 40th anniversary is on Sunday morning, January 29. We will meet at our regular times, 9:30 and 11am. Our founding pastor, Dr. Reggie McNeal will be preaching that morning. You don't want to miss hearing from him. We will also have other special guests with us that day as well.

I am really looking forward to celebrating together. And let me share with you the goal we set for this celebration. We want to celebrate Jesus; it's all about Him. We also want to celebrate the work He's done in and through our church. And we want to look forward to all that Jesus will continue to do in and through us. You ready for that?!

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Last Sunday we launched a new teaching series. We are going to work our way through the first part of 1 Samuel this spring in a series I've entitled, "Life Lessons."

If you missed last Sunday, don't worry. It was just an overview of 1 Samuel and the major themes of the book. You can always go back and listen to that message on our website at trinitytx.org/sermons or check out our podcast, "Hope for the Broken," on whatever platform you listen to podcasts.

This week's message is entitled, "Calling Out to God." So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with me to 1 Samuel, chapter 1. We will be in verses 1 through 20 this morning.

Today we will study one of the godliest women mentioned in the Bible. Her name is Hannah. She is Samuel's mother. And in these verses, she cries out to God with a gut-wrenching prayer. I think we will all find ourselves relating to

Hannah this morning. We are going to look at Hannah's pain, Hannah's prayer, and Hannah's promise and then a couple application points today.

MESSAGE:

Let's begin by looking at...

1) Hannah's Pain

Follow along with me in your copy of God's Word. 1 Samuel 1, beginning in verse 1. *¹There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim* [Rama-they-um, Zo-Fum] *of the hill country of Ephraim* [E-Free-Um] *whose name was Elkanah* [El-Cain-uh] *the son of Jeroham* [Ja-Row-Ham], *son of Elihu* [E-Lie-who], *son of Tohu* [Tow-Who], *son of Zuph* [Zuff], *an Ephrathite* [F-Ruh-th-ite].ⁱⁱ Whew! I worked hard on those pronunciations this week! This would not be a good place to get ideas for baby names. Okay!

This verse is introducing us to a man name Elkanah [El-Cain-uh]. And the location and genealogy tell us that this guy is a good country, mountain man. Verse 2.

²He had two wives [uh-oh]. *The name of the one was Hannah* [which means grace], *and the name of the other, Peninnah* [Pa-nine-uh, which means ruby]. *And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.*

Now, obviously this marriage arrangement goes against God's ideal. While we read about polygamy in the Bible, it does not condone it. God's ideal for marriage was clearly given in Genesis 2 when he brings Eve to her husband Adam. The design of marriage is to be one man and one woman in a covenant relationship. So, what's going on with the two wives?

Well, we learn that Hannah, most likely his first wife, was unable to have children.ⁱⁱⁱ Because she could not have children and because the importance of childbearing in those days, Elkanah stepped out of the will of God and took another wife.^{iv} This is not the first time in the Bible we see this. Remember Abraham and Sarah? She thought it impossible to have a child in her old age, so Abraham had a child with his servant.

And guess what happens in both Abraham's case and Elkanah's case? Major dysfunction. Let's keep reading and see the dysfunction. Verse 3.

*³Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice [So Elkanah's very devout] to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. ⁴On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. ⁶And her rival used to **provoke her grievously to irritate her**, because the Lord had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore **Hannah wept and would not eat**. ⁸And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"*

Do you see the dysfunction?! And Elkanah, bless his heart, is completely clueless. A typical man. "Why are you sad, Hannah? I mean, I gave you a double portion of mashed potatoes." Oh, it gets better! He basically says, "Take a look at me, babe. I'm better than 10 sons!" Fellas, just a word of advice. That's probably not helpful! And it's not going to get you anywhere. At least make it a double scoop of ice cream. Know what I mean? Just kidding.

But the point of these verses is to give us insight to Hannah's pain. Do you see it? I want us to feel her pain.

Hannah's pain came from her inability to have children. Being barren is difficult for any woman in any culture, but in her society, not being able to have children was the worst affliction a woman could endure.^{vi} It was the main way women gained a sense of value and purpose. Can you imagine the stares and the judgement she faced from her peers?

To make matters worse, Elkanah's other wife, known as Hannah's rival, Ruby, she had several children. Can you imagine? I can't have children, so my husband brought into our family another wife and she can have children no problem. Do you feel the pain she felt?

Moreover, this other woman, Peninnah, would rub it in her face. Verse 6 says she would provoke her grievously just to irritate her. And we learn in verse 7 that this happened all the time, especially when they made the journey to Shiloh for the annual sacrifice.

I want to draw your attention to the words, "grievously irritate." Circle or underline that in your Bible. Those words will help us feel the depth of Hannah's pain. The word in the original language is more than "getting on my nerves." Literally translated, it means "to roar," or "to thunder."^{vii} The idea is of a raging storm. And this is what Hannah feels inside. Pain and agony. So much pain and agony she can't even eat. And verse 8 says she would just weep constantly. Can you identify with Hannah? Ever been there?

What happens when we find ourselves in that state? We tend to look for something to cope, right? Something to fill the void, to numb the pain we feel. But that's not what Hannah did. We feel Hannah's pain, now let's look at...

2) Hannah's Prayer

Let's pick up in verse 9. *⁹After 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.*"

One commentator I read this week pointed out something that is easy to overlook, "Hannah rose." The word translated as "rose," indicates that Hannah got up in decisive action.^{viii} The action that Hannah takes is prayer. Instead of continuing in her pain, instead of turning to something to numb the pain, she purposes to pray.

And look at her prayer. Verse 10. *¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.* Skip down to verse 12 as we see the passion in her prayer. *¹²As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard.* She was praying silently, but passionately. This mirrors the way Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. He said in Matthew 6:6, *⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*" That's what Hannah is doing.

Meanwhile, back in 1 Samuel 1, verse 13 again. *Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman.* [Eli is the priest. While he seems to be decent in his job as priest, he is not in tune with The Lord. That's indicative of his leadership.] *¹⁴And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." ¹⁵But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but **I have been pouring out my***

soul before the Lord. [Wringing out my soul... to The Lord.] ¹⁶*Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along **I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.*** ¹⁷*Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.”* ¹⁸*And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

Do you see the passion in Hannah’s prayer? She is crying out to God. Pouring out her soul. Ever pray prayers like that? A gut-wrenching prayer.

Now, we know what she prayed for. She prayed for a child. Specifically, a son. We will come to that next.

The focal verse in Hannah’s prayer is verse 18. The second part of the verse says, after she prayed, she got up, ate, and was no longer sad. **Hannah had hope before the answer came.** She knew who it was that she prayed to and that gave her hope, even if her prayer was not going to be answered.

Now, if you’ve read ahead of me, we know Hannah has a son, Samuel. Most scholars believe that name means, “Ask from God.”^x But think about the order of events here. We might expect Hannah to pray, then get pregnant, and then have her joy and hope return. But it all unfolds in a different order in the story. Hannah prays, she is joyful, and then she gets pregnant.^x

Hannah’s time with The Lord, her passionate prayer, filled her with hope and faith, not because of what she got from God, but because she spent time with Him. She didn’t have to know how God would answer her prayer because she laid it all at His feet. She realized what Peter urges us in 1 Peter 5:7. *“**casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**”*

Listen, our prayers ought to fill us with the same hope and faith that filled Hannah. What she found was fulfillment in a relationship with God that superseded her circumstances. This should be what prayer does in us!

So, we’ve felt Hannah’s pain and examined her prayer. Now, let’s look at...

3) Hannah’s Promise

In the course of Hannah’s prayer, she made a promise, a vow, to God should He determine to grant her petition. Verse 11. *“**11And she vowed a vow and said,***

*“O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me 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.**”*

So, we understand what Hannah does here. She says, “God if you come through with a son, then I will give him back to You and Your service.” We pray these kind of prayers, don’t we? God if you get me through this... I’ll go to church every Sunday this year, or something like that. Right?

But this vow she makes before God is much greater than that. The detail about no razor touching his head is reference to a “Nazirite” vow. This vow was a special vow for people who wanted to serve God like a priest. Normally, the priestly role was reserved for those belonging to the tribe of Levi. But, if a person outside of that tribe wanted to serve in this capacity, they would take the Nazirite vow. A part of that vow is to not cut your hair.^{xi}

But consider what making this vow means for Hannah. Her pain was caused by not having a child. But she vows to give the child back to God if He chooses to give her a child.^{xii}

In other words, she is giving up all claims to her son so he could serve in the temple. When someone took that vow, they left their family for The Lord’s service. That means that her son would not grow up in her house. He would not be there as an emotional support. He would not be available to take care of her in old age.

Do you see what she’s done? Hannah prayed for a son but laid aside every benefit a son could have given her. The one thing she thought she needed to fulfill her purpose.

Hannah had come to a point where she had shifted where she found her identity and happiness. That’s why she was able to get up from the prayer with a sense of hope. She was no longer placing her hope in a son, but solely in The Lord. This challenges us in the arena of finding purpose and satisfaction, doesn’t it?

Some of us are wanting to just get to that next stage in life. Some are desperately hoping for a promotion at work. Others are hoping for a status. And

some are even, like Hannah, hoping for a child. But hear me. None of those things can bring the joy and fulfillment like a relationship with Almighty God. That's what Hannah discovered. So, giving Samuel back to God and effectively losing her son wasn't a big deal.

So, we see Hannah's pain, her prayer, and then her promise.

APPLICATION:

Now, in the time we have left, let's take a look at two application points, quickly. What does Hannah's story teach us? I think there are many lessons here but let me mention just two things. First, ...

1) God never forsakes us.

When you think about Hannah's story, it is a reminder that God never forgets us. In verse 11 of Hannah's prayer, she asks God for 2 things: to remember her and not to forget her.

Think of the profound nature of that kind of prayer. Here's an obscure, country woman of very little significance. What would the Almighty God, in charge of the universe, have to concern Himself with her? Of all the things needing the attention of the Highest of the high, where does little ole Hannah rank on the priority list?

Obviously very high. Look at verse 19. ***19They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. 20 And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord."***

Question for you. Where do you need The Lord to remember you? What hurt, pain, crisis are you crying out to Him about? Where do you need Him to tune His ear to you? I can say with confidence that while God's response is not always what we want, The Almighty will remember you and tune His ear to your cries.

Hannah's story tells us that if God didn't abandon a little country lady of very little significance living in the hill country, then He won't abandon you either. God never forsakes us. Secondly, ...

2) God has a purpose and a plan.

It doesn't take a bible scholar to see the similarities between Hannah's story and that of another obscure little country girl, Mary. God had a purpose and a plan for these two ladies. And from both of them, a nation and the world received hope.

In Hannah's case, she gave birth to a child that would be a great and godly leader. A man that restored hope to the nation of Israel. In Mary's case, she gave birth to a child that would be our Savior.

Listen, if there's not the passionate prayer of Hannah, there may never have been a Samuel, nor a King David, nor an entire line leading to Jesus. Well, I take that back. There would have been because God always works His plan. But Hannah got to be a part of that because of she allowed God to work His plan.

In allowing Hannah to be in the position she was in, God was using it to prepare her for what He had in store for her. God was getting Hannah ready for the adventure of faith in her life, to realize the plans He had for her. Same is true with Mary.

See, we may not always know the details of God's plan, but we can know that He has one. The very thing that you are walking through right now is perhaps preparing you for what's next. The question is not if God has a plan. The question is are we willing to partner with God in His plan?

God never forsakes us, and He has a purpose and a plan.

CONCLUSION:

We are going to have a time of response. Do you have a relationship with Jesus? Have you been born again unto a relationship with Jesus? If not, or if you have questions about that, you come this morning. Our elders will be here ready to receive you. Just come and say three words, "I need Jesus."

Where are you crying out to The Lord? Would you allow us to join you in that cry? We would love to pray with you and for you this morning. Whatever is burdening your heart.

I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but let's respond. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996; Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, Holman: Nashville, 2016; Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2003; John MacArthur, "How to Be a Godly Mother," sermon published by Grace to You, accessed online: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1279/how-to-be-a-godly-mother>; J.D. Greear, "Hannah's Hope," sermon preached at Summit Church on June 26, 2022, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/hannahs-hope>; Jack Graham, "Legacy of a Godly Mother," sermon published by sermons.love, accessed online: <https://sermon.love/jack-graham/10871-jack-graham-the-legacy-of-a-godly-mother.html>; ; Skip Heitzig, "Expound: 1 Samuel 1-2:25," message taught at Calvary Church on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/314/sermon/4569/play>; Skip Heitzig, "Why me, Lord?," sermon preached at Calvary Church on March 13, 2002, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/66/sermon/988>.

ⁱⁱ Pronunciations taken from YouVersion Bible App audio.

ⁱⁱⁱ Discussion on this is laid out in great detail in Bergen's commentary, pages 64-65.

^{iv} Explanation taken from Jack Graham.

^v Quip taken from J.D. Greear.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} J.D. Greear said he took those definitions from Tim Keller.

^{viii} Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear Commentary, page 42.

^{ix} Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996, page 71.

^x Pointed out by Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear.

^{xi} Arnold, page 56.

^{xii} Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, page 43.