

Dedicated to the LORD Forever: 1 Samuel 1:21-28

Scriptures for Today:

1 Samuel 1:21-28 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. 23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. 24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. 25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: 28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

Introduction

As we look at this book of 1 Samuel again, I want you to think about this question:

What is harder: asking God for something you do not have, or giving it back to God once He gives it to you?

It is easy to pray when you are desperate. It is easy to cry out to God when your heart is broken. It is easy to say, "Lord, if you answer this prayer, I will serve you. Lord, if you give me this, I will use it for you. Lord, if you help me, I will do what is right."

But what happens after God answers? What happens when the sorrow is gone? What happens when the prayer is answered? What happens when the blessing is in your arms?

That is where Hannah is in this passage.

She prayed for a son. God gave her a son. She asked the Lord for Samuel, and the Lord remembered her. But now comes the test. Will Hannah keep her vow? Will Hannah give back to God the very child she prayed for? Will Hannah still be faithful after God answers her prayer?

That is the heart of this passage. The title of the sermon this morning is **Dedicated to the Lord Forever**.

We are in 1 Samuel chapter 1, verses 21 through 28. Before we jump into the verses, we need to remember where we are in the Bible.

1 Samuel is a turning point book. Israel is moving from the period of the judges into the period of the kings. In Judges, the Bible tells us that every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The nation was full of compromise, rebellion, and spiritual weakness.

By the time we come to 1 Samuel, the priesthood is in bad shape. Eli is old. His sons are doing wicked things in the sight of God. The people are spiritually weak. Israel needs leadership. Israel needs a prophet. Israel needs a man who will perform the Will of God.

And where does God begin? Not in a palace. Not on a battlefield. Not with a mighty warrior.

God begins with a brokenhearted woman praying at the house of the Lord. That is amazing.

Before Samuel ever becomes a prophet, before he ever judges Israel, before he ever anoints Saul, before he ever anoints David, there is a mother named Hannah who poured out her soul before the Lord.

Last time we saw Hannah in bitterness of soul. She was provoked. She was barren. She was grieving. But she did not turn away from God. She turned to God.

Usually when things get hard in life you can do one of two things: you can draw nearer to God, or you can run away from Him.

Hannah chose to draw near to God. She prayed. She wept. She made a vow. She said, Lord, if you give me a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life. And God answered.

Now in verses 21 through 28, Hannah is not praying for a child anymore. She has the child.

Now she has to follow through. What is she going to do? After God gives you the things that you ask for, what are you going to do? Are you going to follow through with your promises? Are you going to give back to God? Let's begin in verse 21.

I. SHE REMEMBERED WHAT SHE PROMISED

1 Samuel 1:21-22 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. **22** But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.*

The first thing we see is Elkanah and his house going up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. This was something they did year after year. Elkanah would take his family up to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice unto the Lord. That is a good husband who was leading His family in obeying the commandments of God... But this year, something is different.

Hannah does not go up. Why? Because Samuel is still very young. She says, “I will not go up until the child be weaned.”

But notice what she says next:

“Then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.”

Hannah has not forgotten what she promised. She is not trying to get out of it. She is not looking for an excuse. She’s not acting like she never made a vow.

Imagine having this beautiful baby that you desired for years and years of your life. She finally has him. The baby that she cried out to the Lord for is here in her possession. Under her care. She is holding him, feeding him, comforting him. And every day she spends with Samuel, her love for him grows stronger.

At this point a person might think, “Do I really have to give him up? Are you sure I made that vow; I must have been really emotional when I said that. I didn’t really mean that.”

No, Hannah remembered what she promised, she remembered her vow.

It is one thing to say, “Lord, if you give me a son, I will give him back to you.”

It is another thing to hold that son in your arms and still say, “Lord, he belongs to you.”

That is where many people fail. They remember God when they are desperate, but they forget God when they are blessed. They remember God when they are praying, but they forget God when the prayer is answered. They remember God when they need something, but they forget God when they receive it.

Deuteronomy 8:11-14 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: **12** Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*; **13** And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; **14** Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

In your life, don’t forget what God has done for you. Don’t forget where He has brought you from. Remember the blessings that you have received. Remember the promises that you made to the Lord.

Maybe there was a time when you were going through a hard trial, and you said, “Lord, if you help me through this, I will serve you.”

Maybe you said, “Lord, if you give me strength, I will do more for you.”

Maybe you said, “Lord, I am going to get serious about reading my Bible, praying, going soul winning, being faithful to church, and serving you with my life.”

But then time passed. The pressure lifted. The prayer was answered. And the promise faded away in your mind. That can happen a lot if we're not careful. You don't want to make promises that you are not going to keep.

Jesus said, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Hannah made a vow and a promise. If God gave her a child, then she would give him back to the Lord. He would appear before God (serve Him in the house of the Lord) and abide there forever. For the rest of His life.

God answered her prayer. Now Hannah remembered the promise that she made. She did not forget God who gave her this blessing.

II. SHE PREPARED TO GIVE WHAT SHE LOVED

1 Samuel 1:23-24 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. **24** And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

Notice Elkanah's response here.

He is not fighting against Hannah. He is not resisting the vow. He is not saying, "No, Hannah, we are keeping Samuel for ourselves." He gives Hannah room to fulfill her vow wisely. He says, "Do what seemeth thee good."

In other words, "Take the time needed. Nurse the child. Wean him. Prepare him. And when the time is right, bring him to the house of the Lord." But then he says something very important:

"Only the LORD establish his word."

That shows us something important about Elkanah. He understood this was not just Hannah's idea. This child was given by the Lord, and this child belonged to the Lord.

Hannah made the vow, but Elkanah supported it. That is a good example of a husband and wife being unified in the things of God. When a husband and wife are trying to serve the Lord, they should not be pulling in opposite directions. The husband should not be trying to hold the wife back from obeying God. The wife should not be trying to hold the husband back from obeying God.

They should be helping one another do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

If your spouse wants to be more faithful to church, help them.

If your spouse wants to get sin out of the home, support that.

If your spouse wants to pray more, read the Bible more, serve more, give more, and live more for the Lord, do not be the one pulling them backward. Be unified in the things of God.

That does not mean every decision will always be easy. Hannah and Elkanah were preparing to give up the child they loved. But they were together in it. They both understood that Samuel belonged to the Lord.

When Elkanah says “Only the LORD establish his word.”, he is recognizing that Samuel’s life is in the hands of the Lord. Only God can establish the work He intends to do through Samuel.

If Samuel is going to serve in the house of the Lord, Hannah is going to nourish him, care for him, and bring him there at the right time. She is preparing him.

It’s our job to prepare the things that God has given us for His use. And ultimately God is the one who will establish and choose who or what He uses.

2 Timothy 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

In your life you want to be prepared to be used by God. You want to prepare the things that God has given you for the work of the Lord.

God has given you a body. Are you preparing your body to serve Him? A lot of people say, “If I was healthy, I would do more for God.” But then God gives them health, and they use that health for everything except serving the Lord. They use their strength for work, hobbies, entertainment, for their own plans. But when it comes time to serve God, they have nothing to give.

God has given you a body, so prepare it for His use.

God has given you a mind. Are you preparing your mind for the Lord?

Are you filling your mind with Scripture? Are you meditating on the Word of God? Are you learning doctrine? Are you growing in wisdom?

Or are you filling your mind with junk all week and then wondering why you have no spiritual strength?

If your mind belongs to God, prepare it for God.

If God has given us children, and we say “They belong to the Lord” then we need to prepare them for the Lord.

We need to teach them to pray, to sing, to sit in church, to listen to the Word of God, to obey, to work, serve others, care about souls. Teach them that life is not about pleasing themselves, it's about serving and worshiping God.

We need to prepare our children so that God can use them.

Think about all the things that God has given you in your life. Are you preparing those things to be given back to God for His use. Everyone here has a talent or multiple talents that God can use. Are you preparing those things so you can give God your absolute best?

Don't give God leftovers. Don't give God what costs you nothing. Give Him your best.

1 Samuel 1:24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was young*.

Hannah does not come empty-handed. She brings Samuel after he is prepared. But she also brings an offering: Three bullocks. One ephah of flour. A bottle of wine. (That's unfermented grape juice).

She is not treating this lightly. She is not casually dropping Samuel off. She is coming to worship. She is coming with sacrifice. By the way, sacrifice is when you give up something of value. You take a loss for the sake of someone or something else. It's not like Hannah is giving God something that she doesn't care about.

"God I have these old dingy clothes, and worn-out furniture that I was going to throw out but I'll just give them to the church as an offering to you"

Hannah prepared to give what she **loved** and cared for **greatly**: her very own child, the son she carried in her womb, brought forth through the pain of birth, and nourished with her own body. She was bringing a true sacrifice and offering to the Lord.

And notice the last part of that verse: "*and the child was young.*"

That detail matters. Samuel was still young. Hannah did not wait until Samuel had lived most of his life for himself. She did not hold on to him until he was older.

No. From the beginning, Samuel's life was being set apart for God. Exactly what she had promised to the Lord.

III. SHE RETURNED WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN

1 Samuel 1:25-28 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. **26** And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. **27** For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: **28** Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

Now we come to the moment where Hannah follows through. She remembered what she promised. She prepared to give what she loved. And now she returns what God had given.

Verse 25 says, “And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.”

Imagine yourself in this moment. Put yourself in Hannah’s shoes. You are standing before Eli again. This is the same place where you prayed. The same place where you wept. The same place that you poured out your soul before the Lord. And now you’re back, but you’re not empty-handed.

You are back with the child that you prayed for. The child that God gave you. The child that you nourished and cared for. The child that you love greatly. The child that you promised to give back to the Lord.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. **27** For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

Hannah is a strong woman. She has great faith. She understood where this child came from. And she gives God all the glory.

Samuel was a gift from God. Samuel came from the Lord. And because Samuel came from the Lord, Samuel belonged to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

That word “therefore” is very important. Hannah is connecting the gift to the giver. She is saying, “Because the Lord gave him to me, I am giving him back to the Lord.”

That is the great lesson of this passage. **What God gives you should be given back to Him.**

Think about all the things in your life that come from God. Your life, your body, your children, your strength, your time, your mind, your abilities, your salvation, all of those things came from God.

And if it came from God, it should be used for God. **What God gives you should be given back to Him.**

Think about how different Hannah is from how many people live today.
Many people ask God for something, and once He gives it to them, they hold on to it for themselves.
They ask God for children, but then they do not raise those children for God.
They ask God for health, but then they use their health for everything except serving God.
They ask God for a spouse, but then they do not build that marriage around the Lord.
They ask God for strength, but then they give God the leftovers.

Hannah took the very thing she prayed for and gave him right back to God. What about us?

God has given us life. Shouldn't we give that life back to God?
God has given us breath. Shouldn't we use our breath to praise Him?
God has given us a mouth. Shouldn't we use our mouth to preach the gospel?
God has given us hands. Shouldn't we use our hands to work for Him?
God has given us feet. Shouldn't we use our feet to go where He tells you to go?

Above all those things, God gave us His Son. Jesus Christ gave His life for us.
He died on the cross. He shed His blood. He paid for our sins. He rose again from the dead.
He gave us eternal life. If God gave his life for us, how can we not give our lives back to Him?
We owe Him everything. How can we sit back and do nothing for our Lord and Savior? How can we serve ourselves?

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

God calls us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. The same way that Samuel was a living sacrifice. After everything He has done for us, it is reasonable to say, "Lord, my life belongs to you." It's reasonable to say my body, my family, my children, my time, whatever you have given me, it all belongs to you. I want to give it back to you.

That is what Hannah did. She didn't just remember her promise, she didn't just prepare her son, she returned what God had given. And notice how this chapter ends:

1 Samuel 1:28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. **And he worshipped the LORD there.**

Because Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, that dedication led to worship. This chapter started with grief and sorrow. And it ends with joy and the worshipping of God.

Because of Hannah's faith and dedication, we have an amazing example of what it looks like to give back to the Lord. That's the kind of example that you want to follow.

TRUE WORDS

Baptist Church

Revelation 21:5

Book of 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 1:21-28

So remember the question we started with: What is harder: asking God for something you do not have, or giving it back to God once He gives it to you? Hannah shows us the answer. The real test comes after the blessing. It comes when God answers, when the prayer is fulfilled, when the thing you asked for is finally in your hands. Will you hold it for yourself, or will you give it back to Him?

And if you are saved, this is not really a question of whether your life belongs to the Lord. It already does.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

You are His forever through faith in Jesus Christ. So live like you belong to Him now. Stop giving God the leftovers. Stop waiting for an easier season. Lay your life before Him, and let your body, your home, your family, your future, and your service say, "Lord, this belongs to you." Dedicated to the Lord forever. Let's Pray