

Main Text: 1 Samuel Chapter 1

Main Point: How to pray through a difficult season?

Introduction: I would like to thank the team here at Skypointe Church for allowing me and Sara to be away last Sunday as we celebrated our 12th wedding anniversary. Kyle did a great job bringing the Message, the team did amazing at making sure that all of the bases were covered, and Josh/Mandy Dominguez were great leading worship! All in all you were in great hands while we were away and we appreciate it deeply.

The last time I was with you (two weeks ago) we introduced our new sermon series on Prayer entitled “Teach Us To Pray”.

In week 1 we simply introduced the topic and spoke about **how to make our prayers effective** and our lives Righteous from the book of James. If you missed the message it is posted for you online.

For the next many weeks we will be focusing in on that forth ingredient: Prayer

We are going to talk about (*according to the Bible*)

WEEK 1: What makes prayer effective...

TODAY: **How to pray through difficult seasons of life...**

WEEK 3: What prayer IS and IS NOT...

WEEK 4: The RIGHT and WRONG way to pray

WEEK 5: The proper response towards to Lord when his answer is NO...

By the end of this series on prayer we will be at a better place of understanding not only how to pray, but how to enjoy an effective prayer life in any season that you find yourself in.

Let's pray...

Please go with me in your Bibles to the Old Testament book of **1 Samuel 1**. Today we are going to learn **HOW TO PRAY through difficult seasons of life from an expert on the matter: Hannah.**

Hannah stands out in Scripture as a strong woman of faith and character! She is a hero of the Bible. So many times we see her singled out as a hero among the woman of the Bible, but I would say that she is a hero...period. She sets an example of PRAYER for all of us...and shows us what we need to do when we are surrounded on all sides by people and circumstances that tear us apart and do not support us.

Some quick context: This book is really about a Prophet/Judge named Samuel. He was the last of the Judges and helped inaugurate the first Kings of the Hebrew people: Saul and David. Samuel was a powerful man of God. People feared him and respected him because of his close relationship with God. But today we are not going to focus on Samuel...though he could teach us a thing or two about prayer. **Today we are going to look at the woman who prayed Samuel into existence. God used Samuel mightily, but there would be no Samuel if it weren't for a woman who knew how to pray.**

Chapter 1: 1-2

There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ramah in the region of Zuph in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, of Ephraim. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

- It was not abnormal (within this cultural context) for a man to take more than one woman as a wife.
- There are many reasons why they would do that...it was and is certainly not God's plan for polygamy (Jesus made it clear that God's best plan was for one man and one woman to be married Mark 10:1-12)...but polygamy was the cultural norm...and remains to cultural norm for many tribal people groups...WHY?
- FOR THEM...IN THEIR CULTURE...AT THAT TIME...women were believed to have fulfilled their purpose and destiny through marriage and childbearing. SO...if there were not enough men for every woman...MEN would take more than one wife to help them fulfill their calling...AND TO THEM this was normal.
- THE WOMEN even believed many times that they were somehow "lesser" or "illegitimate" if they were not BOTH married AND able to bear children. AND men actually believed it to be their duty to the tribe to make sure that each woman had a husband. (SHARE THE MISSIONARY STORY OF POLIGAMY) "Your God is anti-woman and anti-family..."

That is a lot of cultural information and context but it makes the rest of the story more understandable when you understand where everyone is coming from and their perspectives.

Verses 3-7

Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Heaven's Armies at the Tabernacle. The priests of the LORD at that time were the two sons of Eli—Hophni and Phinehas. On the days Elkanah presented his sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children. And though he loved Hannah, he would give her only one choice portion because the LORD had given her no children. So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the LORD had kept her from having children. Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat.

- They are on their way to worship! They are on their way to “church”.
- This was their annual/yearly pilgrimage. They went to the Tabernacle to worship and pray. But how many know that just because a person goes to church regularly does not mean that they are on your side.
- There are several challenges for Hannah: There is NOT ONE person in this story that she can depend upon. No one that she is traveling with and no one that is waiting on her at church is in her corner. She is totally trapped.
- **Hophni, and Phinehas:** Were grossly immoral and wicked people. They would steal the choicest portions of food for themselves and take advantage of the women who worked in the temple. (The Tabernacle had become nothing more than a front to their criminal enterprise)
- **Peninnah:** was a constant daily reminder that Hannah wasn't enough, used goods, illegitimate, not loved (by God or her husband). **Some commentators speculate that Hannah's husband took a second wife because she could not have kids.**
- **Elkanah:** was completely clueless and self-focused.

⁸ “Why are you crying, Hannah?” Elkanah would ask. “Why aren't you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn't that better than having ten sons?”

- **Eli** (their father) would turn a blind eye to his children's behavior and would not deal with them. And was not a very compassionate Shepard.

⁹ Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. ¹² As she was praying to the LORD, Eli watched her. ¹³ Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. ¹⁴ “Must you come here drunk?” he demanded. “Throw away your wine!”

- Eli...the High Priest...makes a judgement call based on looks. Instead of dealing with his own children he is calling down hellfire and brimstone on an innocent woman who is broken and is just looking for someone who defend her and to come to her rescue.

Verses 15-18

Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven’t been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD. ¹⁶ Don’t think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.” “In that case,” Eli said, “go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him.” “Oh, thank you, sir!” she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.

Verses 19-28

- In due time the Lord answered her prayer and she became with child.
- The Lord removed her shame and shut the mouths of her persecutors. (3 more sons and 2 more daughters)
- She kept her word and returned the boy to the service of the Lord.

Hannah’s Prayer: Verses 10-11

Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. And she made this vow: “O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the LORD, his hair will never be cut.”

How do you pray through a difficult season of life**(or in Hannah’s case...just life as normal)****5 LIFE LESSONS FROM HANNAH****First:** Her attitude was real and authentic

Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD.

Second: Her heart was true and she intended fully to keep her word to the Lord.

And she made this vow: if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the LORD, his hair will never be cut.”

- A doubter should not expect to receive anything from God. (James 1:7)
- A double minded person is unstable in all there ways. (James 1:8)
- **We can pray for help in our unbelief! (MARK 9:23-25)**

THIRD: THIS WAS A RISKY PRAYER: Husbands could nullify vows made without their consent. (Numbers 30:13) **GOD IS LOOKING FOR MORE RISKY PRAYERS!!!**

On a side note God did a work in her husbands heart:²³ *“Whatever you think is best,” Elkanah agreed. “Stay here for now, and may the LORD help you keep your promise.”*

Fourth: She knew who to address.

“O LORD of Heaven’s Armies,

*Need **Provision:** God has a name for that... **JIREH (The God who provides)***

*Need **Healing:** God has a name for that... **RAPHA (The God who heals)***

*Need **Victory:** God has a name for that... **NISSI (Our Victory Banner)***

*Need **Holiness:** God has a name for that... **M'KADDESH (The Lord who Sanctifies)***

*Need **Peace:** God has a name for that... **SHALOM (The Lord of Peace)***

*Need **Guidance:** God has a name for that... **ROHI (The Lord our Shepard)***

God is all in all. He is everything we need and more.

HANNAH KNEW WHO TO CALL...THE GOD OF HEAVENS ARMIES...She needed someone to fight for her and defend her cause...because no one else would.

Fifth: She made no excuses and followed through on her vow. (Verses 25-28)

After sacrificing the bull, they brought the boy to Eli. “Sir, do you remember me?” Hannah asked. “I am the very woman who stood here several years ago praying to the LORD. I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life.” And they worshiped the LORD there.

- She could have said...
 - **Hophni and Phinehas are criminals. I don’t want my son around their influence.**
 - **Eli was a jerk to me and judged me before he knew me. I don’t want my son around a guy like that.**
- There will always be an excuse at the ready to keep us from keeping our word to the Lord.
- God is faithful and will keep his word to us. When we keep our word to him blessings come.
- She did not know that God was raising her son up to Judge the entire nation and anoint the first kings of Israel.
- She did not know that God would bless her with 3 more sons and 2 more daughters.

- Imagine how the history books would have been rewritten had she allowed excuses to keep her from fulfilling her vows.

Conclusion:

How do you pray through a season of suffering...

- 1) The prayer should be **real** (real means from your true feelings)
- 2) The prayer should be **risky** (risk = faith)
- 3) The prayer should be **right** (declare the name of God over your problem)
- 4) The prayer should be **ready** (be ready to follow through on your end)

Hannah's Prayer and worship

1 Samuel 2

“My heart rejoices in the LORD!

The LORD has made me strong.

Now I have an answer for my enemies;

I rejoice because you rescued me.

²No one is holy like the LORD!

There is no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.