

Date: May 13, 2018
Title: A Woman of Grace
Text: 1 Samuel 1:1 - 2:11

Intro: This is Mother's Day, and as such, we want to turn our thoughts to how we can honor the ladies in our fellowship, as well as those visiting on this day. The story before us today is one that demonstrates that God is in control of history. The English statesman Oliver Cromwell said, "What are all histories, but God manifesting himself." Charles Spurgeon said, "the pivots of history are microscopic. Hence, it is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of providence, as the most startling events." Today's message shows us one of those times when the wheels of history turned on the prayers of a woman named Hannah.

I think it's important to tell you now that Hannah's name means "a woman of grace." You will see how this story depends entirely upon the grace of God.

I. Hannah's burden

A. There is an apparent contradiction to the negative aspects in Hannah's life that I need to point out: her husband loved her

1. Warren Wiersbe thinks she was his first wife, his choice for a bride and future mother of his children
2. Elkanah lavished her with as many gifts as he could.
3. Men, be wise and find ways to bless your wife

4. Look for tangible ways to show her how much you love her.
 - a) Sometimes, you will do it with gifts
 - b) Sometimes, you will do it by running the vacuum, or doing the laundry
 - c) Sometimes you will do it by listening
 - d) Other times, it will be a tender touch

B. Here's the contradiction and the burden:
Hannah wanted children.

1. Most women will find their greater fulfillment in this world through raising children. It's how God designed you.
2. But like Hannah, the Bible tells us about so many women who were unable to have children
 - a) Think of Sarah, who was 90 before she conceived
 - b) Then there is Isaac's wife Rebekah
 - c) Rachel
 - d) Ruth
 - e) Elizabeth
3. Sometimes it doesn't happen like we envision it. I only know 3 real reasons why it doesn't.
 - a) The consequences of Adam and Eve's sin; the fall of

mankind; our DNA is corrupt and does things like this

- b) The consequences of personal sin that impacts the body's ability to bear children; this happens to men and women alike.
- c) And here: the Lord closed Hannah's womb.

II. Hannah's bitterness

- A. There is no cup that tastes so bitter as unfulfilled expectations and unrealized dreams
- B. Hannah had many signs of full-blown depression
 - 1. She wept all the time
 - 2. She didn't want to eat
 - 3. She grieved (deep sorrow and sadness)
- C. Hannah's husband didn't know how to help her
 - 1. Ladies, most men I know are solution-finders; we are fixers
 - 2. When we can't fix what looks broken, it confuses us
 - 3. Elkanah did what he knew to do: he loved her every tangible way possible
- D. Elkanah's second wife piled on during Hannah's time of burden
 - 1. Have you ever noticed how often people do that to you?

- 2. When I worked in chicken houses, I noticed that the healthy chickens would gang up on an unhealthy one and peck it to death.
- 3. Does it not disturb you that our sin nature can be just as evil as that of a lowly chicken?
- 4. This other woman was so mean to Hannah the Bible calls her Hannah's "rival."
 - a) She mocked her
 - b) She provoked her by pointing out the obvious every chance she had

E. Bitterness can turn any number of directions

- 1. Hebrews 12 warns of the root of bitterness that, springing up, defiles many: it can spread to others.
- 2. Bitterness can turn to anger and even rage
- 3. Bitterness can turn into withdrawal and isolation;
- 4. Or bitterness can and should drive you into the presence of God – v10

III. Hannah's brokenness – 1:15 You can take the ugly, detrimental, negative, heart-breaking, life-changing, crushing circumstances and you can either internalize it, or cast it on the Lord.

- A. If you internalize your struggles, this is what you potentially face

1. You face the darkness of depression
2. You face the cycle of repetition as you try to break free from it
3. You face the danger of turning to the works of the flesh as a panacea for your pain
4. You may face building up a stronghold in your life
 - a) It may be a stronghold of anger
 - b) It may be a stronghold of unbelief
 - c) It may be a stronghold of some other work of the flesh

B. Option two is to cast your cares on the Lord – 9 – 11.

1. Hannah prayed to the Lord
2. Hannah poured out her soul to the Lord
3. Hannah prayed with purpose – v11
 - a) Answer my prayer and this child will be yours forever
 - b) Answer my prayer and this child will be your servant
 - c) It's always good to pray for your children; mine are grown and I pray for them to this day
 - d) It's very good to pray for your children before they are born

- e) You should pray first and foremost for them to come to Christ and saved while they are still young
4. Hannah prayed with persistence – v12

IV. Hannah's blessing

- A. Hannah rejoiced – 2:1
- B. Hannah rehearsed the greatness of God – 2:2
- C. Hannah remembered her promise 1:27
 1. So many people think it would be a waste if their child or grandchild became a minister of the gospel.
 2. They think if they became a missionary, why, the world as we know it would end
 3. But Hannah remembered what she prayed, and she kept her promise to the Lord.
- D. Hannah was rewarded for her faith – 2:21

Conclusion: Now, my intent with this message was not to harm anyone who may have struggled with having children. I don't know any preacher in his right mind who would do such a thing. I can tell you this, though: you should pray and pray some more, until you know the will of God about that or any other issue. There is a far greater need we must address: that is the need for every mother, every father, and every child to know Christ. And your foremost priority this day is that. We have two men today who sought to be a blessing to their mothers by first repenting and believing, and then by being baptized

as believers. You may be one who needs to be that kind of blessing.

Invitation: