

It's Bible Story Time! With Pastor Ian Goligher

Today's story is based on Samuel chapters 1 - 3.

The Boy Samuel



One of the happiest days in the life of your Mom and Dad was when they brought you home for the first time as a newborn baby. That happened five times in our home and we remember each homecoming with a new baby with delight. First, there was Ewan, born in Omagh, then Grace born in Ballymoney. Then after we came to Canada, Bryce, Calvin and Lloyd were born in Langley, B.C.

But there was a young mother who did not have that happiness for a long time. God did not give her a baby and she was very sad. In fact, she cried and cried about having no child. So, she decided to go to the temple and pray about it.

Old Eli, the High Priest, noticed Hannah sitting there in the temple praying in the temple for many hours. Her lips were moving but there were no words, Hannah was praying silently - into herself. Eli thought she was drunk, or babbling making no sense, but she wasn't drunk she was heart-broken and very earnest in prayer to God asking God to give her a baby.

She also made a vow that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord and give him for the Lord's service.

Well, do you know what? God answered. God heard the young mother's cries in prayer and blessed Hannah with a baby boy. Oh, she was so happy and this boy who was an answer to prayer was called Samuel. And, do you do what Samuel means? It means, Heard of God!

Samuel, this special gift from God, was an answer to Hannah's prayers.

Hannah was one of the happiest Mom's in all the world. She just loved her baby boy and she fed it, bathed it, put it to sleep and played with him little silly games to make him happy. But what about her vow? She had promised to God to dedicate him to God's service, and she did. She found the strength to take him to Eli in the temple and place him under Eli's care. Samuel wore a white linen apron, called an ephod. He helped Eli to minister in the temple each and every day.

Hannah must have been little bit sad to leave Samuel behind in the temple, but God rewarded her with more children - three boys and two girls!

Each year she made young Samuel a new little coat. He would have been growing so fast at that early age that he needed a coat every year, and his Mom brought a new one each year.

Then one night, as Samuel lay down to go to sleep, he heard a voice calling out to him. He got up and went to Eli and asked, Did you call me? Eli said, No, no I didn't call you. Go and lie down again. Then he heard the voice again and then again, for a total of three times. Finally, Eli said to Samuel, perhaps it is God calling you. If you hear a voice again, then say, **"Speak Lord, thy servant heareth."**

Sure enough the voice of God was calling Samuel, and he did as Eli suggested. He cried out, **"Speak Lord, thy servant heareth."**

So that night the Lord gave to little Samuel a very strong message. The message was about Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas. They were very wicked and Eli was so old that he didn't correct them. Those sons were horrible and pestered people all the time and committed terrible sins with the women, who visited the temple. God was angry with them and God was also angry with Eli for not correcting them. Eli was allowing them to do their evil deeds.

God told little Samuel that He was going to judge the house of Eli severely and there would be no turning from the judgement because they would not turn from their evil.

Oh boy, that was a terrible secret for Samuel to keep. He was privileged to be given God's word and God's message about the household of Eli. He couldn't sleep with it and had to lie all night awake thinking about it.

In the morning, Samuel opened the doors of the temple as usual but said nothing about the message God had given him. Then Eli came to him and wanted to know what God had said unto him. So, Samuel, sadly, but faithfully, told him the message from God that Eli's sons were wicked and God was going to judge them and Eli.

Eli just listened, we are not told that he did anything to stop his sons from sinning against God.

That was Samuel's first prophecy. He was given a very hard thing to talk about, but he delivered the message in truth. Because of his love for the truth God made Samuel to grow up into a mighty prophet who always spoke for God. That's what a prophet is supposed to do. He is to carry God's message in all its truth and deliver it to the people without fear of man. Then he is God's faithful messenger.

Samuel lived for God all his life. He was a true prophet and a great blessing to the people in Israel. He anointed King David and prayed powerfully calling on God to bless Israel, and God did. All the days of Samuel God was with Israel.

God can make your life a blessing too if you love the truth and speak it faithfully. God can never bless a lie, but He loves the messenger who tells the truth. To do this we need to read the Bible and speak its truth at every opportunity.