

Hannah's Prayer

“And Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in the Lord;
My horn is exalted in the Lord.
I smile at my enemies,
Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

2 “No one is holy like the Lord,
For there is none besides You,
Nor is there any rock like our God.

3 “Talk no more so very proudly;
Let no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the Lord is the God of knowledge;
And by Him actions are weighed.

4 “The bows of the mighty men are broken,
And those who stumbled are girded with strength.
5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
And the hungry have ceased to hunger.
Even the barren has borne seven,
And she who has many children has become feeble.

6 “The Lord kills and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave and brings up.
7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
He brings low and lifts up.
8 He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,
To set them among princes
And make them inherit the throne of glory.

“For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s,
And He has set the world upon them.
9 He will guard the feet of His saints,
But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

“For by strength no man shall prevail.
10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces;
From heaven He will thunder against them.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

**“He will give strength to His king,
And exalt the horn of His anointed.”**

Let's pray. Father we thank You for this passage You have given us. We thank You for the faithfulness of Hannah and her prayer of praising You and giving honor and seeking to glorify You through her words. We thank You that You have recorded this for us. We pray as Jonathan preaches that You give him the words to say, and the words that we need as a congregation to hear, and the words that will glorify You, and that we would seek to glorify You through the hearing of the preaching, and through the speaking of the preacher. In Christ's name, amen.

Good morning. So we are in our second week taking a break from Daniel and we are studying about prayer. We are in the middle of what we would call prayer week, except it's 10 days long. So it's a good opportunity to meditate on that as well. Our text, as Connor read, is from 1 Samuel chapter 2. If you would just put your finger there, I want to start with Luke chapter 1 verses 46-55. Is what's called The Magnificat, or the song of Mary. This is what Mary says after realizing that she is pregnant with the Christ child. Luke 1:46-55 “And Mary said: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers. To Abraham and to his seed forever.’” So we obviously don't have time to go through all of that and break all of that down. The reason I wanted to bring that to your attention was to point out that this is a very famous prayer of Mary. So if you take this prayer of Mary, and you layer it on top of Hannah's prayer, it's harder to find themes in Mary's prayer that Hannah doesn't already pray about. So why bother to point that out? Why bother bring up this other famous prayer because we are not really going to touch this one again? We are going to stick with Hannah's prayer for the rest of the time. Well the reason I wanted to do that is because Hannah's prayer predates Mary's prayer by roughly 1100-1000 years. And yet, when Mary, in a very similar situation to Hannah, Hannah is a barren woman who has a child. Mary is the virgin woman who conceives a child and a very similar situation. Mary draws on the same prayer that we're going to study today. So Hannah's prayer is incredibly important. It influences the course of Israel in Jewish history, down to two the most important moments in history of all the world. The first person to know about what was going to happen, that would actually change everything when she heard that the Messiah was here, she drew on the same themes that Hannah drew on when she prayed her prayer. Hannah's prayer arises just before the reign of the first king, David. And Mary's prayer arises at the Advent of the son of David. So today we are going to primarily studying Hannah's prayer. In order to learn about prayer, we are going to be using it as a model. We're not going to be covering every aspect in the prayer that Hannah has and we're not going to look at every theme. We're not going to study every theological thing that she raises; we don't have time today to delve deep into the Holiness of God but Hannah appeals to the Holiness of God. What I want to know is why Hannah is doing that? When Hannah brings something up in this prayer, why is Hannah bringing this up at this moment? So we're here to learn about prayer today. Historically the book of 1 Samuel starts during the age the judges, as we know it. It is basically the end of the age of the judges. Samuel, the son who is, if you will, the object

to the cause for Hannah to give this prayer as the last judge of Israel. So this prayer is, like I said, 1000 to 1100 years before Christ. It is also roughly about 500 years before Daniel, where we have been studying. So just to give a little bit of context. At this time, there is no king in Israel. And that is actually important because of some of the things that Hannah praise. It is important to know at the moment of this particular point in time, 1 Samuel chapter 1 and 2 there is no king in Israel. As the Book of Judges ends, it has this line, "in those days there was no king in Israel; and everyone did what was right in his own eyes.". It was not a high point in Israelite history. This was a low point in many different aspects. Israel is not in captivity, like they are in the book of Daniel, but in the same sense, they don't really rule themselves either. There is constant oppression and occupation, especially from the Philistines. If you read through the book of Judges, conflict with the Philistines extends through the reign of David. And it's not until Solomon, until there's peace and sovereignty in the nation of Israel. But they are under persecution from those who occupy a large portion of the land. So let's do this as a way of introduction, I'll give you thoughts from chapter 1 to the actual text. So let's touch on a few things for context. This is actually Hannah's second prayer. The first prayer is a short prayer that is recorded in chapter 1. Hannah is one of two wives of Elkanah, the Ephraimite. As a side note, Ephraim isn't really a major player through the course of Israelite history. There are a few instances where there are important things that happened. But it is not really a big deal, usually. Ephraim was one of the sons of Joseph. He is not called a half tribe, but they're like Manasseh. They're this tribe of Joseph that was divided in two. And it's interesting, Joseph gave this name to his son because God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. Just keep that in the back of your mind when you think about Hannah when she says that she's praying for fruitfulness in the midst of her affliction. She's from a tribe, that it's very name indicates that God is a God who gives fruitfulness in the land of affliction, that's Genesis 41:52. This is the child, that when Joseph brings his children to his father Jacob, Jacob is overwhelmed and said he didn't know he was ever going to see him and now he sees his offspring. Joseph brings these two children to Jacob at the end of Jacob's life, he blesses them, Joseph is kind of concerned because Jacob has his hands on the wrong child, Manasseh is the older child and Ephraim is the younger child and Jacob blesses Ephraim as if he were the older child. He gives him the greater blessing. He proclaims that Ephraim would be a multitude of nations. In a sense, Hannah is not a person of any great note or importance, she is from a tribe of no great importance, we don't have any indication that Elkanah was a person of any great importance. She was like us in ways that Daniel hasn't been like us. Daniel was a man of high birth; he was enough of a noble if he was taken away as one of the captives. Daniel was not only of high birth, but he rose to high position and was in high position for the entirety of his life. Yet, this story of Hannah comes and goes in these two chapters. We meet her in chapter 1, we hear about this prayer in chapter 2, we get one more phrase about her later on in chapter 2, and that's it. Her husband is at least of some level of devoutness because he goes up yearly to worship at Shiloh and while there she goes to the tabernacle to pray. If you have been reading this in KJV, it says she goes to the temple to pray, but you know your history of Israel, there is no temple until three generations of kings later, there's no temple until Solomon builds one. The phrase there, the word literally is temple and is a better translation than what we have the word tabernacle in the NKJV. I think it's indicating that the tabernacle, this building that was designed as a temporary building that was meant to be moved from place to place was put in Shiloh and has become more or less a permanent building, it's not moving around anymore. While she is there she prays, she's been afflicted, she's barren and desires a child and this is the prayer/vow that she makes. "Then she made a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." Her

prayer indicates that she is making a request of God and that she vows to respond to God if He answers her prayer in a particular way. She is vowing that she will give this son, if God would grant her a son, to God as a permanent Nazirite. The sorts of things she is describing here about no razor coming to his head, as far as we know there are only three permanent Nazirites mentioned in Scripture. Samuel is one of them, Sampson is one of them, who is either a contemporary of Samuel or just right before him, and the other one is this fellow named John the Baptist that we don't meet for another thousand years. She is giving a really extraordinary vow, she is asking God to do something for her and promising if God does that thing she will dedicate that son in a very particular way to God. She makes this prayer at the door of the tabernacle and Eli shows up, Eli is the high priest and he sees her praying and sees her lips moving but no words coming out and his first response is that she is drunk. I want to pause and sit on that for just a moment because I think this tells us about the state of worship in Israel at the time. Apparently prayer at the tabernacle is so rare that when the high priest comes and sees a woman in an attitude and posture of prayer, his first assumption is not that this is a woman who is praying, his first assumption is this woman must be drunk. Apparently people did not come to the tabernacle/temple to pray often enough that Eli knew what it looked like. The closest analogy I could think of is, think about those church who have a rail down at the front and there is an invitation, there will be elders and deacons at the front, come down and pray with them. People go down and pray quietly during the course of the service. This would be like if someone went down there you would think they were drunk, that's what this is like and Eli says that. He doesn't even know what it looks like to see a devout person when they show up. Given what is said later about the behavior of Eli's sons, what they do with the women that come to this same place, the door of the tabernacle, Eli is assuming and maybe rightly so, that it's more likely that this woman is one of those drunk harlots that his sons associate with, rather than she might be a devout woman worshipping God. That's how bad things had gotten in Israel, the high priest doesn't even know what he is looking at. The tabernacle becomes stagnant, the priests are wicked, the high priest doesn't even know what it looks like to see prayer and the Philistines are oppressing. Things are bad in Israel, culturally things are bad, they are bad inside, bad outside, and in the midst of all that Hannah has a very personal concern. She explains to Eli what's going on, Eli says to go away and let God grant her request. God is faithful, God answers the woman's prayer and gives her a son, she names him Samuel which means "asked of God" or "heard by God". It's at least two years later, probably more like 4-6 years later when Hannah has weaned Samuel, they come back for the yearly feast. We know that Elkanah came back yearly during the meantime, but Hannah stayed back until the child was weaned. They take Samuel to the yearly sacrifices, and the phrase used here is "to lend him to the Lord", in the care of Eli and when she is there she reminds Eli that she was that woman who was praying and she acknowledges that the Lord heard her. They take a bowl for sacrifice, they worship there, and that brings us to chapter 2:1.

Verse 1, And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation." Hannah's prayer was answered and her first response to the answer of prayer is to rejoice. The whole point of us studying this prayer is so we can kind of look at it as a model, as a template. You know other famous prayers through Scripture and you probably know this one. I want us to look at this and ask if we do the same thing Hannah does. Do our prayers match this example that's been given to us in Scripture? When God answer our prayers do we rejoice or are we just hum-hum about it. I asked for it, thanks God. Hannah's prayer is answered and she rejoices in the Lord. Consider though when she is praying right here because it's more intense. Normally this would be a heart-breaking kind of moment because you realize this prayer is coming in the context

of a woman who wanted a baby, God gave her a baby, and now she is giving him away. We don't know how old he is, but he is small. He might be two years old or up to six years old, somewhere in there. Think of all of the 2-6 year olds in here, how many of you want to give them away, especially to a man who is known for having wicked sons? Hannah says her heart rejoices in the Lord. I think the next phrase is incredibly remarkable. "My horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies." That phrase, "my horn is exalted", you see that all throughout Scripture, but not typically in this kind of context. You don't typically see a woman saying about these things, talking about her horn being exalted. This is the sort of thing that kings or rulers say about them being put into position or having their position established. This is the sort of things warriors say when they are victorious in battle. This is a very masculine kind of phrase. Also think about Deuteronomy, think about the history of Ephraim and things that are said about Ephraim. Deuteronomy 33:17, "His glory is like the firstborn bull, and his horns like the horns of the wild ox; together with them He shall push the peoples to the ends of the earth; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manassah." This is near the end of Moses' life, so we know what Jacob said about Ephraim, at the end of Moses' life he goes through the tribes and prophesies about them and blesses them. So I read that and I think Hannah knows her history, I think she understands what the name Ephraim means and that she is among the Ephraimites, she knows what Jacob and Moses said about her people. When she uses this phrase about her horn being exalted, she is appealing back to the things that the men of God have said were going to happen and she is saying that it's happening. She is praying that God has been faithful and it's about far more than just having a baby. She sees that what has happened with God meeting her particular, individual, and very personal needs in small and local ways are actually in the context of God's larger plan for her and the tribe of Ephraim. She smiles at her enemies, literally means "she smiles her mouth at her enemies". She does it because of salvation. Take note of what's happened here. Hannah desires that her womb would be open, God opened it and Hannah rejoiced in salvation. We pray for the sorts of things like Hannah prays for all the time, we pray for private, personal means that are the result of private, personal conflict and God answers those prayers all the time and when He answers those prayers, do we make that jump where we thank God for answering our prayers, I rejoice in Your salvation? When we pray to be healthy because we've had the flu, do we rejoice in God's salvation? When we pray for employment, do we rejoice in God's salvation? When we pray for the salvation of the lost and God gives it, do we rejoice in God's salvation? That's what Hannah did here. Do that. All of this is because she prayed and asked God for a baby and He heard her prayer.

Verse 2, "No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God." After praising God for salvation and exalting her above her enemies, Hannah starts praising the attributes of God. On Wednesday nights when Mr. Horn is leading and says we want to start about praising God for His attributes, it's not just so we can wait and then eventually get to the things we really want to pray about, those things that are our needs, it's because that's the pattern you see in Scripture. When you read prayers in Scripture and people address God, it's not any different than what you see Hannah doing here. She says she is going to exalt the attributes of God and exalt Him in His holiness. She says "there is none beside You." There's this really famous photo from the last summer Olympics from the hundred-meter dash. Usain Bolt from Jamaica is so much faster than all the other competitors, that he was several strides ahead of all the other competitors in the gold medal race. This photographer got this picture where he is a couple strides ahead and he has this big smile on his face because he is so much ahead of his competitors. Hannah's not saying God is like that. What she is saying is that God is not even in the same race as everyone else, there is nothing you can compare God to or put in the same

category of God and then it happens to be that Yahweh is the best at that. No, it's Yahweh is here and there is nothing else to measure, you don't even have anything else in the same category. There is no rock like God, there is nothing reliable like Him, nothing made by human hands are like the Rock that follow the people in the wilderness. We don't have time to speak at length about all of these things, each thing we could spend sermons on. There are hours' worth of things that we could talk about on these attributes, we don't have time for it now. We should observe that this woman from the hills of Ephraim had a good understanding of basic theology and knew how to apply it even despite the current lack of theological leadership in the country. She understood that God was holy and she knew that God should be praised for being holy. All this she prayed because she had asked God for a baby and He had heard her prayer.

Verses 3-5, "Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the Lord is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed. "The bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children has become feeble." The tone changes a little bit here, she prays to God, she extols His attributes, now she turns her prayer to a warning. Who is she speaking against? Is she speaking against Peninah? Maybe partly, but I think her target has to be bigger than Peninah. Peninah was the other wife, the one that was abusive to Hannah because Hannah didn't have children and Peninah did. If it were just Peninah, then the things Hannah prays here are way over the top, but it's possible that what Hannah is doing is that she sees the kinds of things that are happening in her own family life, the oppression she is feeling in her own household and she sees them as a microcosm of everything that Israel is going through. Israel is being oppressed from within by wicked priests, they are oppressed from without by the Philistines and other Canaanites. Hannah sees that God is in control of these things, she doesn't just speak against them, but she speaks with warning. There is a God that knows things and "by Him actions are weighed." I read those together and I think what she is saying is that God is in His heaven, but He sees and He knows and He will weigh the actions of men. Hannah is probably praying something along the lines that she knows there is a God who is aware of what happens on the earth because I prayed to Him and what I prayed came to pass. Like we have been saying in the book of Daniel, there is a God who rules in the affairs of men. The rest of this section contrasts that is probably spoken from the same motivation; if God can answer my prayer and open my womb, He can do the rest of these things, God can break the weapons of the mighty. If God can give me a baby that I asked for, then God can bring down those who fatten themselves wickedly like Eli's sons. When people would bring their sacrifices to the temple, they would take away portions that were intended for the people by just sticking a hook into the pot of meat and they would take it away and then take away the portions that were meant to be burnt on the altar. If God can give me a baby, Hannah says, God can satisfy the hungry. When she talks about the barren woman having seven children, all of a sudden you have to say that Hannah is talking about more than herself because at this point Hannah has one child, not seven. By the time things are done, we know Hannah wasn't talking about herself because Hannah blesses her with three more sons and two daughters that we hear about later in chapter 2. When she talks about the barren woman having seven children, this is a phrase that's indicating fruitfulness, indicating completion. The number seven in the Bible, just like the seven days of the week, you have come to the end of something, something is finally satisfied. There is a line in Proverbs 30, that talks about the things that are never satisfied, things like the grave; a barren womb is among those listed and Hannah is saying that God satisfied that. Perhaps Hannah knows something that we take a little lightly. When God opens a barren womb in Scripture, He

usually has something remarkable in store for that next generation. Hannah's probably the fourth or fifth woman recorded as being barren and having a child and look at the other ones in Scripture. Sarah was barren, but she bore Isaac, the child of promise. We know Rebecca was barren, it's not a big deal except that there is one line, she is barren then Isaac prays for her and she bears the twins Jacob and Esau who keep alive the promise. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob was barren until she bore Joseph who was the child that saved the whole earth from famine, that's how he is described. Sampson's mother was barren and she bore a mighty son, one of the mightiest of the judges. Even though he had personal problems of his own, when God gave a child to a barren woman, God had great things in store for that child. Elizabeth was barren and she bore John the Baptist. Generally speaking, when you open your Bibles, this is just a hint for how you read your Bibles. When you see a barren woman and see her have a baby, God has something in store for that generation, that's how God works in the Bible. Think about this because we live in a culture that celebrates barrenness. We live in a culture that celebrates people that have no children and thinks that's such a wonderful thing that is. When a woman does have a baby these days, she is celebrated for how quickly she can get back to looking like she is barren. All these things Hannah prayed because she had asked God for a baby and He had heard her prayer. Isaiah 54:1-3, "Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the Lord. "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited."

Verses 6-8a, "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap; to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory." If we didn't know the backstory and all we had was Hannah's prayer dropped into the Bible, I don't think I could say all the things I am saying now, but we know the background of the prayer, so I think again what you have here is Hannah saying that if God can answer the prayer and give me a child, God can "fill in the blank". God can kill and make alive and even raise from the dead. If God can give me a child, God can make the poor rich, He can make the rich poor. If God can give me a male child, He can make the high low, or the low high. If God can give me a child, God can lift up the beggar and the poor from dust and ashes and He can make them princes on thrones of glory. Wait a minute, we need to pause here and think about when Hannah is talking. When she is praying here there are no princes in Israel and Israel has never had a king ever and Hannah is praying about the lifting up of the poor to become princes. This is clearly something that has to be prophetic. What does Hannah know? Does she know that her son, the one that she is praying in response to right now is going to be the first kingmaker of Israel? The first one who anoints the first two kings of Israel? Maybe it's not even that local, does she know the things we know from the New Testament? Does she know things from Revelation 1, "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins with His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever amen." Is she talking about the covenant that's yet to come? I don't know how much is revealed to her, but I do know that she is praying beyond the circumstances that she is in, speaking about the working of God on the earth. This is what God can do, God can make princes out of people who are in the dust and ashes. That phrase that it ends with, "inherit the throne of glory", that's a special phrase. This isn't just a regular king you are talking about; this is the sort of phrase that Matthew in his gospel uses to describe Christ when He is going to ascend into heaven. Christ is the One who gets to inherit the throne of glory. Is Hannah prophesying about

Christ? I think it's highly likely and more likely than that she's not. Do you see the progression that's happening here? Hannah is saying because You God can give me a baby, You can make Jesus reign and inherit a throne of glory. That's a bigger leap than we are willing to make in our prayers. All this she prayed because she had asked God for a baby and He heard her prayer.

Verses 8b-9, "For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He has set the world upon them. He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail." Now she is just getting excessive, this is just overboard. She wanted a baby, she got a baby, and here she goes praising God for creating and maintaining the world. She is using the highest poetic language to do it, what's with this "pillars" and setting the earth upon it? Hannah is praying in the sorts of ways that we are not used to, she is praying in the sorts of ways that we don't pray. Hannah gets a very small, very personal, very local prayer answered. She asks God for a baby and He gives her a baby and she says that God is the creator of the world, who sustains the world and maintains the world. This talk about pillars is probably a talk also about how God established rulers. Also think about the local context when she is giving this prayer. She says, "He will guard the feet of His saints" remember this is the woman who is praying at the moment she is giving up her son to a man who has wicked sons and she has faith. She says God will guard the feet of His saints. She is giving away her small little baby. That last phrase in verse 9, "For by strength no man shall prevail." In a year, in five years, in ten years, if you forget everything else about this sermon, if you forget anything else that I have said, if you forget that I have said it, I hope you remember this fragment of a verse. Maybe even forget where it comes from, I hope you remember this fragment, by strength no man shall prevail. Think of the reasons we are told to pray in Scripture and the things we are supposed to pray for. We are supposed to pray and glorify God, exalt His attributes, give thanksgiving to God, praise Him for His mighty deeds, confess our sin, bring our petitions before God, and when you look at the balance of those things and how we pray, we probably weigh things heavier on the petitions rather than the other things relative to what Scripture does when you look at prayers in Scripture. The fact that we weigh things heavier doesn't mean we aren't supposed to pray them. We are supposed to pray them and the reason is because of this last line in verse 9, "by strength no man shall prevail." We judge and humanize whether someone is going to prevail based on what we perceive to be their strength. Hannah says that by strength no man shall prevail. Why is it so important? Everyone who doesn't pray either implicitly or explicitly is denying this phrase in this verse. They either think or act that success in life is a factor of strength, they think something comes by strength. Hannah says that by strength no man shall prevail, unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who builds it. Unless the Lord protects a city, the men guard it in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. By strength no man will succeed in business, by strength no woman will struggle with the raising of children, by strength no one will find a husband or wife who wants one, by strength no child will obey his parents, by strength no doctor will cure any illness, by strength no politician will rise to power, by strength no man shall prevail, by strength no one will get into heaven. Your works aren't going to get you there, but strength no one will inherit eternal life, by strength no one will overcome sin in their life, by strength no one will cheat death, by strength no one will avoid hell. She tells us the other side too; she says the wicked will be silent in darkness. If you need any more motivation to bring your prayers and petitions to God, this is it. If you think there is anything you can succeed from apart from God, Hannah says that by strength no man shall prevail. If you think we are going to have any success in Nigeria, remember this, by strength no man shall prevail. All this Hannah prayed because she prayed to God for a baby and He heard her prayer.

Verse 10, "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed." We are back to that phrase about the exalting the horn of His anointed. It's a little bit of a play on horn because the image is a horned animal that lifts up his head, but you also anoint people with a horn of oil so she is being a little bit clever there. If there was ever doubt that Hannah was speaking prophetic things, even things about Christ, this should end now with this verse. Hannah speaks of an anointed king, but there is no king in Israel at this time. The language she uses here is actually incredibly similar to Psalm 2, which is kind of a favorite here. If you think about it, Hannah anticipates the sort of things that are said by David in Psalm 2 and you can draw a direct line to Hannah, her son Samuel, who anoints David, who writes Psalm 2. That great manly Psalm about destruction of kings, a woman who wanted a baby said it first. Hannah touches on big things and little things in her prayer, do we pray for the big things, do we pray for the little things in the context of the big things? She seems to have some sense that her son is involved in bigger things. Who knows what God revealed to her, we know that God revealed things to Elizabeth about John the Baptist, we know God revealed things to Mary about her Son Jesus. Scripture doesn't tell us anything else about what Hannah knows, but we know she understands that there is something in store for Israel than her getting a baby. She knows there is a God who acts in the earth. Here's the sum of Hannah's prayer. She says if there is a God who can open a barren woman's womb, if there is a God who can answer prayer and give me a baby, then there is a God who can bring a total and complete reformation and salvation to a people. She is praying in the midst of a people who are oppressed from within and without, a people who are not holy, a people who do not act like they know God and she says if God can give me a baby, then He can change the entire culture. If God can do this thing for me, He can destroy His enemies and raise up His own king. All this she prayed because she asked God for a baby and He heard her prayer. Hannah's biography ends later in this chapter, a couple verses later we read that she is blessed with five additional children, we know she travels yearly to the sacrifices to visit Samuel and each time she brings him a little robe and that's it. We don't hear about Hannah again or know anything else about her. There's this sense in which Hannah is not a significant person like Daniel is a significant person, but it appears that this prayer of Hannah's was probably paraphrased into a psalm. Psalm 113, which is an anonymous psalm as far as the Scripture goes, we don't know exactly who wrote it, it's typically believed David wrote it, but that's not necessarily relevant. Psalm 113, "Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, His glory is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes- with the princes of His people. He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!" Traditionally this psalm, along with all the psalms from 113-118, were sung during the Jewish feasts and it's even possible that this psalm would have been one of the psalms that was sung by Jesus at the close of the Last Supper. Regardless of that, we know that elements of Hannah's prayer, this woman who wanted a baby and got a baby, elements of that prayer are taken out and they become part of the Israelite and Jewish liturgy, they are recorded for us to sing, and she's remembered even now. Not bad for a girl from the back country hills, and all this because she prayed and asked God for a baby and He heard her prayer.

Applications:

1. We should thank God like Hannah did, recognize that when God answers prayer, we should respond and we should acknowledge Him for it. It sounds simple, but we pray to God with petitions all the time, we should be diligent and fervent in our follow-ups when we are aware that God has answered those petitions.
2. We should pray in faith. Hannah saw that God answered her personal prayer and then prayed as if He were the God that could raise kings and reform nations. She prayed for a little thing, God did the little thing for her and her response is that He is the God who does great things.
3. Pray for your personal and individual and mundane requests framed in the context of God's will and plan for the course of history. Hannah understands where she fits in the lineage of Ephraim, she understands the things said about Ephraim and when they come true for her she prays in that context and looking forward knowing that what God says will happen.
4. I intend this to be somewhat of a rebuke to us as a church and I don't mean you, I mean us. We need to make the most of the opportunities we have to pray. Hannah prayed at the tabernacle and her prayer was heard and we have set times where we gather as a church to pray. We are going to have a moment here where we ask the men to lead the church in prayer, we have Wednesday nights where we get together to pray. If we really believed in the same God as Hannah, if we really believed God was as Hannah described Him in this prayer, then we would pray a lot more like Hannah did and there would be a lot less dead air when we gather to pray, there would be a lot more fervency. We need to make the most of our opportunities that we have to pray.
5. I believe that we should hear more women's voices more often when we pray. Perhaps you have a theological reason against that, if you do I present 1 Samuel 2 as exhibit #1, but all Israel benefitted from Hannah's prayer, they made it into a song, Mary more or less quotes her, all Israel benefitted because Hannah prayed. Reformation Baptist could benefit if the women would pray more.
6. Remember this, by strength no man shall prevail. We should pray like that's actually true.

Heavenly Father, we ask that You would teach us how to pray. We ask that You would take the examples You have given us in Scripture, the example of Jesus, Daniel, Hannah, and many others, and You would show us how we should approach before You. You are a God not like the other gods, You are high and lifted up. You are holy and yet You are a God who says to come before You. We don't even know a king like this, we don't know a ruler who would say to their people that they want to hear from you, like You do. Our governor or president would be bothered if we brought our requests to them, but You are a God who commands us to do so. You are a God who commands us to lift You up, to acknowledge You as the source of all good things and the only One who can meet our needs. So heavenly Father, we exalt You for that, we exalt You that You met our needs for salvation by sending Your Son Jesus. In His name we pray, amen.