

“An Excellent Family”
1 Samuel 1
(Preached at Trinity, April 24, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We're at the beginning of our journey through **1 Samuel**, which Lord willing will continue into **2 Samuel** and then **1 & 2 Kings**. **1 Samuel** opens with the account of Samuel's birth. We are introduced to a Hebrew man by the name of Elkanah and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.
 2. We are told that Hanna is barren which sets the stage for a wonderful testimony of faith and commitment to God. Peninnah resented Elkanah's love for Hannah and often mocked her because of her condition—**Verses 7-8**. This caused Hannah much sorrow. But her greatest sorrow was not being able to participate in God's promise of a seed who would bless all the nations of the earth.
 3. Instead of total despair Hannah prayed and committed her condition to God and vowed to give back to Him whatever blessings she might receive from Him.
 4. Before we move on to chapter 2 I want us to gaze for a few minutes upon Samuel's family. I stated a couple weeks ago that one of the tasks of preaching is not only unfolding the text but of drawing out application for the building up of God's people.
- I. They were a family committed to worship
- A. We find them present at the appointed times of worship
 1. The Israelite people were required to make appointed pilgrimages for worship
Deuteronomy 12:5-7 NAU - "But you shall seek *the LORD* at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. ⁶ "There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. ⁷ "There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you."
 2. Elkanah and his family faithfully made the journey to worship at the appointed time
1 Samuel 1:3 NAU - "Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh."
 3. Year after year they made their pilgrimage to worship God in spite of the distance and whatever inconvenience it might have caused.
1 Samuel 1:21 NAU - "Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and *pay* his vow."

4. This is particularly amazing knowing the condition of Israel at this point
- a. This was a particularly wicked time in their history
Judges 2:12 NAU - "they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from *among* the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger."
 - b. Evidence of their spiritual deadness was all around
 - c. Eli was the judge and priest and we can see his spiritual weakness. He was unable to discern the difference between drunkenness and a woman pouring her heart out to God.
 - d. We are told that Eli's sons were serving as priests but were completely spiritually bankrupt.
1 Samuel 1:3 NAU - "Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there."
1 Samuel 2:22 NAU - "Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting."
 - e. We saw in the Book of Ruth how easy it was for Elimelech and Naomi to move their family to Moab, forsaking God's worship and His people.
 - f. In this culture when everyone was doing that which was right in their own eyes this family was committed to the worship of God.
 - g. We too live in a culture in which few feel driven to worship
- B. It wasn't a mere nominal worship
1. They were not alone as they gathered at the tabernacle but many were just going through the formality of outward worship
Isaiah 29:13 NAS - "Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*"
Matthew 15:8-9 NAS - "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. ⁹ 'But in vain do they worship Me"
 2. This family was truly committed to the worship of God
 Not only do we see it in the faithfulness of their annual attendance, we can also see it in the extravagance of Hannah's offering.
 - a. I pointed out before that **Verse 24** is a disputed text.
1 Samuel 1:24-25 NAU - "Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the child was young."

- b. The original Hebrew states she brought three bulls as represented by the KJV.
1 Samuel 1:24 KJV - "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."
 - c. They base their argument for a single bull on two points. One is the single bull offered in **Verse 25**. The other is the extravagance of the gift which would have represented a huge sum. But God's people should always worship Him with extravagance. The oil the woman poured upon the feet of Christ was probably the greatest of her possessions.
3. Few people today have any interest in attending the worship of God. And many of those who do are only involved in a nominal Christianity that has little heart for Christ. They sing the hymns while their minds and hearts are a million miles away.
 4. The excellent family has Christ at the core of their very existence. Every day is shaped by the love of Christ and the Lord's Day is the highlight of the week.

II. There was spiritual unity between this husband and wife

A. The hearts of Elkanah and Hannah were knit together

1. Hannah made a vow to God. As I pointed out before, her husband could have annulled it.
Numbers 30:12-13 NAU - "But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears *them*, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the LORD will forgive her. ¹³ "Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it."
2. Elkanah and Hannah were joined together in spiritual oneness. They shared a single heart of commitment to God. Together they used their marriage as a platform for displaying His glory.
1 Samuel 1:21-23 NAU - "Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and *pay* his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "*I will not go up* until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and stay there forever." ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you. Remain until you have weaned him; only may the LORD confirm His word." So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him."
3. Elkanah knew his wife to be serious minded and he knew her to be God fearing. He trusted her.
Proverbs 31:10-11 NAU - "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her"

- B. The excellent family is united with singleness of purpose
1. There are countless things that can draw the hearts of a married couple
 - a. We can direct great energy upon our physical home. There are endless projects.
 - b. The pleasures of this world can draw our hearts
 - c. With children there are endless activities – sports and gymnastics and dance and social events.
 2. The excellent family maintains a singleness of purpose
Matthew 6:33 NAU - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
 3. This isn't to say that there aren't many things that fill our lives. But as Christians we should have singleness of purpose and direction. Husbands and wives should have the same goals, should do the same things.
 4. There are few things sweeter than the Christian companionship between a Christian husband and wife. It is a true friendship, a true partnership in service. They can pray together, study together. They share together as God leads each in service to Him. They are in faith's journey together.
 5. Hannah had made a vow to God and Elkanah shared in her commitment.
The husband is the leader of the home but the Godly husband should be able to perceive God's direction in the life of his wife.
 6. No family is perfect and sometimes we as husbands fail to fully understand our wives. Even Elkanah failed to fully comprehend the anguish Hannah was experiencing in her barrenness.
1 Samuel 1:8 NAU - "Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"
 7. But Godly husbands should seek to be in tune with what God is doing in the lives of their wives and seek to support them in their Kingdom labors.
- III. Elkanah and Hannah model the proper attitude of parents toward their children
- A. Elkanah and Hannah knew their children belonged to God
1. Hannah desperately wanted a child
1 Samuel 1:10 NAU - "She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly."
 2. God blessed her with a son
1 Samuel 1:20 NAU - "It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel"
 3. The child belonged to her and her husband, yet her great desire was that he be used for the glory of God. She dedicated her son to God.
 4. It is true that she had made a vow to give her child to God, but this should be the heart of every Christian.
- B. How tragic when Christians have the same mindset as the world
1. Their greatest desire is for their children to be popular as a child; they puff them up in pride. Later they want them to be successful in the world. They want them to have a good education and a good paying job and a fine house.

2. How many pray that their children spend their lives in service to Christ.
3. It is a sad reality that most children grow up and leave the church. There are many reasons for this, the chief being an unconverted heart. But too many parents raise their children with an eye upon this world's values. Too little value is placed upon service in the Kingdom of God. The church is merely an appendage; not the core of the home life. And Christ takes second place to the worldly goals of the home. It's no wonder just as soon as they are able they forsake the church.
4. Godly parents seek to equip their children for service to God, either formal ministry or faithful labor in the church.
Hannah's great interest was to give her son in service to God.
3. On the day Adoniram Judson was commissioned to go overseas, he also met and fell in love with the beautiful Ann Hasseltine and soon wanted to make a proposal of marriage. But he also knew how costly it would be for her to join him in missionary service. In all likelihood, she would never see her family again. So Judson wrote to Ann's father:

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown of righteousness, brightened with the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?
4. Ann's father permitted her marriage and departure. He understood the call of Christ upon our lives.
Mark 10:29-30 NAU - "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, ³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."
5. Ann had three pregnancies. The first ended in a miscarriage while moving from India to Burma; their son Roger was born in 1815 and died at eight months of age, and their third child, Maria, lived for only six months after her mother's death at the age of 36.

Conclusion:

1. The excellent family is the family that worships together. Not simply the formality that comes from nominal Christianity but the passionate worship that comes from knowing God.
2. The excellent family is the family where a man and woman join together in a spiritual union that seeks to glorify God with their lives. They are joined together in a partnership that has an eye on serving Christ.
3. The excellent family is the family where parents see their children as precious gifts from the hand of God. Gifts that are then given back in service to Him. There is a continual eye on preparing them for such service.
4. May God bless our families with such excellence. And may this be the goal all of our families strive for.