

Subject: *The Power of a Praying Mother*

Scripture: *1 Samuel 1:1-28*

First Samuel traces the lives of three important leaders: Samuel, King Saul, and King David. This is a book a time of transition in Israel's history, from the time of judges to the time of kings. Samuel was the bridge-builder. He was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. Samuel was the man who anointed Saul and David as the first two kings of Israel. Samuel gave good spiritual leadership when it was needed at a critical time, but the important person in chapter 1 is not Samuel, but his mother Hannah.

1. Hannah's problems (verses 1-8)

A. She lived in dark days

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

The nation of Israel was without a king and it had no spiritual leadership. Eli was high priest and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were called "sons of Belial" or worthless men.

B. She lived in a divided family

She lived in a devout family (vs. 3), but it was a divided family because Hannah had a rival woman, Elkanah's other wife, to contend with. She had to share her husband with another woman. On top of that, the other woman had children, but Hannah was barren, and had no children. This was a real burden at that time and in that culture. Elkanah was good to her and seem to be a compassionate husband (vs. 8), but it was still a tough situation for Hannah.

2. Hannah's prayer (verses 9-18)

A. She took her burden to the Lord

Hannah prayed to God because He was the only One who could help her and meet her need. President Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

Psalms 121:1-2 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

The name "Hannah" means "grace" and she needed a lot of grace to deal with her many problems. She didn't get bitter or angry. She didn't attack Peninnah, the other woman in the house. But she took her burden to the Lord, and left it with Him. When the outlook is bad, try the uplook...look to God in prayer like Hannah did.

B. She made a promise to the Lord

Hannah made a vow (sacred promise) to God. We read of Lemuel's mother in Proverbs 31:2, and she calls him "son of my vows." Hannah made her prayer to God by the name, "the Lord of hosts" (vs. 11). That name is found almost 300 times in the Bible, but this is the first reference. This name describes God's sovereign control.

He is “the Lord of armies” (stars, angels, and the armies of Israel). It is the name in Martin Luther’s well known song, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, “Lord Sabaoth his name from age to age the same, and He must win the battle.”

3. Hannah’s precious child (verses 19-23)

A. She gave birth to a special son

God often solves problems through the birth of a baby. Babies are God’s announcement that He knows the need, He cares about His people, and He is working to change things. God wanted to have a chosen people, so Abraham was born. God wanted to preserve His people in Egypt so Joseph was born. God wanted to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage, so Moses was born. God wanted to take His people into the Promised Land, so Joshua was born. God wanted to seek and save lost sinners, so Christ was born. God wanted the church to grow and the New Testament to be written, so the apostles were born. God wanted the Bible to be written in the English language, so John Wycliffe was born. God wanted the Bible to be printed on a press, so Johanne Gutenberg was born. And God wanted to restore the Gospel in its purity, so Martin Luther was born.

B. She gave him a special name

Samuel means “asked of God.” Samuel never forgot that he was an answer to his mother’s prayer. Samuel was not only an answer to his mother’s prayer, but he became a godly man of prayer. See *1 Samuel 12:19-25*.

C. She gave him special attention

See 1:21-23. Notice the close attention she gave to nursing her precious boy. Matthew Henry commented that she did this not only because he was dear to her, but because he was devoted to God. We ought to give special attention to our children, not only because they are ours, but because they belong to God.

4. Hannah’s presentation (verses 24-28)

Hannah weaned Samuel when he was 2-3 years old, and she had not forgotten her promise to God. During those early years, Hannah prayed for Samuel and taught him right from wrong. She gave him a solid foundation. Then she personally took him to the house of God and presented him to Eli, the high priest. Hannah was so grateful for God’s gift, that she willingly gave her son back to Him. She believed that God would use him and bless him in His service all the days of his life, and she was right. When King David prayed over all the materials that were given to build the temple he said, *1 Chronicles 29:14*, *Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of your own have we given You.*

A child is God’s gift to the parents, and if the parents are wise, they will give their child back to God for His service and His glory.

It is not an exaggeration to say that even though George Washington commanded the forces of the United States, the prayers and influence of Mary Washington commanded George. Never underestimate the power of a praying mother. There is nothing wrong in this world that could not be changed by a praying mother. It has been said that “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

When I recall the joys of my fifty-six years of public ministry, I often shudder at the thought of how near I came to losing them. For many months my mind was balancing between the pulpit and the attraction of a legal career. Behind it all a mother's prayers were moving the poised balance. She made souls outweigh silver, and eternity outweigh time.

- John Wesley (founder of the Methodist Church)

I remember my mother's prayers, and they have followed me; they have clung to me all my life. All that I am and hope to be I owe to my angel mother.

- President Abraham Lincoln

A final word of application:

- Mothers, pray for your children, and never stop prayer. Above all, pray for God to use them for His glory. Dedicate your children to God and His service whatever He may have for them to do.
- Mothers, raise your children up and train them to live their entire life for God.
- Sons and daughters, honor your mothers by doing God's will for your life, and always thank them for all they have done for you, including their prayers for you.