

Week 7 - Hannah

Connect: choose 1 *Connect* question and discuss for 5-7 minutes.

- Share with your group the top 3 things you want most in the world right now.
- What's the most interesting meal you've ever had?

Read these passages aloud: 1 Samuel 1-2:10

Engage the text as a group:

1. What do you **observe**?
 - Who is Hannah? What is happening?
 - What does Hannah promise?
2. What **questions** arise for you?
 - What must it have felt like for Hannah to leave her young son there?

Why does Hannah matter?

Hannah is the mother of the prophet Samuel, who would play a pivotal role in the monarchies (king Saul and David) that would rule ancient Israel. Hannah birthed the prophet who would anoint king David, the one “after God’s own heart.”¹ It was through Hannah’s anguished prayers and deep longing for a son that Samuel’s life came to be.

As a woman and wife in ancient Israel, to not bear children and particularly sons for your husband was a deep social and familial shame. You weren’t giving your husband heirs to continue the family line. Hannah and her husband’s other wife, Peninah both knew it, too. With this deep longing in her heart, Hannah goes before God in such earnest and intense prayer that Eli the prophet looking on thinks her drunk. Hannah teaches us about prayer, about laying it all out before the LORD, not suppressing, repressing, or withholding emotion from God or from ourselves—especially painful emotions. She is a model for us, a mother in the faith of trusting God with our heart’s deepest desires.

It’s through the prayers of his mother Hannah that Samuel becomes the great servant of the LORD that he was. Because she prayed for him and kept her word to give him back to the LORD, he became who he was called to be.

Put this bible story in one sentence:

“In this story, God _____.”

How does Hannah point us to Jesus?

Jesus would do like Hannah did in letting out his anguish in prayer before the LORD in the Scriptures.² Hannah teaches us in her example how to pray with and from our souls to God, and Jesus teaches us words³ to pray to our

¹ 1 Samuel 13:14

² Matthew 26:36-46

³ Matthew 6:9-13

Father. Hannah “prays through the pain,”⁴ pouring out her heart to God in prayer. God hears her prayer, and when God answers affirmatively, she does not go back on her promise to God to offer back to God the very thing she wanted most in the world.

Jesus in the gospels did not withhold from God the things that were dear to him: he did not grasp comfort or power or favor,⁵ and not even his very life.⁶ Jesus lays his emotions and soul bare before God and he lays it all down, submitting to the will of the Father, even to giving up his life, suffering, and dying. Jesus by his Spirit teaches us to do the same—how to hold our desires and how to lay them down before God. Both Hannah and Jesus teach us about the goodness of our desires—that they aren’t bad—but how we can also surrender even very precious things to us to God, trusting that God will do a good thing with them.

Hannah’s song in chapter 2:1-10 sings of a messianic king to come; this points to Saul and David, the kings of Israel, but ultimately to Jesus Christ—who would be the king perfectly following after God’s heart and will that both Saul and David failed to be.

So What Now?

- When have you intensely wanted something that you didn’t yet have?
- Where do you go to pour out your anguish to God? (a prayer room? Bedroom? Chapel sanctuary? Woods?)
- What is something/someone that you have been/are praying for?
- What is the longest you’ve ever had to wait for something you wanted?
- What was it like when you finally received it?

Video:

For context of the book of Samuel and Hannah’s story, watch “Read Scripture: 1 Samuel,” from minutes 0:00-2:32 (can watch longer if you have time; first 2 minutes critical for Hannah).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJOju5Dw0V0>

Close in Prayer:

Think of one of the things you mentioned at the beginning as being 1 of the 3 things you want most in the world. Picture holding it before God. When you’re ready, simply pray:

Lord God, thank you for the desire for good things. Help me by your Spirit be willing to lay whatever it is down before you so that it can be in its rightful place. Help me be willing to set it down. And then help me to do it. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

⁴ Sharifa Stevens, “Prayign through the Pain: Hannah’s Example,”

http://blogs.bible.org/engage/sharifa_stevens/praying_through_the_pain_hannahs_example.

⁵ Jesus is tempted in the desert: Luke 4:1-13

⁶ Matthew 26:38, 41, 44.