

1 Samuel 2:1-10 — Hannah's Prayer

January 23, 2022

Good morning! It is good to have you. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. Last week, I told you we were in a crucial season at CrossWinds. There are a number of important items in the air. We took the time to pray over them last week. I thought it would be good to begin with an update on how God responded to those prayers.

When it comes to our capital fund and our goal of \$650,000 by the end of January, last week we took in another \$10,000 toward that goal, making the total received so far \$456,000. We thank God for that and will see when God provides the rest.

When it comes to approval of our blueprints by the city of Spencer, this week our blueprints were approved pending some minor changes. We thank God for that. Soon we will be swinging hammers. In the bulletin, I put a rough sketch of the main floor plan of the new facility. There are also three additional rooms not shown on this drawing that are on the basement level of the building. Their primary use will be storage.

As you know, pastor Andy accepted a pastoral job in Ohio. Next week will be his last week. We will have cake for him at the coffee bar. If you haven't had a chance to tell him how much you appreciate him, you have until next Sunday.

Not much took place in the search for a permanent replacement for the administrative position in Spirit Lake. Renae Nelson continues to fill in and has done a great job.

Of course, there are plenty of people still sick. We should be praying about that.

We also have not done much this week when it comes to focusing on our mission of reaching people with Jesus. I hope we can strategize on that as a church body in the next few weeks.

We want to continue to pray over these issues. Last week, I asked you to get into groups of three to pray. This morning, I am asking you to simply take time to pray in silence in your seats about these needs on both of our campuses. We know God answers our prayers so it will be exciting to see how God answers these needs. After a minute or two of prayer, I will close and we will get to our study.

Prayer

Does anyone remember what happened on February 7, 2021? That was the Super Bowl. It was a face-off between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs. It was a great game that ended with Tom Brady leading his team to a 31-9 victory over the Chiefs. That was Tom's seventh Super Bowl win. A Super Bowl victory deserves to be celebrated. How do we get people together to celebrate in a COVID world? To encourage people to keep their distance, Tampa celebrated with a boat parade in the Hillsborough River through downtown Tampa. At one point in the parade, plans for a safe celebration almost fell apart. Tom Brady threw the Lombardi trophy from his boat across the water to another boat where a tight end caught the trophy. Thankfully, Tom is a good

quarterback and has good receivers. If the Vince Lombardi trophy ended up on the bottom of the river, that would have put a quick end to the celebration!

Celebrating a victory is something the Bible tells us to do.

In the first two weeks of our study in 1 Samuel, we read about a great win, a triumph over defeat. Hannah was a childless wife who was constantly being tormented by a wicked rival wife named Peninnah. Hannah couldn't have children, but she was loved by her husband, Elkanah. Peninnah, the rival wife, had many children, but she wasn't at the center of Elkanah's heart.

In desperation, Hannah prayed and asked God for a son. She told God that if he enabled her to conceive a son, in gratitude, she would give her son back to God to serve God all the days of his life. That is what happened. God enabled her to conceive a son named Samuel. Last week, we saw that Hannah was a woman who kept her promises. As soon as Samuel was weaned, probably 3 or 4 years of age, Hannah brought her son to the tabernacle at Shiloh. There, she dedicated him to the Lord and left him to serve in the tabernacle for the rest of his life.

Hannah was so thrilled that God answered her prayer for a son, she couldn't help but celebrate. Just as Super Bowl champions celebrate their victory, Hannah celebrated her victory. What we find in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 is Hannah's victory song of celebration for her son. The genre of her words is a little different. They are Hebrew poetry. She used short phrases that are pregnant with meaning. Let's read her victory song together, then we will study our way through her words.

And Hannah prayed and said, “My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. “There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and on them he has set the world. “He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” 1 Samuel 2:1–10 (ESV)

What is the significance of the song Hannah?

Let’s begin with a little overview of her song and how it fits into 1 Samuel.

Hannah’s song reveals how God loves to rescue his people.

Hannah was a very insightful woman. In this song, she didn’t spend her time thanking God for a baby. She thanked God for his character and how he loves to rescue people who rely on him. God loves to take his people who rely on him and take them out of tragedy and give them victory. Wealth, power, status, and privilege will not save you at the end of the day. It is only those who have their faith and trust in the God of the universe who will be saved.

Hannah’s song prophetically introduces us to two great kings.

At the end of this song, Hannah will prophetically introduce us to two kings. One is a great king in Israel whose story will unfold in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. The other is the greatest king the world would ever experience. That king would rescue God’s people in a greater way than any other king who came

before him. You can probably guess his name, but I will leave that thought to the end of the message before I develop it for you.

Hannah's song serves as a bookend in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel.

Earlier in our study, I told you that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. When we come to the end of 2 Samuel, David will sing a similar song of praise in 2 Samuel 23:1-7. These two songs serve as bookends to wrap the books of 1 and 2 Samuel together. The themes that Hannah anticipated in the birth of Samuel found in Hannah's song will find their fulfillment in King David. In David's poetic song at the end of 2 Samuel, he will look back on Hannah's prophetic song to show how her hopes were fulfilled in his reign.

Hannah's song breaks into three parts. There is an introduction at the beginning, a middle, and a conclusion at the end. Let's work our way through the verses.

Introduction — My heart sings praise to God.

And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation." 1 Samuel 2:1 (ESV)

Here Hannah shows us what a difference it makes when we turn to God in our time of need. The last time we saw Hannah praying, her situation was very different. She was heartbroken after being ridiculed by Peninnah and feeling like she failed her husband by not being able to provide him with a child. Now, things are very different. Instead of being heartbroken, she described her transformation in terms of her heart, her horn, and her mouth.

My heart exults in the LORD... 1 Samuel 1:21 (ESV)

She said her heart exults in the Lord. Exalts means to rejoice, to celebrate. What filled her with the happiness she sang about in this poetic song was not that she gave birth to a son, it was that the God of the universe cared about her. He listened to her. He answered her prayer. For Hannah, more thrilling than the birth of Samuel was that the God of the universe cared about her, listened to her, and loved her.

What really makes us happy? There is nothing wrong with celebrating a Super Bowl win. There is nothing wrong with celebrating a job promotion or the birth of a child. But what should be more satisfying than any of those things is that we actually know God. We are not alone. He cares about us. He loves us. He answers our prayers. Your co-worker that has never opened the Bible does not know God. Most of the celebrities and wealthy people in the news do not know God. That is tragic. Most people around the world have never heard the good news of Jesus and do not know Jesus. What amazing good news to know God. More important than the birth of a son to Hannah was that God heard her prayer, he loved her, and he came to her rescue. The same is true for us. This is what should give us true happiness in our lives.

...my horn is exalted in the Lord... 1 Samuel 2:1 (ESV)

Hannah then said “my horn is exalted in the Lord.” What does that mean? In Hannah’s rural world, they knew that animals would fight with their horns. After a fight, the winning animal would hold its head and horns high as a symbol of its victory. You hunters have probably seen this after bucks battle for a female. The winning deer keeps its head high. The losing deer keeps its head down and slinks away in defeat.

This is a poetic way of Hannah saying that God gave her victory in life's battles. God took away her disgrace. Her head was held high not because of her strength but because of what God did for her. No longer was she defeated in life but God gave her victory. She didn't give herself the victory. God gave it to her.

If we think about her desperately trying to get pregnant, isn't it true that this was not something she achieved on her own strength? It was God who enabled her to conceive. It was God who took away her shame. It was God who gave her victory over Peninnah, who was insulting and demeaning her.

My mouth derides my enemies... 1 Samuel 2:1 (ESV)

Lastly, Hannah spoke about her mouth. "My mouth derides my enemies." What does that mean? The Hebrew literally says "my mouth is open wide." The idea is of a lion devouring its prey. What is going on? As I studied this, I had to pause. This doesn't sound too ladylike for Hannah, especially in her battle with Peninnah to have children. God gave her the victory and lifted up her head so she was no longer barren, but doesn't it sound too strong to say God enabled her to devour and destroy her enemy? What is going on here?

Let me tell you what Bible scholars think is happening. This song was written by Hannah as she gave thanks to God for the birth of her son Samuel. As we will see in a few moments, this poetic song has a wider angle on it than just Hannah thanking God for a son. Hannah saw Peninnah and the hurtful things she did to her as an example of the enemies of God and the hurtful things they would do to God's people.

Hannah represents Israel. Just as Hannah was barren and mocked, Israel was barren and oppressed by the nations around her. The way God came to the

rescue in Hannah's life and saved her from her enemies was designed to be an encouragement to the entire nation of Israel. In 1 Samuel, we will see God coming to the rescue of his people Israel, giving them victory over their enemies and enabling them to destroy their enemies. When Hannah wrote this, she was saying that the way God rescued her on a small scale was going to happen to the nation of Israel but on a large scale. God would hear the Israelites' cries for help. God would draw close to them. God would answer their prayers for a leader.

Hannah's story stands at the beginning of 1 Samuel because there is a connection between Hannah's story and Israel's story that will follow in the rest of the book.

I rejoice in your salvation. 1 Samuel 2:1 (ESV)

Hannah said, "I rejoice in your salvation." Hannah's joy was not just that she received something she wanted. More significant than receiving Samuel as her son was God hearing her prayer and coming to her rescue. In a Super Bowl victory parade, the players see themselves as the champions. In Hannah's victory song, she saw God as the champion. He is the one who heard her prayer and came to her rescue.

As we continue in her song, we find out why having God is better than having the answer to most of our prayers. Let's look at what God is like.

There is no one like our God.

"There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)

Let's look at the first phrase.

There is none holy like the LORD... 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)

Hannah said God is holy. Nobody else is like him. The holiness of God means that God is separate from us. God is different from us. Holiness carries the idea of moral perfection. Since God is holy, that means he never makes a wrong choice and he never has an evil intent or action. Everything God does is always right. Everything God does is perfect. We are not that way. I make mistakes. I sin all the time. God doesn't sin or make mistakes. If God loves us, if we are his people, since God is holy, that means everything that God ordains to happen to us is for our good and for God's glory. Even if there are hard things in our lives, God ordains those things and has a good reason for those things. For instance, if Hannah had no trouble conceiving children, would she have prayed a prayer where she promised to dedicate her son to serve God for the rest of his life? Do you see how God had a good plan for Hannah even in her hard time? Don't we need to hear that today? God loves us. If we know him, his plans for us are good, even when we don't understand them.

...for there is none besides you. 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)

Having praised God for his holiness, she now reminds us that there is none beside God. This means God is not only holy, so there is no evil in him, but God is incomparable. There is no one else in his class. There is only one God in the universe. This is the God Hannah knew. It is the God we know. He alone is the one to be worshipped. Since there is no one beside God, we can rest assured that nobody out there than can thwart God's good plans for us

Today, when you hear of different religions worshipping different gods or you think different religions are all worshipping the same god, just in different

ways, don't believe it. Hannah said there is "none besides you." There is only one God in the universe. Hannah knew him. We know him.

Now Hannah added a third statement.

There is no rock like our God. 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)

The image of God as a rock is meant to convey the idea of God's protection and strength. When you are attacked in a battle and arrows or bullets are flying, you get behind a rock because it is a safe place. It is a protected place. God is the biggest rock on the planet. He is the great source of protection for his people on the planet. Nobody can change him or move him.

What do you go to for protection in your life? What is your rock? Is it your bank account? Do you find your protection in your wealth? Do you find protection in your intellect? None of those are reliable. The only one who will always be a rock where you can find protection is God.

There is nothing our God does not know.

Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. 1 Samuel 2:3 (ESV)

God is fully aware of every evil plot hatched in darkness. God knows everything there is to know about us. He knows every thought in every mind. He knows the goals of our lives. He knows the suffering in our lives. God knows every word on our lips before it is spoken. Nobody else in this world knows what God knows.

What is amazing is that God doesn't just know all there is to know about our thoughts and our lives, but God also has a response calculated by his infinite wisdom for every situation we face. Nothing is out of his control. God acts, and

only permits actions, with perfect knowledge of the past, present, and future. He will always achieve his sovereign will for his own glory and the highest good for his own people. He never makes a mistake in achieving that goal, no matter how out-of-control the world seems.

It is verses like this that Paul used as the basis for some of his most famous words in the book of Romans.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 (ESV)

God knows everything. God is holy and good. He has a good plan for his people, even in our suffering. Nothing can change those plans. He promises that for his people, he will work everything out for their good because he loves us!

Here we have a window into Hannah's heart. What enabled her to bear up under the trial of childlessness and the constant mockery of Peninnah? What enabled her to give up her own son to serve the Lord for life? Hannah knew God's character. She knew that God was good. She knew God loved her. She knew God had a good plan and it was not altered by anyone or anything. Even if she didn't understand what God was doing during those years of barrenness, she knew she could trust God's plans for her life.

Look what the prophet Jeremiah said about the importance of knowing God and his character when it comes to life.

...but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD. Jeremiah 9:24 (ESV)

Why do you come to church? Are you here to meet God with his people or are you here for the self-help portion of the sermon? There is nothing wrong with

learning a little biblical wisdom in a sermon so we make better choices in life, but there is something better to get on a Sunday at church than a little life wisdom. Best of all is that when we come to worship God, we grow in understanding God and his character. The best thing we can do is grow in understanding God's faithfulness, amazing knowledge, and unlimited power. The more we know God's character, the better we will handle the hard times in life when we don't have God's good gifts to hold onto, when all we have is God. Having God is better than having his gifts.

Our God loves to save the powerless who trust in him by giving victory in the face of defeat.

While Hannah's joy came from knowing God, that is not to say she wasn't thankful that God came to her rescue. In the next verses, we find Hannah focusing in on another aspect of God's character. It is that God loves to rescue those who call out to him in their time of need. God is really good at doing that.

The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. 1 Samuel 2:4-5

According to Hannah, God loves to save his people by reversing the direction of their lives. Our God is a God who loves to come to the rescue and snatch his people from defeat to victory. Don't we see this in story after story in the Bible? The Israelites were in Egypt being forced to make bricks without straw and to throw their newborn male children into the Nile River to die. God came to their rescue by sending Moses and taking them out of Egypt. Abraham and Sarah could not conceive a child. God waited until Sarah's womb was as good as

dead, and then he came to the rescue and enabled her to conceive. God loves to write these rescue stories.

Later in 1 Samuel we will see an example of this when young David goes to war against Goliath, the Philistine giant. God broke the bow of mighty Goliath and strengthened David to defeat him, even though David was only a young boy.

Hannah also said those who were full have hired themselves out for bread yet those who were hungry have ceased from hunger. Hannah's point was that the satisfaction of our needs does not depend on human resources. Our security for the future cannot be measured by our prosperity. The one who holds our future in his hands is God. God is capable of taking away riches in an instant by a crashed stock market or he can give riches in an instant.

Here is the danger. When people get richer, it is easier for them to think less of God and to tell themselves they don't need God. In reality, wealth doesn't provide security for the future. Only God holds the future in his hands. I always think about Steve Jobs and Apple. He was incredibly successful, but he died of cancer. It didn't matter how much money he had, God held his future.

...The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. 1 Samuel 2:5 (ESV)

Here it sounds like Hannah was directly applying God's saving work to herself. There is one obvious problem. While Hannah was a barren woman, it says here God gave the barren women gave birth to seven. The problem is when we get to the end of 1 Samuel 2, it tells us Hannah bore six children. What is happening? Why is the math wrong?

I think the answer is that this is poetry. As you have already seen, just about everything in poetry is symbolic. If you have studied the Bible, you know that seven is a special number. It is symbolic for full or complete. I think this number is not meant to be taken literally. Like the rest of this song, it is meant to be taken poetically. God loves to reverse the fortunes of his people. Even a woman that is barren, through God, can be given a full number of children, many children. A woman who has many children can end up forlorn and alone. God can reverse anything.

Hannah's point was that no matter what we face in life and no matter how impossible the situation seems, if we know the God of the universe, nothing is hopeless. God loves to save his people from hopeless situations. He loves to completely reverse an impossible situation. God loves to save his people.

Isn't this what he did for us through Jesus? Didn't God rescue us from a situation that was hopeless and completely flip things around the other way? With Jesus, we go from fully deserving the lake of fire for all eternity because of our sin to being completely saved and being the most blessed beings in the universe through Jesus. We are adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus. There is nothing we must do besides completely trust in Jesus to save us, and Jesus will save us! Isn't God great at rescuing the helpless who trust in him?

The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. 1 Samuel 2:6 (ESV)

Our God is so powerful that he holds life and death in his hands.

Sometimes we hear that in the Old Testament it doesn't talk about the resurrection. Hannah did! She said God is so great, he can bring dead people

back to life. That is a great reversal. That is a great rescue. That is the good news of the gospel. No matter how far you have run from God, God can save you. The God we worship is so powerful he can bring dead people to life.

The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. 1 Samuel 2:7 (ESV)

Today, if you are financially wealthy, it is not because you made yourself rich. God determines if we will be rich or poor. Poverty and riches are in God's power. God determines the stock market. He determines the wealth in your bank account. God is the one who determines the success of your business. He can give that to us or he can take it all away from us.

He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor... 1 Samuel 2:8 (ESV)

God loves to reverse fortunes. As I thought about lifting up the poor from the dust and making them sit with princes, what comes to mind is the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. He was in the dungeon room one day and after God enabled him to interpret Pharaoh's dream. In one day he went from the dungeon room to second in command of the nation of Egypt. This is the kind of reversal God loves to pull off. This is the kind of rescue God specializes in finishing.

What matters in life is not power, ingenuity, how many connections you have with the right people, or how much money you have in the bank. What matters is your relationship with the God of the universe who knows everything, controls everything, and loves to rescue his people, especially when they are in the darkest places and in the darkest moments calling out to him.

...For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. 1 Samuel 2:8 (ESV)

In Hannah's world, pillars held up buildings. She said God is not just the one who controls everything that is happening on the planet, but our God is so big that he is the one who supports the Earth. The reason Earth hangs in space where it does and orbits the way it does so we do not get too far from the sun and freeze or too close to the sun and burn is because God suspends the planet exactly where he wants it.

He will guard the feet of his faithful ones... 1 Samuel 2:9a (ESV)

Now we are getting to what Hannah wanted us to remember. What matters in this life is not your wealth. It is not your connections. It is not your status. It is your relationship with God. God promises to guard the feet of his faithful ones. God watches out for his children in this world. He cares about us. He answers our prayers, and he always has a good plan for us, even when it is not easy. Wealth isn't our security for the future. Health isn't the security for our future. God is our only security for the future. Only God can raise the dead.

If you don't know God, the other option is that you are wicked. In these verses we see God promises to cut off the wicked in darkness. God will eventually right every wrong. Those who are powerful, those who are evil will not get away with their sin forever. There will be final justice.

I love the way Hannah closed this verse: "For not by might shall a man prevail." Have you learned that lesson? God, and your relationship with him, is what matters. Even if we succeed in climbing to the top of the ladder, unless we

are right with God, all will ultimately be lost, if not in this life, for sure in final judgment in the next life.

At the end of the day, it will not be the strong, powerful, wealthy, famous, and popular who are the winners. It is only the Lord who will bring through those who belong to him, the ones who trust in him.

God's King and Messiah

...but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth... 1 Samuel 2:9b-10 (ESV)

The one thing we do not want to be in this life is an enemy of the true God of the universe. Hannah said that it is guaranteed that they will be broken to pieces by God. God will judge everyone on the earth. There is a time of final judgment for all of us. What matters on that day is our relationship with God today.

Hannah concluded her prayer with a reference to God's king and his promised Messiah.

"...he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed." 1 Samuel 2:10b (ESV)

At this point, Israel had not had a king. Remember, it was a people under the leadership of God. I don't know if Hannah saw something in the Old Testament Scriptures that clued her into her final prophetic lines or if the Holy Spirit inspired her to say these things, but Hannah prophetically promised that God would provide a king to rescue Israel and destroy its enemies. That king was David. If we go to David's poetic song at the end of 2 Samuel, we find him

realizing he was the fulfillment of Hannah's prayer. He was the king sent to rescue God's people.

Hannah prophetically promised God would provide his anointed one --- the Messiah, the Christ --- that would be a king to rescue God's people. That king was Jesus. In these final words Hannah was looking forward to the anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ, that is Jesus. We may wonder if Hannah was prophetically speaking about Jesus in these final words.

When Mary wrote a song celebrating Jesus' birth in the New Testament (Luke 1:46-55), it was similar to Hannah's song of praise about Samuel's birth in the Old Testament. Mary saw herself as a second type of Hannah and as the fulfillment of Hannah's final words in her song of praise.

Conclusion

There are two challenges I give you.

1. Are you following God for who he is or for what he gives you? We see this clearly in Hannah's victory song. Even though she was thanking God for her son, she was more in love with thanking God for his character. Knowing God loved her, heard her prayer, and loves to rescue his people when they call out to him in times of distress was more thrilling to her than her son. When life is hard and God's good gifts are not there to enjoy what will sustain us is having God, which is better than his gifts.
2. God loves to rescue those who trust in him, bringing them from hopelessness to victory. Are you trusting in Jesus to rescue you? The center of her prayer was this same idea repeated again and again. The big question all of us have to answer is, "Have we trusted God to rescue us?"



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