

Sermon on 5 March, 2017

Theme: A great woman of prayer-Hannah

Bible: 1 Samuel 1:10-20; 2:1-7

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Let us pray. Mighty God! Thank you for your grace. Please be with us this morning. Help us to understand your message and apply it into our lives. Help us learn, how one of the Biblical heroes-Hannah: prayed to God and how God answered her prayer. Mighty God! As your servant, please use me as your mediator. Allow me to speak your word with power and confidence. Thank you, Lord, I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Last week, I was talking to you about prayer. Can anybody tell me what prayer is? Prayer is like breathing. Without breathing we cannot survive. Without praying we cannot survive. Prayer is also a communication. It is the communication between God and his people, because we were designed to serve God and we were designed to communicate with God.

From one of the things about prayer in the last sermon, I said that we needed to understand the will of God. Because the men of God would ask the will of God, not the will of themselves. And they prayed for the will of God. God answered their prayers. There was a man with leprosy, who came to Jesus. He asked for his healing. That was the will of God. And, Jesus touched the man and he was healed. In addition, we need to have faith in God. Mark 11:24 says, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Pray to God by faith. Believe that it will be answered by God.

Today, I am going to talk to you about a great woman of prayer-Hannah (not Hannah North, Our youth worker, Hannah in the bible). She is known as a great woman of prayer. Here we will see how she prayed to God and how God answered her prayers.

Now we will go to the story of Hannah. The Bible says that Elkanah had two wives; Hannah and Peninnah. Peninah had children, but Hannah had no children. I was brought up in South Korea. When I was a child, woman, who had no child were ignored. But not today. In the Old Testament, it was known with great importance for woman to give birth to a baby. Because it was common for people to succeed their family legacy and tradition to their descendants. In the Bible, Elkanah needed his descendants, who succeeded his family. He had married Hannah. He loved her and gave many valuables to her, but she had no baby. And thus, Elkanah must have married Peninnah to have children.

When we look at **verse 6, it says, "because the Lord had closed her(Hannah's) womb, her rival(Penniah) kept provoking her in order to irritate her."** We know that Penniah made Hannah angry. And, Hannah must have been so frustrated. We would often be frustrated with so many things. What would you have done when you were having hard times?

What did Hannah do when she was having a hard time?

Verse 10 says, "in bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord." The Bible says that Hannah wept. She was very sad. But she came to God. She prayed to God. Now, we know why Hannah is called a great woman of prayer.

Many of you might have heard about St. Augustine. He was known as one of the great men in church history. Like Apostle Paul, Augustine did lots of great works. He was known as one of the great men of God in history. When he was young, he was addicted to sexuality and would often sleep with prostitutes. He was a failure. However, he had a great woman of prayer named Monica. She was a mother of Augustine. She prayed for

her son days and nights. Her prayer was answered. Augustine came to God and met with Jesus. He later accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. A prayer of mother changed her son's life.

This can be applied to your lives. If you are having a hard time, come to God and pray to him. If you know someone, who are having troubles in their lives, pray for these people. They might be your family members, church members or someone else. Our Lord will be with you. Our Lord will answer your prayers.

Why is Hannah still known as a great woman of prayer? Here we will see how she became a great woman of prayer.

First, Hannah came to God. She prayed to God specifically. Sometimes, we would pray to God, but there was no point. Look at Hannah. She prayed very specifically. Our Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 6:7**, **“when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans.”** Pagans would show up when they prayed. Then, we wonder how we should pray. Let us learn from Hannah. How did she pray? She came to God and prayed in 1 Samuel 1:11, “O Lord Almighty. If you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant,” Hannah prayed specifically. She talked to God how hard she was. She asked for God's help. Hannah continued, “Give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life.” She prayed that she wanted to have a son, then she would give the son to God forever.

What is the point? She asked God for her son. There was a man named Bartimaeus. He was blind. He couldn't see anything with his eyes. What did he really want? He must have wanted to see. Jesus asked what he wanted (Mark 10:51). The man said in verse 51, “I want to see.” Jesus said in verse 52, “Go! your faith has healed you.” Bartimaeus asked for his eyes. He asked for God specifically. It was the will of God and he had faith in God. God answered.

Sometimes, we wonder why God didn't answer our prayers. I still believe that prayer is not the will of us. Prayer is the will of God. Apostle Paul wanted his thorn to be taken out. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” God wanted Paul to serve God in spite of his weakness.

Why is Hannah still known as a great woman of prayer?

Second, Hannah kept on praying. Verse 12 says, “as she kept on praying to the Lord.” **1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “pray continually.”** We need to pray to God continually. How can we pray continually? In the book of Luke 11, we see that Jesus was teaching about prayer. It is called the Lord's prayer. After this, Jesus used a parable. This is a very good example for this. Luke 11:5-6 says, “suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me and I have nothing to set before him.’”

What does this mean? A man came to his friend at night and asked for some bread. What would you do if one of your friends come to your place and ask for some bread at night? Well, you might say, “Hello my friend, are you all right? How can I help you? Do you need bread. Wait, I will give you some. Make yourself at home. I am your friend. Call me anytime. I am happy to help you.” Some might not respond because it is too late or very few might say, “what are you doing. It is 11pm at night. Go home.” Today, in western countries, we don't normally ask a favour at night except during an emergency. Because it is regarded to be not polite. What does the bible say about this? Luke 11:7 says, “don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.”

What would you have done if you had been at the place? Personally, I might not have asked. What does the Bible say? Verse 8 says, “though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” The Bible says that because of man's boldness, he will get up and give him. He must have asked continuously. Prayer is like that. If you need God's help, don't give up. Pray to God continually. God will answer your prayers.

Jesus says in **verse 9, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."** We need to ask God. We need to knock on the door. And the door will be opened to you

As I said last week, my Lord opened the door for me to study my doctoral degree in the U.S.A. When I prayed to God, God didn't answer my prayer straight away. But it took me a long time. With patience and eagerness, I had to pray continually. At last, God opened the door for me. He answered my prayer. God helped me to study there and I learned more about God. I was being trained by him. I made a promise with him that I would use all of those for God and his people.

Why is Hannah still known as a great woman of prayer?

Third, Hannah prayed in her heart. 1 Samuel 1:13 says, "Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard." Hannah prayed with eagerness. While she was having hard times, she didn't give up, but prayed to God in her heart. **Luke 22:44 says, "Jesus prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."** Can you believe this? How was it possible that Jesus' sweat was like drops of blood? Our Lord was praying to God with eagerness. We can learn how our Lord and Hannah prayed to God? Hannah was praying in heart. 1 Samuel 1:13 says, "her lips were moving but her voice was not heard." Praying in our hearts is praying to God in truth.

How do we pray in our hearts? How do we pray to God in truth? A Samaritan woman came to Jesus. She wondered how she could worship God. Jesus said, in **John 4:24, "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."** In the time of Jesus, many Jews believed that worshippers should worship God in Jerusalem. That was the only place for the true worship. The place of worship was very important to the Jewish people. But Jesus said, "true worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." This can be applied to us. When we worship God by prayer, we need to pray to God in truth and in spirit. This is the prayer in our hearts.

Hannah prayed in eagerness, but Eli the priest didn't understand why she prayed like that. 1 Samuel 1:14 says, "how long will you keep on getting drunk?" Hannah was praying to God in heart. But Eli was not quite sure of how she prayed in heart. We would often be frustrated in our Christian lives, because some people might not understand how hard you were. Some Christian family members might not understand your situation. They might challenge your lives in God. What would you have done against them? How could we overcome if we were in this situation? Our Lord is still talking to us, "don't give up! Don't stop. Continue to pray. I will be with you."

Hannah said in verse 15, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring my soul to the Lord." When you would pray to God, your lives still might not be changing or you might continue having a hard time. What would you do if you were in that situation?

Don't be afraid. Come to God. Have confidence in God. He will be with you. He will answer you. Don't stop. Keep praying to God. Our Lord will answer you. Hannah said in verse 16, "I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Hannah continued to pray in faith. God was with her. Finally, Eli understood how hard she was. She said in verse 17, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

Why do you think that Hannah was a great woman of prayer?

What was her response to God? Verse 19 says, "Early the next morning they arose and worshipped before the Lord and they went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her." Verse 20, "so in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him." Samuel means I asked the Lord for him. Hannah prayed to God and God answered. She kept a promise with God. Hannah said in verse 27-28, "I prayed for

this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord.” Hannah asked. God answered. Hannah gave her son to God as she promised

What have you learned so far? First, Hannah came to God and prayed, Second, she continued to pray. She prayed in her faith with God. Third, she prayed to God in heart. It is the prayer of truth and spirit. God answered her prayer. And she kept a promise. She gave her son to serve God for all his life.

After this happened, Hannah continued to pray. She was filled with the Holy Spirit. **1 Samuel 2:6 says, “the Lord bring death and makes alive.”** We would often be afraid about our lives and deaths. Remember that our Lord controls. He has got the key for our lives and deaths. We don’t have to worry about our future. Instead, we are to glorify God and live and work for him.

Verse 7 says, “the Lord sends poverty and wealth,” Our Lord still is in control of our poverty and wealth. A long time ago, I complained about my poverty. I would compare my life to others. I realized I was very unhappy. Later, I knew that I was on the wrong track. However, I understood how God allowed me to experience the poverty and endured hardships in my life. This really helped me to understand others and how I should live and work for God. Since then, I have made my own efforts to do the glory of God in using my gifts and talents for others.

Verse 8 says, “he(God) raises the poor from the dust. And lifts the needy from the ash heap.” I like this verse. Because it gives me the power and strength in God. Due to the grace of God, I have been guided to serve God and his people as a minister. Thankfully, my Lord has allowed me to understand others. At this time, I really realized that I would have to spend much time for God and his people in preaching and teaching about the message of God.

Let us pray. Mighty God! Thank you for being with us this morning. We are so grateful to you for what you have done for us. Today, we learned about, “a great woman of prayer”-Hannah? We learned how she prayed. Also, we learned how God answered her prayers. Thank you for giving us the time and opportunity to learn about this. Mighty God! Help us to live and work for you. Help us to spend our time and energy in preaching and teaching the word of God. Be with us. Thank you, Lord, we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.