

The Story of Samuel and the Power of a Trusting Heart

In 1st Samuel we read the personal history of Samuel—the last Judge of Israel—and witness the beginning of the era of kings among God’s people. We meet Elkanah from Ramathaimzophim in the hill country of Ephraim. He had two wives: Hannah and Peninnah. Although Peninnah bore children, Hannah remained childless. Every year, Elkanah journeyed from his town to Shiloh, the nation’s religious center where the Tabernacle was located, to worship and offer sacrifices to the Lord of Hosts. There, under the care of Eli the high priest and his sons Hophni and Phinehas, the people gathered in celebration.

When it came time for the sacrifice, Elkanah gave portions to Peninnah and her children—but he loved Hannah so dearly that he offered her a double portion, even though God had closed her womb. In this household, the tension was palpable. Peninnah’s constant taunts about Hannah’s barrenness only deepened her sorrow. I’ve learned that trying to meet the needs of two conflicting expectations can create pain and conflict—a reality Hannah knew all too well.

Despite the festive atmosphere at Shiloh, Hannah’s heart was heavy. While others celebrated, she wept silently and refused to eat. Concerned, Elkanah gently asked, “Why are you crying? Why won’t you eat? Am I not better to you than ten sons?” His words remind me that even in our darkest moments, a loving touch can point us back to hope.

After the meal, Hannah went to the temple where Eli sat by a post. In the quiet of that sacred place, overwhelmed by grief yet clinging to hope, she poured out her soul before the Lord. With tears streaming down her face, she made a solemn vow:

“O Lord, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your servant, and remember me, and not forget Your servant, but will give to Your servant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life; and no razor shall come upon his head.”(1 Samuel 1:11 NKJV)

I’ve experienced moments when I cried out to God with a desperate heart, wondering why answers seemed delayed. Like Hannah, I know what it’s like to ask, “Lord, why haven’t You answered?” Yet, God’s delay isn’t neglect—it’s His way of aligning our hearts with His perfect plan. As the Bible reminds us:

“The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward Him.”(2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV)

God was not only listening to Hannah’s plea; He was gently shaping her heart, drawing her closer to His purpose. In that moment, Hannah’s pain transformed into a deep, unwavering commitment: if God would grant her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord for his entire life.

Then something beautiful happened. As Hannah continued her earnest prayer, Eli mistakenly thought she was intoxicated because he could not hear her words over her quiet sobs. When he confronted her, she replied:

“No, my lord, I am a woman of deep sorrow; I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not count Your handmaid as a daughter of disobedience...” (1st Samuel 1:13 NKJV)

Humbled and encouraged by Eli’s blessing—***“Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you Your petition”***—Hannah’s sorrow began to lift. She started eating and her countenance changed. I know how hard it can be to shift from despair to hope; yet, when we truly believe God’s promises, our very attitude is transformed. We choose to rejoice even before the miracle appears.

In due time, the Lord remembered Hannah. She conceived and bore a son, naming him Samuel, which means “asked of God.” Elkanah, along with all his household, continued to offer yearly sacrifices. However, Hannah held back until Samuel was weaned, so she could later bring him to live in the house of the Lord. When the time was right, she brought young Samuel to Shiloh with a few bullocks, a bushel of flour, and a bottle of wine, and presented him to Eli by saying:

“My lord, as Your soul lives, I am the woman who stood here in your presence, pouring out my soul to the LORD. And now, behold, this child is the one given to me by the LORD.” (1st Samuel 1:27–28 NKJV)

This act of dedication is more than a historical note—it speaks to each of us today. It reminds us that when we earnestly seek God, even in our deepest pain, He hears us. Our lives—and even our children—are precious gifts to be nurtured for His purposes.

May this story inspire us to trust in God’s timing and to embrace His transforming power. Let us remember that faith means acting as though we have already received His promise, allowing hope to change our outlook even in hardship. And as we move forward, let us also dedicate our lives and the lives of our loved ones to the Lord, confident that He is faithful, just, and ever-present.

May you be encouraged this week to trust God in every season—knowing that when your heart is fully aligned with His will, He transforms sorrow into joy and uncertainty into a testimony of His grace.