

# (1 Samuel) Blessings to the Barren

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon explores the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel, highlighting her struggles with barrenness and her profound faith in God through prayer and dedication.*

**Duration:** 36:02

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:24, 1 Samuel 1:18, Matthew 6:24

**Topics:** "Biblical Characters", "Faith And Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the book of 1 Samuel and expresses their excitement about studying it. They highlight the authenticity of the Bible compared to movies, novels, and television shows, emphasizing that the characters and events in the Bible are relatable and real. The speaker then begins to delve into the first chapter of 1 Samuel, introducing the main characters, Elkanah, Hannah, and Penaniah. They also discuss the use of human language to describe God's actions and the significance of feasts and celebrations in the Bible.

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## Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 1. Very exciting morning. If you need a Bible, raise up your hand and one of our ushers will bring one to you. But it's exciting for me because we're starting in a new book of the Bible, 1 Samuel.

And if I could just say, this is one of my favorite books in the whole Bible. You are going to feel it's one of your favorites, too, by the time we get through it. And it starts off.

And I think one of the most marvelous things about the Bible is how real it is. You know, you go to a movie today and it's so fake, you know, everything that happens, the way people interact with each other, the scenes, the action scenes, you know, you've got the hero who can never get shot and you get the bad guy who can never shoot anybody and you got all these things going on. And it's also unbelievable in the same way with novels and television shows and all of that.

But when you read the Bible, it's real. It's real people. As we go through this first chapter of this book of 1 Samuel, you're going to look at these people.

You're going to say, these people are real. They're just like me. They're just like people I know.

And that's a marvelous thing about the Bible. It's not a Hollywood script, although I'll tell you, it'd make a lot more entertaining movies than anything that's being put out today. But it's at the same time, it's just so real.

It's so powerful because it's true. So let's jump right in here. First Samuel, chapter one, verse one.

Now, there was a certain man of Ramathem Zophim of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jehoram, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zeph and Ephraimite. And he had two wives. The name of one was Hannah and the name of the other was Penaniah.

And Penaniah had children, but Hannah had no children. Well, this whole account and the whole book of 1 Samuel begins the way that so much of God's word and God's work begins with a certain man. Isn't that how God does a work when he determines to do one? God doesn't need people to do his work or to accomplish his purpose.

God's pretty capable on all on his own. Don't you agree? And God has thousands of angels at his disposal that he can dispatch to do whatever he wants done at any particular time. Yet, even though God can do it himself, even though God could enlist the angels, God uses men and women who are available and have a willing heart to accomplish his work.

And so this story begins like so many story begins, a certain man that God is going to call to be used of him in a particular situation, a certain man at a certain time in a certain place. These were critical times for the nation of Israel. And we'll talk more in coming weeks just about how critical it was and what God was doing at this time.

But friends, this was a real man at a real time. And can I say he had real problems? You can see he had real problems. He had two wives versus one and two.

A lot of people question the whole thing in the Bible, we read in the Old Testament from time to time, there are men who practice polygamy or or had more than one wife. And some people wonder, well, I mean, could this be permitted by God today? And we say plainly and simply, no, Jesus said very plainly that we couldn't have two wives that that God condemns polygamy. We find this in several places.

To me, the most notable one is where Jesus condemned polygamy by saying no man can serve two masters. That's a little Bible joke from the preacher there. But actually, Jesus said that God's whole purpose in marriage is to bring one man and one woman together in what he called a one flesh relationship.

And God said Jesus said that God had ordained this from the beginning, that it should be so. And even though God did allow this to happen in the Old Testament, it's a very interesting phenomenon. Wherever we see a polygamous family in the Old Testament, it's a family that's having problems.

You will never find a happy family life and a polygamous family in the Old Testament. And this is no exception. Sure, you have two wives, one named Hannah, one named Penaniah.

And we can surmise in verse two that Hannah was the first wife because she's the first one mentioned. And then at some later time, he married this gal, Penaniah. Now, why? Well, perhaps it was because it says Hannah had no children.

She was barren. We can very well imagine that Elkanah married this woman, Hannah, and he loved her, but she could provide him with no children. And Francis was very painful to the heart of Elkanah because he needed to have a descendant to pass on his inheritance, his progeny to.

It was very important. And because it was permitted, he added another wife and she could provide him with children. You can see already how there's going to be a problem in this household, can't you? Look at verse three.

This man went up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts and Shiloh. Also, the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. We're going to find out more about these fellows in coming weeks.

They were not good characters. But going on here in verse four, it said, And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Penaniah, his wife, and to all his sons and daughters. But to Hannah, he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb.

Now, can you see the foundations for some problems in this family? You've got a husband who is dividing his affections. You've got one that he loves more than the other, but you've got the other who has an advantage over the one that he loves more because she has given the husband children, while the one that he loves more has not. Now, look at the problems that is shown here in verse six, and her rival also provoked her severely to make her miserable because the Lord had closed her womb.

So it was year by year when she went up to the house of the Lord that she provoked her. Therefore, she wept and did not eat. Friends, there was perhaps no greater shame for a woman in Old Testament times than to be barren.

She felt that she had let down herself. She felt that she had let down her husband. She felt that she had let down her God by being barren.

It was regarded as being a curse. And even though she had the love of her husband expressed by the double portion, you see, that's what they would do when they would go to the tabernacle yearly to feast. This man, Elkanah, was a godly man because he was obeying the law of God by taking his family up to the tabernacle every year in the celebration of the feast.

Now, at this time, the tabernacle was at a place called Shiloh, and you can go to Shiloh today. Our last visit to Israel, I went there and what an incredible place it is because you can see the rock foundation outlines of the courtyard of the very place where the tabernacle of God stood in the days of Shiloh. I'm here to tell you, I stood on the same ground that Hannah and Elkanah and Eli and Ben and I would have stood on where the tabernacle was in Shiloh.

And it's an awesome thing to be there. But there they were gathered together at this place and they would come and bring a sacrifice. Now, it wasn't a sacrifice of sin.

You should know that in the Old Testament, there were several different types of sacrifice that a person could offer, and not all of them were sacrifices for sin. This would have been a peace offering or a fellowship offering. And what you would have done at the peace offering or the fellowship offering is you would have given a portion of the animal unto the Lord and burnt it on the altar before him.

A portion of the animal would have gone to the priest as sort of a way to support the priesthood. And with the other portion of the animal, well, you know what you did with it? You had a barbecue and you got together your whole family right there at the at the tabernacle or at the temple and you had a great big feast. It was like a Thanksgiving feast for your whole family.

The whole family looked forward to it every year. And it was a time of joy and excitement, all having a fellowship meal with the Lord. But you know what it's like in Thanksgiving in some of our families.

There's always that relative there who's trying to stir things up and, you know, looking for a way to kind of attack one another. And that's how it was with Penaniah and Hannah. Penaniah felt that this was the beautiful time just when their husband Elkanah was showing Hannah the favor of the double portion.

Penaniah said, well, now it's time for me to play up my role as the mother in this family. And I'll brag about my kids and I'll get out the pictures and I'll show them the report cards and all that business and make Hannah so jealous. And that's exactly what she did to the point where Hannah was so grieved that even when this double portion, this portion of honor, this portion of recognition, the symbol of her husband's love, even when that was put before her, she was so miserable, so sick that she couldn't eat it.

There she was at the house of God, a feast set before her, and she couldn't enjoy it because of family conflict in the home. Does that ring true to anybody here? I mean, I don't know about your exact circumstances about coming to church this morning, but, you know, you might have heard about this happening with somebody sometime. But you drive to church and well, there you are with your wife and your kids and you're just arguing like cats and dogs.

It's like all this conflict at the home and it makes it tough for you to come and enjoy what the Lord has to give for you here at church. You know, you drive into church and you're practically screaming at each other, the kids or whatever. You get out and you feel like slamming the car door, but you can't do that because, you know, you're spiritual now, you're at church.

And so you close the car door a little more gently and you do that great thing that we all know how to do. You put on that church smile, you know, everything's fine. So somebody says, Hi, how are you doing? Great, great.

Everything's fine. And you go and you sit down and everybody else is there and the Lord just spreads out a feast before you that morning. There it is.

The words there, the worship there is there and prayer is there and your brothers and sisters are there. It's like the Lord has spread out a feast before you, a double portion. And you can't enjoy any of it.

You're just like Hannah here. It seems like you weep and you do not eat. You're crying on the inside, even though you might have a nice church smile on the outside.

And you can't enjoy any of it. And friends, the worst part about all this, or I shouldn't say the worst part, but maybe the most mystifying part is the phrase you see repeated there in verses five and six with Hannah's troubles. Did you see that? Don't mark that out of your Bible where it says that the Lord closed her womb.

Friends, I want you to tell you that even though it was so painful to Hannah that she was barren, that God had a purpose in it. Sometimes we think that if we're really walking right with the Lord, if we're really going according to his purpose, that everything's going to be easy, everything's going to be nice and comfortable

in our life. But friends, God allowed this pain to come into the life of Hannah for a reason.

He had a purpose. He had a plan that he wanted to fulfill. And it could only come about as he allowed this pain to come into her life.

And I'm sure she prayed many times before, Lord, give me children. Lord, give me children. But God wanted to bring her to a remarkable place that we're going to see later on in this chapter.

And I can't figure out all of God's working. I can't figure out all of his plan, but he never asked me to figure it out. Why is it? Why is it that Penaniah, who seems to be of a bad character, why should she be blessed with children? While Hannah, who seems to be a more godly woman, is cursed with barrenness? I don't know.

Yet in God's whole plan, it makes sense. And might I say that a lot of times the sense of God's plan is only seen once it's accomplished. A lot of times we don't see it when we're in the midst of it.

So all of this drove Hannah to a place where she was going to cry out to God. But there was one more burden sort of put on her back. Look at verse eight.

Then Elkanah, her husband, said to her, now this is the marvelous, sensitive way that husbands talk to their wives when they're in a place of pain. Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons? Well, you know, that's the way husbands talk to their wives, isn't it? Come on. What's wrong? Everything's OK.

Look, you know, I can do everything for you. And there's poor Hannah, you know, tears rolling down her face because she's so upset over the way that Penaniah is treating her. She can't receive the good things that are in front of her, the feast set before.

And she's in this place and she can't do anything. And then all of a sudden here, it just comes about where where her husband comes up and he says, look, why is it so bad? Aren't I everything for you? Like a man, she was crying before and now she really, really starts with it because my husband doesn't even understand me. He doesn't even understand that he's a great husband.

He loves me. He's a good man, but he can't be everything for me. He can't be a child for me.

He can't provide that he can't be that for me. And so there's just a need that he can't satisfy. And so here's Hannah, burden after burden, problem after problem put upon her shoulders.

And then look at verse nine. So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now, Eli, the priest, was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord, and she was in bitterness of soul and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.

Hannah was in bitterness of soul and in great anguish, but she did the right thing. Do you know what she did? She took those bitter, those anguished feelings and she took them to the Lord. And she said, Lord, I want you to do something about it.

You know, most everybody knows a time of bitterness of soul and great anguish at some time in their lives. I read about a man named Thomas Sutherland. He was a hostage in Lebanon for many years, just held in a basement, sometimes chained, sometimes blindfolded, always in isolation or just in the company of a few other people, never knowing if he'd ever see his family again.

And in the midst of that kind of deprivation, he says, quote, God, I prayed so many times and I prayed so hard, so hard and nothing happened. After thinking about it deeply, I'm not so sure there is a God. You know, a lot of people are driven to that kind of place of extremity.

They they're in a place where they just don't know if it's real anymore. And I think Hannah had the door open to her where she could have walked through that door and said, I don't even know if there is a God. I've prayed for children before, but where are they? God, where are you? I'm in bitterness of soul and great anguish.

Hannah had a lot of problems. Her husband's heart was divided. Her home, it should have been a place of refuge from trials, but instead it was a place where trials came to her.

Her hope had been disappointed. She had been misunderstood by her husband. Yet in all of those things, Hannah did the right thing.

Instead of turning away from God, she wept, she prayed, she committed the whole situation to God. Friends, I'm here to tell you that the two greatest weapons of the church are its tears and its prayers. And Hannah was using these in the right way.

So she began to pray and look at her prayer in verse 11. Then she made a vow and she said, oh, Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant, remember me and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant 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.

Now, you see that prayer, right? And I think you may recognize that kind of prayer, because on the surface, it seems like it's one of those. Well, what should we call it? But a deal making prayer with God, you know, you pray that kind of prayer before. Lord, if you just let me win the lottery, I'll give you half, you know, those deal making prayers with God, right? Lord, if you just give me that brand new car, I'll drive people to church every Sunday, you know, that kind of prayer.

Well, what about it? Is this that kind of prayer? Well, not really. I think we need to understand something that's a little deeper than just what you might see just by a quick reading of the text. Hannah is dedicating the child that she wants God to give her to the Lord.

But I want you to see that there's a very interesting dynamic happening with this dedication, because this child already belonged to God. Let me explain how. First of all, the child belonged to God because he would have been a child of Israel, a Jewish child, and every child that was born into a Jewish home in the ancient world was dedicated to God with a special sacrifice after they were born.

They were dedicated. So the child was already dedicated to God. Secondly, Elkanah, the man was a Levite.

We know this from comparing scripture with scripture in First Chronicles, chapter six. And I'm not going to go into the details. Just take my word on it.

He was a Levite. That means the Levites were the special priestly tribe of Israel. And so any male child born from Elkanah would have been a priest that would have made him specially dedicated unto God.

Between his 30th and his 50th year, the Levite would have been dedicated to the service of the Lord. That's the dynamic going on here. Whatever male child would be born from Elkanah would already be dedicated to God.

Then why is Elkanah dedicating him? Because she is talking about a deeper and a more complete dedication than what was already known. Let me explain how. Did you see verse 11? She wants to dedicate him to the Lord in two ways.

First of all, she says, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life. Friends, a Levite was dedicated to the Lord between his 30th and his 50th year. Hannah says, that's not good enough.

This boy is going to be yours, Lord, every day of his life. I'm going to give him to you in a deeper and in a stronger way. Yes, he's dedicated to you, but I'm going to do it again in a deeper and a stronger way.

That's more than just making a deal with God. And then she says, very interestingly, at the end of verse 11, and no razor shall come upon his head. And you think, what's so special about that? What she's vowing never to give him a haircut.

I don't understand this. What Hannah is doing is she's making reference to an Old Testament ceremony called the vow of a Nazarite. And the vow of a Nazarite involved three things.

First of all, if you were to take the vow of a Nazarite, you say, I will never eat or excuse me, at least during the time of the vow, I will not eat during my vow anything from a grapevine. I won't drink wine. I won't eat raisins.

I won't eat grapes. I won't have anything to do with that. I am not going to do that because the grapevine, because it produced wine, spoke of the pleasures of life.

And the Nazarite said, I'm going to separate myself from the normal pleasures of life so that I can serve God in a more dedicated way. That was the first thing. Nothing from the grapevine.

Second thing that a Nazarite would do is he'd say during the days of my vow, I will not go near a dead body. I won't go to a funeral. I won't touch a dead body.

I won't have anything to do with the dead body because death is a consequence of sin. And I want to show that I'm especially dedicated to God and separated from anything that's touching sin at all. And then the third thing that a Nazarite would do is he would not cut his or her, a female could take the vow of a Nazarite as well, he would not cut his hair during the time of the vow.

And he would say, this is my public way of demonstrating that I have taken the vow of a Nazarite. Everybody will know it because of my unkept hair. Well, the interesting thing about it was that typically the vow of a Nazarite was taken for a period of time, 30, 60, 90 days, maybe if you're really spiritual, a year.

Hannah says not only will this boy be a Nazarite, he will be a Nazarite his entire life. God, I'm dedicating him to you in a deeper and in a stronger way. Friends, let me just nail this point home to you.

This boy would have been dedicated to God no matter what. But what Hannah is talking about is a deeper and a more intimate dedication in the same way your life may be dedicated to God right now. I bet probably everyone here would say, yeah, my life's dedicated to God.

I'm here, aren't I? Why else would I be coming to church if my life wasn't dedicated to God? But I want you to ask yourself if God isn't speaking to your heart this morning about a deeper and a greater dedication to him. Maybe that's why he has allowed a bitter circumstance or some measure of anguish of heart to come into your life, to draw you into a deeper dedication to him. It would have been easy for Hannah to say, I don't need to dedicate my child to the Lord.

He's already dedicated to the Lord, just as it may be easy for some of us to say the same thing. But friends, God may be trying to draw out of you just what he drew out of Hannah, a deeper and a greater dedication. So let's see what happens here, verse 12, and it happened as she continued praying before the Lord that Eli watched her mouth.

Now, again, Eli's the high priest and he's just sitting around checking out things and he sees this woman praying. Notice verse 13. It says now Hannah spoke in her heart, not excuse me, she spoke in her heart.

Only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, how long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you.

Now, I think this is very interesting on a couple of different levels. First of all, it shows us that we do not have to make our prayers vocal for God to hear us. God hears us when we pray in our hearts.

Now, it's not wrong to pray vocally. When I pray, most of the time I pray vocally. Do you know why? Not because God won't hear me otherwise, but because it just helps me to keep focused and pay attention.

I'm sure this doesn't happen to any of you, but to me sometimes there I am late at night, you know, I have a time of prayer now. And so I just kind of lay down on my bed and I say, Lord, you know, I don't need to vocalize my prayer. I'll just pray to you in my heart and I'll just talk to you, Lord, in my heart.

And so I start doing that. And then, you know, it's just a few moments until the Lord's going to say anything to me. You better speak in a dream because I'm out cold.

But if I'll speak my prayers audibly, it just helps me to keep focus and attention. It's not for God's benefit. It's for my benefit.

Now, that's interesting to see that Hannah prayed silently. The other thing that's interesting about this is it shows us that the spiritual condition of Israel was very low at this time. I think, David, how does this text show us that the spiritual condition of Israel was low at this time? Well, for the high priest to look at a woman praying and I'm sure tears are rolling down her cheeks, I'm sure she's maybe gesturing, maybe being emphatic as she prays.

But for the high priest to say, there's another drunk woman at the tabernacle shows, listen, things aren't very spiritual in Israel at this time. I mean, it's kind of a far conclusion to jump to unless this was happening around the tabernacle. And you can see people get together for the barbecue, for the feast, and some have too much to drink.

And so Eli's reaction when he sees Hannah praying is, there's another one lady, get off the sauce, go sleep it off and then come back and worship the Lord. So that's what he says. But look at Hannah's response here in verse 15.

And Hannah answered and said, no, my Lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Oh, I love that.

Do you hear what it says? She poured out her soul before the Lord. Now, back in verse 10, it says that she was in bitterness of soul and she prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. There she is.

Her soul is filled with bitterness. Her soul is filled with anguish. So what does she do? She pours out her soul before the Lord.

Isn't that what the Lord wants you to do and me to do when we're in bitterness of soul and anguish? Pour it out before him. You know, that bitterness, that anguish, it's like acid. And as you try to hold it in your soul and keep it bottled up in there, I'll just eat away at your soul and make it ragged and burning and just a mess.

What does God want you to do? He says, pour it out before me. Don't hold it in, pour it out. And this is what she said.

I poured out my soul before the Lord. Going on now, she says, verse 16, do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now. Then Eli answered and said, go in peace and the God of Israel grant your petition, which you have asked of him.

Oh, Eli shows himself well here. He says, listen, I'm sorry, lady. I jumped to conclusions.

May God give you what you have prayed. Now, verse 18 just blows my mind. Look at what she says.

And she said, let your maidservant find favor in your sight. That's a Hebrew way of saying, amen, I receive it. And it's like saying, yes, I'll take that.

And notice what it says at the end of verse 18. This is what's mind blowing. So the woman went her way and ate and her face was no longer sad.

Do you realize what that says? Let me ask you a question. Verse 18, was Hannah pregnant? No, but she was still praising God because she believed God's promise. Now, let me just be very honest, some of us are not like that.

Some of us cannot believe God's promise. When God promises us something good, when God promises to meet our needs, sometimes we're like, you know what? Until I have it in my hand, I'm not going to change my heart. But you know what Hannah said? She said, listen, God gave me a promise that's good enough for me.

She didn't have to wait for the pregnancy test to come back. She didn't have to wait to see whether it's blue or red or whatever it is to show that you pray. Hey, listen, God promised it.

I'll take it. Thank you, God. I receive it.

And her whole countenance changed. Isn't that glorious? Isn't that the way God wants us to be? To receive his word with faith and to believe his promise. So going on here, verse 19 almost gets better here, where it says then they arose early in the morning and worship before the Lord.

She wasn't pregnant yet, but she could still worship because she believed God's word. Going on now, verse 19, it says they returned and came to their house at Rama and Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her. Now, before I go on, let me just say something about the Lord remembering Hannah.

Sometimes that trips up people. They think, well, you know what? Did God forget about her before? There was God in heaven. Whoa, Hannah.

Oh, I forgot. Well, I should have put that on my day timer. OK, well, now I remember.

I'll help you out now. No, no, no. That's not what it's talking about at all.

But when it's using this phrase, the Lord remembered her. It's using and I'm going to try to impress you with a fancy word. It's using an anthropomorphism.

That's pretty fancy word, isn't it? Let me tell you what it means. It's using a human figure of speech and applying it to God. In other words, God is beyond us, folks.

He's got his own vocabulary to describe his own workings and his own actions and his own way of thinking. But the problem is that God's vocabulary, it's beyond us. So sometimes we have to describe God's workings in human terms that don't exactly describe what's going on.

But it comes as close as we can. And so it says he remembered her. We do the same thing when we talk about our pets.

We look at our dogs and we say he's so happy or he's so sad. And you don't know if that dog's happy or sad. You just say, who knows? Maybe the dog's miserable and you're saying he's happy.

Maybe the dog's feeling great. And you're saying they're sad. You don't really know.

But you're just doing the best you can, assigning a human characteristic to something that's not human. Well, that's what's happening here when it says that the Lord remembered, because that's how Hannah felt that God remembered her. Verse 20, so it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son and called his name Samuel, saying, because I have asked for him from the Lord.

Friends, this man, Samuel, you're going to love Samuel. Samuel is one of the greatest men of God in the whole Bible. Samuel was the last judge and the first prophet, one of the most pivotal men that God has ever used in the Bible.

You're going to like this man, Samuel. And it's glorious to see what a great beginning God gave him. Verse 21, and the man Elkanah and his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow.

But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, I will not go up until the child is weaned. Then I will take him that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, do what seems best to you.

Only wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish his word. So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

Now, in those days, it was customary to nurse a child for two or three years. And I'm sure Hannah took the outside figure of what was socially acceptable at the time, because she wanted that boy with her as long as she could. But there came a day when that time was up and that she had to take that child unto the Lord.

And that's exactly what she does here in verse 24. Now, when she had weaned him, she took him up with her with three bulls, one ephah flour and a skin of wine and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. And the child was young and they slaughtered a bull and brought the child to Eli.

And she said, Oh, my Lord, as your soul lives, my Lord, I am the woman who stood by you here praying to the Lord. For this child, I prayed and the Lord has granted me my petition, which I have asked of him. Therefore, I also have lent him to the Lord.

As long as he lives, he shall be lent to the Lord. So they worship the Lord there. Isn't it glorious? Isn't it glorious how obedient Hannah was? You know, it's an easy thing to make a promise to God, isn't it? It's harder to follow through on it.

She followed through on it. She said, Lord, you give me a child and I'm going to give him back to you in a unique way, in a special way, in a deeper and a greater way. I'm going to dedicate him to you.

And she followed through on that when the Lord gave her the child. Now, here's something else I want you to see. When she brought the child to Eli, she brought him and said, I've lent him to the Lord.

Now, we might get confused by that. You might think, wait a minute, wait a minute, it's not like the child belongs to Hannah and she's just lending him to God. I think it would be better to translate the original language here.

She gave him to the Lord. And as long as he lives, he shall be given to the Lord. And the original language will allow that kind of translation.

Because, friends, the idea isn't that we own our children and we lend them to God. He owns our children and he lends them to us. Parents, you don't own your kids.

Your kids belong to God and he has loaned you those kids. He's given you those kids as a sacred trust for you to raise them in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. They're just on loan.

And so do the very best you can with them in the years that you have them, because God's going to want them back. And you've got to be able to release your children to do whatever the Lord wants them to do. Maybe God wants your child to go on to be a missionary far off across the other side of the world.

And it may mean that you don't see your child or you don't see your grandkids for years and years and years. And that's a sacrifice, isn't it? But maybe that's what God wants you to do, because your children don't belong to you. They belong to the Lord.

All right, last thing, verse 28. So they worshipped the Lord there. Do you think that you could really worship God on the day that you left your son behind at the tabernacle? And knew that you would only visit him occasionally from then on? Friends, if Hannah was crying on the day that she made that great prayer to God, I'm sure she was crying all the more the day that she left little Samuel at the tabernacle door.

But with all of that, she could still worship God. You know, sometimes we base worship too much on our feelings and we only worship God when we feel like worshipping him. You know, everything's going great.

Yeah, let's go and worship the Lord. Isn't it great? But friends, God says to us in Hebrews chapter 13 that we should bring to him a sacrifice of praise. And I think some of the purest, some of the most glorious worship that we ever bring before God is worship that comes out of pain.

Worship that comes out of the difficulty of laying down our lives before him. And friends, that's worship that God is well pleased with. And I think that's what we should be doing.

So maybe God is calling from you this morning, a deeper and a greater dedication, maybe in a general sense in your life, maybe in one specific place where he's been speaking to your heart very strongly, as I've been speaking this morning. But can I just ask you, as you give that area to the Lord that he's calling you to give to you, do it with worship, worship him as you do it. He'll be well honored by that sacrifice of praise.

Father, we know that just like Hannah, just like Samuel, that you want everything in our life to be dedicated to you. And I know, Lord, that there's some sense in a general way that probably everybody in this room has dedicated themselves to you. But, Lord, you also ask for a deeper and a greater dedication.

So we humbly come before you and ask that you help us to offer that to you. And we ask God that as we do it, and even when it hurts to do that, that we'd be able to worship you. We cry out before you, God, and ask you to help us to follow you in this great godly way that Hannah did.

That even when we have bitterness of soul and anguish in our heart, that we can offer it before you and pour out our soul. Thank you, Lord, for receiving it in Jesus' name.

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