



REDEMPTION STUDY #6

Hang On, God Will Answer

The redemption of Hannah

THE STORY

1 Samuel 1:1-8

Now there was a man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

³ Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of armies in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there.

⁴ When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; ⁵ but to Hannah he would give a double portion, because he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ Her rival, moreover, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷ And it happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, that she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Then Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat, and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

When I was young, and playing a lot of sports, there was no, what we call today "Trash talk". It was just considered unsportsmanlike. My coaches would have pulled someone from the game if they acted in such a way. Today things are different. I have seen and heard this type of thing happening from kids sports all the way up to the pros.

Hannah's story is a story of redemption and overcoming. She had to overcome the continual "trash talking" of her day. Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah. Her husband loved her very much and it is interesting that nowhere in the scriptures does it say anything about if he loved his other wife, Peninnah. However, Peninnah was supplying Elkanah with children and he tolerated her and her treatment of Hannah. Peninnah was a trash talker and would have fit into today's sporting world.



HOW DID HANNA RESPOND TO HER SITUATION

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) The reason for her overwhelming sorrow

I think from the scriptures we can assume that Peninnah's mistreatment of Hannah stemmed from the fact that their husband loved Hannah far more than he loved her. Whatever the reason, Hannah was distressed and sorrowful over not being able to have children and the mistreatment by her husband's other wife.

So we know Hannah for her deep sorrow. She had longed for a son for many years, but she couldn't have children. We know her for her deep faithfulness. Hannah prayed continually and never gave up hope that God would hear her prayer. We know her for her unthinkable sacrifice. We also know her for her prayer, that was so deep and from the heart that the priest thought she was drunk.

2) Hanna was in good company

Hannah isn't the first woman that was barren to be written about in the Bible. Sarah laughed at the angel's proclamation that God would give her a child. (Genesis 18:12) "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?" Sarah doubted to the point of giving her husband her maid to sleep with and provide him a son. She didn't rely on God and His words brought by the angel. What a sad thing, when God sends a messenger directly to His people and they don't believe... Then again, He sent His own Son to come and proclaim that He had come to overcome sin and hell, and very few believed.

Rebekah married Isaac when he was 40 years old. She was unable to have children and Isaac prayed for 20 years on her behalf that God would supply a son. Rebekah conceived and was going to have twins. She struggled during pregnancy and she questioned, "If it is so, why am I in this *condition*?" (Genesis 25:22) as her twins struggled in the womb. She questioned God.

Rachel gave the responsibility to her husband for her inability to have children. His other wife, Rachel's sister Leah, was providing children for Jacob, so it wasn't his fault that she was not getting pregnant. Like Sarah, Rachel gave her husband her servant as another wife so that she could have children by her. Instead of waiting on the Lord they took matter into their own hands.

Hannah is one of the most recognizable women in Scripture for all these reasons. Many of us remember her story for her deep anguish over not being a mother. We all most likely recall her time at the temple, taking her request to God in powerful prayer. And what mom wouldn't be impacted by Hannah's bold move – leaving her little blessing at the temple to be raised by Eli the priest?



Hannah's life had significant moments that stand out, but there are other facts about her we often overlook. Are you wondering if there's more to Hannah's story than you thought? Here are 5 things you may not know about Hannah in the Bible.

3) Hannah knew how to respond with grace, or not respond at all.

Hannah showed unmatched restraint with her words. She not only knew the right things to say, but also when to say nothing. For years Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, ridiculed Hannah for her infertility. Yet instead of responding to her tormentor, she kept her mouth shut.

During one of the family's annual trips to the tabernacle, Hannah had enough of the ridicule. She didn't lash out at Peninnah, but she knew it was time to do something. She left the dinner table and went straight to God with her plea. Her character was tested when Eli accused her of being drunk. And once again Hannah demonstrated grace and humility through her words.

Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation" (1 Samuel 1:16). By describing herself as Eli's servant, she acknowledged his position of authority. When she could have easily mouthed back at him, she chose to display proper respect.

4) Eli the priest asked God to bless Hannah with a child more than once.

Once Hannah explained herself to Eli, his heart softened. He then reassured her of God's intention to answer her prayer for a son. But that was just the last time Eli went to God on Hannah's behalf.

Eli was right. God answered her prayer. But the story didn't end when Hannah gave birth to Samuel. It didn't end when she took him to the temple either. Each year Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah again, asking God to give them more children (5) because of her sacrifice.

"Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, 'May the Lord give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the Lord'" (1 Samuel 2:20).



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US

I've got a friend that is a planner. He and his wife have saved and planned since we met them 35 years ago. If he wants a fishing boat, he makes a plan and begins a regimented step by step process on getting that boat. It might take him 5 years, but whatever happens, short of death, he is going to make his plan happen.

Earlier this summer this friend came to me and said, "It feels like my prayers are not getting to God". He's been waiting and waiting for God's answers and even stressing as he doesn't see any movement. We talked for a while and I tried to reassure him that God certainly was hearing his prayers, if his heart and life were in alignment with God's. He knew deep down that God had a plan and like my friend, God would see it through. It was just really difficult for him to wait on God this past year.

If you are in a season where God has you waiting, I have a few suggestions that may make the wait easier and maybe even a little joyful. Remember what James said ²"Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

I attempted to give my friend confidence in the fact that waiting on God's plans sometimes requires a lot of patience and faith. It's in the waiting that our faith is forged in the fires of trials. In the waiting, we discover that God's in charge and we're nothing on our own. It's also true that waiting is hard, but the wait has a purpose. Hannah was a great example of pain in waiting at times.

God is never accidental; Everything he does has a purpose. Quite often the wait is for God is likely to align other pieces of His plan. Sometimes the wait is for God to align the pieces of our own heart to fit that plan. As much as we want to move forward immediately; sometimes God knows that we're just not ready for the plan to be complete. He knows that we have more to learn or more to grow.

4 Ways to Be Patient Waiting On God's Timing

1) Do a lot of praying

The best way to find more patience while you wait is to pray... CONTINUALLY. Before you worry, before you Go to God in prayer first and let prayer be your rock and your guide.

- Continually pray for patience and stamina through the time of waiting.
- Continually pray for God to show you His plan so you submit to Him.
- Continually pray for your heart to be open to the work God's through this time.
- Continually pray for a time of transformation and renewal through your waiting.

We all find that it's not easy to go remain in earnest prayer when you're waiting and frustrated, but as you remain steadfast in Him through prayer, we'll find the waiting becomes much easier.



Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

2) Do a lot of reading of Your Bible

Stay in scripture daily, but especially in seasons of waiting on the Lord to reveal His plan. God is preparing you for whatever it is that He is having you wait on. Staying in the scriptures keeps you grounded in God's plans and promises. While you're in that season of waiting, daily reminders of God's faithfulness will keep you heading in the right direction. Reading of times where God reveals His power and plans, as in the case of Esther, will fill you with hope, joy and understanding of how God is at work.

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

3) Allow God to work through the Process

It can take a lot of time to get through the process of change in our lives and hearts. It may take far more time than we expect when God is working a change in your life.

Don't fight against God, instead allow Him to work things out in His time and plans. We must surrender our will to His to gain full understanding of how He is working. Submitting to God's timeline and process can be hard. We live in an instant gratification society. Let go of your attempts to control and plan your way out and allow God to lead.

Entrust your ways to the Lord. trust him, and he will act on your behalf. He will make your righteousness shine like a light, your just cause like the noonday sun. Surrender yourself to the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Do not be preoccupied with an evildoer who succeeds in his way when he carries out his schemes. Let go of anger, and leave rage behind. Do not be preoccupied. It only leads to evil.
(Psalm 37:5-8)

4) Focus on the Blessings

Above all, try to find joy and blessing in your time of waiting and what God is doing in and through you. Instead of focusing on where you're going, look around you and find the blessings that you already have. Even if this season is dark and stormy at times, look hard for the blessings, they are there.

During this time of waiting on the Lord consider where can you be a blessing to others? Who has God placed you near that you can bless? Who can you pray for and encourage?

Even in the midst of the storm, even when you're frustrated... in all things, be full of praise and thanksgivings... even while the waiting gets long.



And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8)

DIGGING DEEPER

1) Thinking hard, how do you relate to Esther and her situation?

2) What are you dealing with right now in your life that God is making you wait?

3) Where have you seen blessing come after waiting on the Lord?

4) Can you recall a specific instance where God has taught you through making you wait for His plan?

5) What is your biggest struggle when thinking about waiting on the Lord? Are you having trouble trusting?

6) Who do you know that you can serve as they are waiting? Let them know that that you are praying for them and be available for them all the time.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

I thank you that we can know that you are always working behind the scenes when we feel that you can't hear us. We know that you do hear us and you are working for our benefit and your glory in all things. Please help us to be patient during our seasons of distress and impatience. Help us to learn to look for the joy that You provide in all things and help us understand and believe that you have a plan that is far greater than we have for ourselves. Thank you for loving us even when we doubt. In Jesus name, Amen.