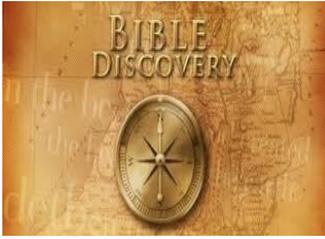


May 11, 2014

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:21-28

Mother's Bring their Young to Yahweh



This story of Hannah could be of a fairy-tale princess with her prince charming, Elkanah, loving her deeply. She seems to have it all. Yet, Hannah weeps with sorrow and distress. How many times does that happen? Friends think we're happy; even we believe we should be satisfied. Yet, sorrow & distress come anyway. Sadness seems overwhelming no matter how wonderful the rest of our lives look.

Finally, we cry out to God, the only one who seems to understand the deep longing of our hearts, the only one willing to listen as we spell out the deep sorrow of our lives. Hannah too cried out in anguish, for she was barren; no children would ever call her "**Mommy.**" Like Hanna, often, our struggle's a secret one, one in which we can cry only to God to share our sorrow, our disappointment. Yet Yahweh demonstrates His great blessings for those who come to Him. Yahweh blessed many women in scripture suffering as Hannah suffered: Remember Sarah, who bore Isaac even in her advanced years; Rebekah, who bore Jacob and Esau after years of disappointment; Rachel, who bore Joseph and Benjamin; and even Elisabeth (again in old age), who bore old Zechariah a son, John the Baptist.

In the midst of anguish, Hannah turns her problem over to God as she hopes for the best, teaching us a valuable lesson. In an incredible display of faith, she "let's go and let's God." Hannah wasn't thinking God would simply kiss the wound and make it better. Hannah's faith ran deeper – much deeper. No matter what the future held, Hannah resolved to worship - to praise God; Hanna understood that in her relationship to the Heavenly Father, it was God who would build her faith; it was through God's faithfulness she would be made righteous.

Yahweh places great importance on building generations of righteousness. Mothers, if you desire righteousness for your home, then be a great helper to Yahweh. How can you best help? Moms, you've a very important role and without it, the home will most likely fail. Proverbs 14:1 tells us, "*The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.*" In the same way a woman can destroy a home, she can build it up as God's Word reminds us at 1 Peter 3:1-2, "*Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.*" See! A woman's influence doesn't just turn a man's heart away from Yahweh; it most assuredly can turn his heart to Yahweh! Not through nagging, but through purity and reverence in their wives' behaviour. Husbands discover the love of

Yahweh through the love of their wives and are won to the Saviour! What better way to bring your children to Christ than by loving their father and showing him the love of the Lord?

I'm probably going to be labeled a chauvinist for this nest comment but I'll say it anyway because I believe God directs me to - If only the women of this generation could see the great blessings of motherhood! So often the role of a mother today is insulted being

***Let Go and
Let God!***

**Motherhood
all important
to God!**

considered bland, boring and of low skill. But to Yahweh, **motherhood** is all-important. Paul was often misunderstood on this precept. For instance, when Paul instructs Timothy that woman may be “*saved in childbearing*” some would suggest this indicates their gender is saved because one woman gave birth to the Saviour. However, I suggest Paul is more accurately indicating a unique mantle placed on women which is glorifying to God because rather than suggesting a woman is saved because she has borne children, it is celebrating childbearing as the role a saved woman functions in because of the great importance for rearing a child in the faith of the Lord, setting an example of submission to God, demonstrating faithfulness through service to others.

So important was this to Hannah that we read how she went to the Temple of the Lord at Shiloh and prayed, **and wept**. And she made a vow to Yahweh promising that if God would just give her a son, she in turn would give that child back to God for service to Him all the days of his life. And we’re told that Yahweh heard Hannah. This child was Samuel who became the great prophet and priest of Israel for God. In fact, Samuel was the one who replaced Eli, the priest who had his generations cut off because he did not restrain the evil deeds of his children.

Unfortunately today some consider childrearing to be a task best relegated to others. Careers, worldly prestige and pursuits of leisure all seem to take the place of raising children for God today. Of those being the primary caregiver some have cried such as, “What is there? I’ve little to do - I’m stuck at home with these kids”. Such remains the attitude of many women today, but it ought not to be so! **Mothers**, you not only have great influence on your husband as we mentioned earlier, you’ve great influence on the righteousness of your children. Don Lonnie a Christian motivational speaker in the 70’s was approached by a woman following a service. He’d been told by the pastor about her history and of how she was always volunteering for exotic opportunities. So when she told him she believed God was calling her to missions, he asked, “Don’t you have a husband at home who doesn’t know Christ?” Softly, she replied, “Yes”. Lonnie then asked, “And don’t you have five children at home – none of whom attend church or know Jesus?” “Yes”, she admitted. “Praise the Lord!” Lonnie responds – “not only has God called you to missions, He’s given you your own mission field right at home!”

Consider this:

**6 generations
with 2 kids
impacts 252
children for
God!**

Consider this: if you had 2 children and 6 generations thereafter had 2 children, you’d have influenced 252 children. With every bit of time you spend with your children, with every conversation, every bit of care and every action, you are reaching many others. Not only your children's children, but those *they* may influence and bring to righteousness. Is there any more substantial role any of us can have then to reach others? Consider a woman, one not a household name known to thousands, born *Morrow Coffey*, who in a day when the bonds holding families together are unraveling as never before, stands as a striking example of the power that Christ can have in the home. She ensured her children were instilled through a family life which developed dynamic foundations they carry with them to this day. She lived a few miles from the site of her birth, became the wife of a farmer and saw her highest achievement raising a home full of children. Her firstborn was born in 1918 and they named him after his father, calling him Billy Franklin Jr. You know him as Billy Graham – a man of God who reached generations because of a faithful mother.

The great potential for influence a mother has to bring her children God is typified in Timothy's example, as we read at 2 Timothy 1:5, *"I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother, Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* Timothy's mother and grandmother were commended for their genuine faith. From a child, Timothy was taught the Scriptures, being encouraged to, *"continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."* [2 Timothy 3:14-15] Because of that foundational training, Timothy was greatly used of God to bless many others. What great fruit was borne out of dedication from his mother and grandmother! Their example's an inspiration for all mothers to raise such children. This is not to say motherhood is easy, it isn't! It's one of the toughest jobs requiring hard work, diligence and a virtuous character. Yet if we would have mothers who bring their young to Yahweh, we need them to be women of faith who see their role of motherhood as a **gift** given by God to be pursued in faith.



So, how do we find faith in a world that's less than perfect? How do we find hope when we're faced with hopelessness? Hannah's hope had depth going beyond fairy-tale dreams, beyond her experience. Her hope anticipated continuous joy — not the perfect ending. Hannah was not disappointed. Hannah knew not all dreams come true the way we dream them.

Need women of faith to see role of mothers as gift from God!

Although Hannah wanted a child, her hope and faith were not dependent on the child's birth. She sang despite her hopelessness, praised God simply for being in her life. Her faith and her hope remained independent of the outcome. ***That's another great lesson for all of us!*** Yahweh is the God who brings hope to us in the midst of our hopelessness.

When our heart is open to His direction, we allow room for God's wonderful work. Hannah's story is more than just the story of one woman in ancient Israel. Hannah's story is a story about hope and faith. Some of us feel the barrenness of living far away from close families, of feeling grief at the death of beloved parents and special friends, husbands and even our children. For some of us, we face the barrenness of friendships that die, relationships that fail, families that disappoint, jobs that don't satisfy, or fear that creeps in. We can become insulated, cold and bitter.

God not dependent on Ideal Situations

Hannah's story reminds us that God doesn't depend on ideal situations in order to do mighty work. Hannah's story and her song of hope was preserved to remind those defeated by their circumstances that God has not left them alone. In the midst of our different versions of barrenness, Hannah's story is retold, her song is sung—the same one that an unmarried, pregnant girl named Mary would sing on discovering she'd bear the Christ child. That song is sung so we too remember that God has not left us alone, no matter how lonely or in despair we might feel. And so, I invite you to put yourselves in Hannah's shoes, to reflect on your own barren situations, to consider how the Lord – Yahweh - works in all our difficulties to restore hope and bring joy into our lives. Let us consider how we may be stirred in our hearts to bring the young of our families, of our fellowship, of our community **to Christ!**

And let us pray as Hannah might have prayed so many centuries ago asking God us to encourage our lives, and our children's lives to be a witness for Yahweh; ***knowing that whatever happens*** next we'll continue faithful; believing in our love of God, in His love for us, knowing we'll carry on. And mothers, is there a greater legacy than that?

God Bless!

