

“Sadness Into Gladness”

Text: I Samuel 1:1-18

Subject: How Prayer Releases The Burdens We Need Not Carry

Introduction

Our text is clear and simple before us:

(In verse 10)

“Hannah was **in deep anguish, wept much and prayed to the Lord.**”

(In verse 18)

“Hannah went her way and **ate something, and her face was no longer sad.**”

Question: How does Hannah go from sadness to gladness?

Question: What happens when she goes to church?

Question: How does God change your feelings in prayer?

Question: What does prayer do when you are downcast?

Question: Why is it O.K. to pour out your heart to God in the house of prayer (this sanctuary)?

Question: What’s the message from God’s heart to your heart this hour?

Grasp the setting of our text:

1. I Samuel give the account of God establishing the monarchy.
2. I Samuel begins with the story of a very unhappy woman.
3. Chapter one opens with, “There was a certain man” (but chapter one is really about **Hannah his wife**).
4. It’s a real-life story that touches everyone here at some time in life.

Question: Who was Hannah?

Answer: She was the wife of Elkanah (and the soon-to-be mother of Samuel).

Question: What was her dilemma?

Answer: She was barren—and having no children was considered by society as a punishment from God.

Question: Was the unfulfilled expectation painful?

Answer: I Samuel 1:10 says, “**In bitterness of soul, Hannah wept much.**”

In other words:

- Her disappointment was very real and clearly recorded by God in Scripture.
- Her tears were real from the pain of her heart.
- Her story is a real-life story, how God changes people who want to be changed!

We have two choices when we hurt:

1. We can be pitied and enabled to carry pain for attention purposes (or)
2. We can be changed internally through the ministry and therapy of prayer.

Question: How many of you would rather be changed by God (instead of being pitied and enabled for attention's sake)?

(Three revelations jump out of I Samuel)

I. Sadness and Tears are a Normal Part of Life (vs. 7, 10)

Question: What was the cause of Hannah's tears?

Answer: Her pain might be your pain this morning:

1. She was barren with no children (vs. 5)

- And in a male-centered society where the focus was on producing an heir to continue the family name, to be barren was to fail the family. Hannah was an object of reproach and scorn.

2. She was verbally abused (vs. 6, 7)

- Peninnah continued to provoke her and torment her (telling her that, "You're barren because God is punishing you for some sin").

3. She was neglected by her husband (vs. 8)

- Elkanah asked her, "Why are you crying? Why aren't you eating? Why are you depressed? You have me, isn't that better than having kids?"
- This insensitivity further increased Hannah's pain. (She was unable to tell her troubles to her husband.)

4. She was misunderstood by Eli the priest (vs. 13, 14)

- When Hannah prayed from her heart without words, Eli accused her of being intoxicated, (vs. 14) "Put away your wine, how long have you been drunk?" (He misjudged her character.)

5. She was seemingly forgotten by God (vs. 15)

- Hannah replied to her accuser this way in vs. 15!
"No, I'm not drunk, I just have a sorrowful spirit and I'm pouring out my soul before the Lord."

(In vs. 11 Hannah prayed)

"Lord, look on my affliction and remember me, and don't forget me any longer."

(Maybe you're in the Bible today)

1. You have an unfulfilled expectation or disappointment, like Hannah.
2. Maybe you've been verbally abused or provoked in some way with unjust criticism (Peninnah).
3. Maybe you've been neglected by an insensitive spouse or even worse received poor counseling (Elkanah).
4. Maybe you've been misunderstood or falsely accused (Eli).
5. Or just maybe, you feel forgotten by God, thinking that God doesn't know where you are at moment in your life.

Question: What can happen to any one of us when we experience an unfulfilled expectation, or disappointment, or doctor's report, or pink slip, or rejection, or betrayal, or whatever?

(Vs. 7, 10)

"Therefore she wept and did not eat."

Question: What's the good news when pain robs you of your appetite?

II. Supplication and Prayer are Available to Everyone (vs. 10-15)

Question: What did Hannah do with her dilemma and her pain?

Answer: She did two things:

1. She decided to go to church (and)
2. She decided to go to prayer!

Here's what happens:

1. In I Samuel 1, Hannah's husband makes the annual trip with his family to the tabernacle.
2. The family goes to Shiloh, to worship and offer the peace offerings 15 miles from home.
3. Everyone else is eating, and drinking and enjoying the festival.
4. But Hannah (in the crowd) is in "**bitterness of soul.**"

Question: What does she do?

Answer: She goes to the tabernacle to unburden her heart to God in prayer.

It's make or break time!

- Dwell on her problems and wallow in self-pity (or)
- Unburden her heart to God in prayer! (And be changed)

(It's only one of two choices for us all)

1. Retaliate against Peninnah, Elkanah and Eli (or)
2. Come to the only One who can heal a broken heart!

In other words:

- Her pain will be her stepping-stone or her tombstone!
- Her pain will make her better or bitter!
- Her pain will make her sweeter or make her sour!
- Her pain will leave her like the first Adam in the garden or like the second Adam on the cross.

What does she do?

In vs. 10, "She prayed unto the Lord and wept sore."

In vs. 12, "She continued praying before the Lord."

In vs. 13, "She spoke in her heart but her voice was not heard." (The first record of silent prayer in the Bible.)

In vs. 15, "I have poured out my soul before the Lord."

Question: How did Hannah pray and what did God do in her praying? (and)

Question: How do we pray and how does God heal us and change us in our praying?

(Write down these four prayer secrets for healthy living)

Secret #1 - Prayer Requires No Special Formula or Method!

- Hannah prayed spoken and unspoken prayers.
- She, "Spoke in her heart, but her voice was not heard" (vs. 13).
- She pondered in silent prayer and connected with God.

(In other words)

- You can think a prayer, speak a prayer, or sing a prayer.
- In a field or sanctuary, standing or kneeling—it doesn't matter.
- What matters is that you experience the therapy of true prayer.

Secret #2 - Prayer Releases Our Problems Over to God!

- When nothing seemed to be going right—Hannah prayed.
- She released her problems to God and returned home.
- She placed her expectations in God's hands.

(In other words)

- Prayer heals your struggle when you relinquish it to God.
- Prayer turns over to God what's outside of your control.
- Prayer releases your burdens so you can smile again and enjoy the journey.

Secret #3 - Prayer Renews Our Trust in God's Sovereignty!

- In prayer, Hannah walked away with confidence that God had heard and was at work.
- In prayer, Hannah's fears were turned to trust.
- In prayer, Hannah's fretting turned to faith in God.

(In other words)

- Prayer is the secret weapon that enforces the Word of God.
- It reminds you that God will work all things together for your good and His glory!

Secret #4 - Prayer Recovers Our Joy and Peace!

- Hannah poured out her heart and was encouraged.
- She, "Went her way and ate, and was no longer sad" (vs. 18).

(In other words)

- Prayer has an amazing effect on your insides and outsides.
- Prayer turns your sorrows into opportunities.
- Prayer allows you to face your challenges and go on.
- Prayer changes you—before it ever changes your situations.
- Prayer recovers our joy and peace to the degree that we transfer and relinquish what we cannot control.

Question: What did Hannah learn after she prayed?

III. Satisfaction and a Song Are Gifts From the Lord (vs. 1:18; 2:1-10)

Question: What did Hannah do after she prayed silently, was healed inwardly and gave birth to Samuel?

Answer: In chapter two, she is satisfied and singing and reminds us of some things about the Lord.

Question: What makes Hannah, and you and me so grateful?

Answer: It's truth that frees us from sadness to gladness.

(In Chapter two—Truth That Turns Sadness Into Gladness)

1. God provides us with salvation.

- Verse 1, "I rejoice in your salvation."

2. God makes no mistakes!

- Verse 2, "There is no one Holy like the Lord."

3. God understands you fully!

- Verse 3, "The Lord is the God of knowledge."

4. God has the power to change your life!

- Verse 8, "The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, He has set the world upon them."

5. God will take care of you!

- Verse 9, "He will guard the feet of His saints."

6. God will make all the wrong things right!

- Verse 10, "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces."

Question: How did all of this come to Hannah?

It's simple:

- In prayer, in church, she emptied herself of herself! (and)
- In prayer, in church, God filled her with Himself!

Conclusion

Question: What's the Word of the Lord this hour?

1. Tears are a normal part of life!
2. Prayer is available for everyone!
3. God turns sadness into gladness!

(How?)

- In prayer, you release your problems over to God!
- In prayer, you renew your faith and trust in the sovereignty of God!
- In prayer, you recover your joy and peace to enjoy the journey!

(I Love Psalm 147:3)

"God heals the broken hearted and makes well their grief."

Bill Kirk