

## Leadership matters

We crave good leaders – constant scrutiny and scandal with political leaders: Donald Trump, Theresa May and Malcolm Turnbull

We want our sporting stars to be role models, but get bitterly disappointed when they mess up

Some of us look to business leaders but then are disillusioned when we find out what it is like to work in their companies.

*Are there any good leaders? Is there anyone worth following?*

1 Sam is all about leadership. But it is leadership from God's point of view not ours. It is not a book which teaches us how to lead, but rather a book which teaches us which sort of leader to follow.

## Context:

1 Samuel was written about 3000 years ago, 1050 B.C. Israel in Promised Land but have not taken over all of it. Just after the book of Judges. Judges ends on a very downcast note:

**Judges 17: 6** In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

**18: 1** In those days there was no king in Israel.

**19:1** In those days, when there was no king in Israel,

**21: 25** In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Judges 17-21 – Idol worship, civil war, women being kidnapped and forced into marriage on a huge scale, and a scene where some of God's people re-enact the debauchery of the town of Sodom in Gen 19. *Horrible*

There was a crisis of leadership in Israel. Anarchy reigned. We are left wondering what God is going to do about this problem. Is he going to destroy his people like he did the people of Sodom? Or is he going to send them a leader to turn things around?

God's answer to Israel's predicament will turn out to be his answer for the whole world and each of us individually.

But before we get to the problems of Israel, we meet one small Israelite family. There is nothing particularly noteworthy about them. They are not royalty or military leaders. Yet God cares enough about them to help them in their predicament. And through the help God gives them, God is going to provide the start of the answer to Israel's predicament.

## Four Sections to sermon:

1. **What happens to this family**
2. **How it reflects/effects Israel**
3. **How it points to Jesus**
4. **How it applies to us**

## 1. What happens to this family

V1-2 - Introducing the characters:

- Elkanah an Ephraimite – ordinary Israelite
- Hannah – Elkanah's first wife – no children
- Peninnah – Elkanah's second wife – children

Instead of trusting God to provide children through Hannah, he marries another woman and has children through her.

People in OT sometimes have more than one wife, but it never goes well for them. Shows that they should stick to God's plan – one man, one woman together forever. That's what Jesus and NT reiterate. Polygamy permitted but not promoted.

4 Scenes

- Scene 1 – Year After Year – v3-8

Elkanah a godly man, despite his polygamy – goes up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh each year – v3. *where tabernacle was*

V5 – Elkanah a loving husband – gives Hannah a double portion of the meat to try to make up for the fact that she has not been able to have children

V6 – Rival keeps on provoking Hannah b/c of her barrenness.

V7-8 – This was Hannah's lot year after year – go to the house of the Lord (tabernacle), which should be a joyous time, but turns into a time of grief because of Peninnah's taunting.

Yet Hannah keeps on going, year after year, knowing what is going to happen. She wants to come and worship God, despite her predicament and Peninnah's taunting. She has not lost her faith.

- Scene 2 – One day at Shiloh – v9-18

V9-11 – Hannah prays to the Lord in her anguish and vows that if the Lord gives her a son she will give him to the Lord for all of his days and no razor will touch his head.

Hannah prays from faith. Could have become bitter towards God or at the least fatalistic, but instead turns towards the God who has promised to save his people and has kept that promise time and time again.

See it in her words in v11 - **11** And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, ~~and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.~~"

Look on her Misery (or affliction) – echoing the language of God's dealings with Israel. Exodus from Egypt – God saw the misery of his people and rescued them (Ex 3:7; 4:31; Deut 26:7; Neh 9:9)

**Ex 3: 7** The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

Hannah begs God to do for her what he had done for Israel in the days of Moses. Hannah's faith, expressed in prayer, was not make believe. It was confidence based on knowledge of what God is like and what he has done.

Prayer is a vow – looks like a bargain with God - if you give me a son, I will give him back to you. But look closely at it.

**11** And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant.

Not accusing God of forgetting her, but begging him to remember her plight and act towards her as he has acted towards Israel in the past.

If he does give her a son, she promises to give him back to God, in the sense that he will be a Nazirite – a person particularly dedicated to God's service.

Nazirite – Numbers 6 – someone dedicated to God for a time, although in Samuel's case it seems to be permanent. Only three permanent Nazirites mentioned in the Bible – Sampson, Samuel and John the Baptist. Nazirites were to not drink wine or cut their hair.

This is Hannah's prayer – not a bargain with God, but a plea for God to act towards her as he has acted towards his people in the past, with a promise that the Son given by God will be given back to God's service.

V12-14 – Eli has been watching and assumes she is drunk and confronts her

This is the closest Israel has to a leader at the moment and he can't tell the difference between someone who is drunk and someone who is pouring their heart out to the Lord. But it is also an indictment on Israel at the time – people turned up drunk to worship God at the tabernacle enough times that Eli assumed Hannah was drunk.

V15-16 – Hannah explains that she has been pouring out her soul to the Lord

V17 – Eli tells her to go in peace, and may God grant what you have asked of him.

V18 – Hannah no longer downcast. Her prayer has changed her. She has cast all her anxiety on the Lord knowing that he cared for her. Her situation has not changed – she is still childless. But due to her giving over her problems to God, and b/c of Eli's kind words to her, she finds comfort. God is good, God is powerful, and he will look after her like he has looked after the Israelites.

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- Scene 3 – Back Home at Ramah – v19-20 *— exactly what she asked him to do*  
V19-20 - Eli makes love to her – Lord remembers her – not natural causes – gives birth to a son. Samuel means name of God or God has heard. Hannah recognises that God has heard her.

- Scene 4 – At Shiloh again – v21-28  
V21-23 – Vow remembered  
Elkanah makes annual journey to Shiloh but Hannah doesn't want to go until she can fulfil her vow. Elkanah agrees.

V24-28 – Vow kept  
Hannah bring Samuel to the tabernacle when he is weaned. With a generous thank offering she presents him to Eli. The passage finishes with Samuel worshipping God at the tabernacle. *of God*

Children belong to God not parents. We are given the privilege and responsibility to raise them and nurture them, but they are God's not ours. Helps us when God takes one of them back early. Although we will grieve, we know that they were his, not ours. Also stops us from making our children an idol. We should not focus everything on them but rather raise them to know, love and serve God.

## 2. How it reflects/effects Israel

Elkanah's, and especially Hannah's faith are a stark contrast to the rest of God's people at the time. They are not perfect, by any means but they are at least trying to follow God. This is how God's people are supposed to be acting.

Hannah's predicament is to be seen as a reflection of Israel's predicament. The nation is afflicted by their own sinfulness. We don't know why Hannah can't have children. But God's response to Hannah's need will turn out to be his response to Israel's need.

Extra point – women in the bible who were barren but God gives children to

- Sarah and Abraham - Isaac
- Rebekah and Isaac - Jacob
- Rachael and Jacob - Joseph
- Elizabeth and Zechariah – John the Baptist

When this is recorded for us in the Bible, normally God is going to do something huge through that person.

God remembers Hannah. But through that, he also remembers his people. And I think Elkanah at least has worked this out. Have a look with me at verse 23:

**23** "Do what seems best to you," her husband Elkanah told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word."

Shouldn't it be the other way around? Hannah, make sure you keep your word to the Lord. What does Elkanah mean by this?

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I think that he is talking about God's promises, his word for his people. God had promised to save his people, and somehow Elkanah knew that little Samuel was going to be part of God keeping his word. Moving from the small picture to the big picture.

God providing a son for Hannah – small picture  
God providing a leader for his people – big picture.

Samuel one of the three leaders in 1 Sam – Saul and David the other two. But Samuel is the start of God fixing the predicament of this people by raising a leader.

**Big Idea: God shows his care for Hannah by helping her to have a Son. God cares for his people and raises a godly leader to lead/save them.**

### 3. How it points to Jesus

What does this tell us about Jesus?

Pattern - Hannah and Samuel, Elizabeth and John the Baptist

Godly woman, can't have children, in the place of worship, she's praying, she's told she is going to have a child, she gives birth to a son, he is a Nazirite, he will rise up to be a great prophet, who will then anoint ~~not one but two kings~~ *a king after God's own heart.* of Israel. Sounds familiar.

Fast forward 1000 years to Luke Gospel and Ch 1. Elizabeth, another righteous godly woman, in her old age, unable to have kids, husband at the place of worship, is told that she will bear a son, who will be a prophet of the most high, John the Baptist, a Nazirite, who points to Jesus, a son of David and the King of Kings and says he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Pattern in 1 Samuel is laid there so that when this configuration of woman, infertile, at the temple, giving birth to a son, who is a prophet, who points to a king is repeated in Luke 1 we say "I've been here before haven't I?" Ah yes that means take note, Jesus is really King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Also helps us to understand that the way that God saves people in OT points to the way that he is going to save them once and for all through Jesus.

#### 4. How it applies to us

- Know that there is anarchy in this world and a shortage of godly leaders  
*Won't find someone perfect in this world to ~~be~~ follow*
- Know that God is both good and powerful  
 In control - Lord almighty - Lord of the Hosts - Lord of the heavenly armies. Closes and opens wombs etc. God is both good and powerful.  
*If we believe this we should pray.*
- Know that God cares for you, both in the everyday trials of this life, but also for your eternity.  
*Raised a leader for ~~you~~ you to save/lead you b/c he cares for you*
- Know that he has saved you once and for all through Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords
- Trust in Jesus and submit to him as your king - follow him as your leader

*- Passage about God, not ~~to~~ Hannah.  
 Mechanic Illustration*

- 1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.  
**Rom 8: 32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Be real about our faith - talk to God about our cares and worries

When the sickness comes, and the marriage is going hard, the singleness is grieving you and the infertility is overwhelming you and the guilt is battering you and the addictions feel overwhelming and the unemployment is discouraging you and the depression is awful and the jealousy is eating you up and the debt is going to destroy your life you think and your kids have gone off the rails and your co-workers are paying out on you and you have a neighbour from hell who keeps on bullying you. Whatever the story - your inner world has got to play itself out in your prayer life. Hannah shows us how it's done. The reason Hannah can pray as she does is that she has understood from God's past actions that he is both good and powerful. And he cares for her.

Don't wait to praise until you get what you want. Don't stop praying when you get what you want. Lament and praise - what it means to be in a relationship with the God of the Bible.

Finish with Hannah's prayer - just after she had handed Samuel over to Eli:

**1 Sam 2: 1** Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. **2** "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.