Series: God's help for the modern family

**Why Faith in God Matters**

1 Samuel 2:1-11 September 25, 2016

Walking through tragedy: what we learn from our circumstances largely shapes the course of our lives.

Hannah’s prayer is not what we were expecting:

* V.1 She’s jumping for joy but who are these enemies she’s talking about?
* V.4 God gave her a baby, so why is she talking about broken arrows?
* V.5 She’s giving thanks that God gives the barren woman seven children, but she’s only got one!
* V.7 She’s giving thanks for God’s blessing on the poor but it appears that Hannah’s family was quite prosperous.
* V.10 She’s praying about God giving strength to his king, but there is no king in Israel.

1. God offers hope to the poor and teaches neediness to the rich.

a. Hannah’s answered prayer was just a sign.

* V.1 Hannah’s rejoicing is out of proportion to her answered prayer for a son given over to God’s service. Hannah sees her son as a sign - a promise of hope for the needy.
* V.1 She’s still surrounded by enemies. Peninnah was one but there were still many others (e.g. the Philistines).
* V.2 The answered prayer was a reminder of God’s unparalleled faithfulness.

b. Hannah’s answered prayer taught her that God was in control.

* V.4 Just as God had answered her prayer, she had confidence that God would bring down her oppressors.
* V.5 Just as God had answered her prayer, she had confidence that God would reverse the world’s injustices.

c. Hannah’s answered prayer taught her the blessing of dependence on God.

* Vv.7-8 Hannah has been praying about the blessings of the poor but Elkanah her husband was quite wealthy.
* To be able to afford two wives or make an offering of a bull in his day was beyond the means of the poor.
* She realized that it was God who had ‘brought her low’ in order to teach her to depend on Him.

Q. What’s the difference between seeing the miracles and mercies of God in Scripture as signs of His goodness and mercy rather than the rights and expectations of Christians? (e.g. the mindset that says, ‘if Hannah got a baby why don’t I get one?’)

Q. What are some ways that God might teach us through our circumstances that He is in control?

Q. How had God taught Hannah the blessing of neediness? Why was that an important lesson to learn?

2. God promises reward to the humble and judgment to the proud.

a. Hannah learned in her circumstances the humility God was teaching her through them.

* V.3 Pride flows from a heart that thinks too little of God and His judgments.
* Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit...*

b. Hannah learned in God’s just answer to her prayer, the final justice God will bring to this world.

* V.6 Just as God has power over the womb, He has power over life and death.
* V.9a Just as God ministered to Hannah as Peninnah attacked, she learned that God will protect the faithful.
* Vv.9b-10 Just as God vindicated Hannah as Peninnah attacked, she learned that God will judge the proud.

Q. How has God used circumstances to teach you humility?

Q. How does a knowledge of God’s final justice change how we view our circumstances and the world around us?

3. God’s offers us hope and reward through faith in His King.

a. Hannah longed for a king who would lead God’s people in peace and justice.

* V.10b Her answered prayer was a sign that God was coming to her rescue and would one day send a great king.
* The phrase “his anointed,” i.e. his messiah, is used here for the first time in the Bible.
* Although Israel hadn’t yet had a king there had been hints of one (Genesis 17:6, Numbers 24:17, Deuteronomy 17:15) and she trusted in God to set things right.

b. Samuel stands in a long line of rescuers born to barren women.

* Isaac, Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist were all born to barren women. They were used by God to save people. God was showing that salvation comes by the power of God shown in humanly impossible circumstances.

c. Samuel points to a greater Rescuer, born in humanly impossible circumstances.

* Micah 5:2 *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
  from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient* days.
* What if the point of life is not to keep everyone comfortable but to convince us that we need a Saviour?

Q. How do you feel about the statement that, “The point of life is not to keep everyone comfortable but to convince us that we need a Saviour”? If you believed that, how would it practically change how you view your circumstances?

Q. How does God’s work through Hannah’s suffering encourage you in your own trials?

Q. God consistently shows His love to the poor and to the immigrant and the needy in Scripture. What can you as a group to do show that the same love?

**Notes:**