

Commentary on I Samuel 1:18-22

Sorrow Turns to Joy and Praise

By: Rev. Phillip B. McKinney

Verse 18: "And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad."

Hannah accepted God's promise to her and went her way—happy, as if the thing she desired was already a reality. How do you get what you want from the Lord? Delight yourself in the Lord, and He'll give you the desires of your heart (Paraphrased from Psalm 37:4). If you go around moping, beat down, and always defeated, you will find that your life will be that way. You must have faith! You must have confidence that He who promised is able to deliver!

When David came back, after he joined Achish to fight with the Philistines against Israel, he found all his wives and children gone. All the wives and children of his men had also been captured and carried away. His men blamed David for what had happened, and they were going to stone him to death. People say this may have happened for many different reasons. They say that David had gone up to fight against God and His people, and that is why his men wanted to kill him. They also said that David displeased God, and that is why it happened. Be that as it may, whatever the reason, they had blamed David for it.

David still enquired of the Lord before he would even go looking for his own family. He wanted to make sure that everything was all right between him and God. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," Proverbs 3:6. In the face of death from the hands of his own men, the Bible said, David encouraged himself in the Lord. Read I Samuel 30.

Hannah delighted herself in the Lord, and there was no more sadness. She began to eat food, and she also began to take God at His Word. That made her strong.

In the days of Nehemiah, when he had read the law to the people, they began to weep and mourn. Then said Nehemiah unto them, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength," Nehemiah 8:10. There is nothing so sweet as the Word of God. When it answers your questions and puts a sharp sword in your hand to fight, then you begin to see how the devil backs off in fear. Nothing else scares him. He

laughs at your swords; he esteems iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. Tanks and guns hold no terror for him; he laughs at all your military strength. However, if you take a little pick lock, as Pilgrim did in the book "Pilgrim's Progress," from out of the Word of God, then you can pick all the locks to *Doubting Castle*. The strongest safe and the largest iron doors can all be torn down with just one Word from God.

So you eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. In the day we are living the sinner has nothing prepared for him. God doesn't prepare a table for him in the presence of his enemies. King Saul's enemies came at him on Mount Gilboa, and they slew him. He was brutally wounded, and he told his armor bearer to kill him (I Samuel 31). Saul had no hope. He had missed God. To a saint of God, however, it's different, God prepares a table right in front of your enemy.

The sinner doesn't have the Good Shepherd to lead him out where the waters are still and where there is no trouble; neither does he lead him in the green pastures. He has no rod, no staff to protect him, no word from God saying hold to my unchanging hand as you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. (See Psalm 23). He has no portions provided for him. A sinner has no hope of anything.

So while you are drinking the sweetness of God's promises and eating from the table He has prepared, remember the ones for whom nothing is prepared but sorrow and heartache and in the end, HELL.

I was thinking last night about my uncle who died years and years ago, and I wondered where he is now. I wondered what he would say if he could get back to the earth. We have been living "good" in our Father's will and protection. We don't look back to tragedies in our lives with sorrow. To live in His perfect LOVE is to never have to say, "I am sorry." Let us not forget, however, about those who go their own way and when trouble comes they have nothing prepared for them.

Verse 19: "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her."

Hannah went away rejoicing, and what happened? She delighted herself in the Lord. She was no longer sad. When you go around all day long worrying and eating the bread of affliction, it won't get you a thing. God is the one that builds a house. He lays the foundation. He sets up kings and removes rulers. He does according to His own will for you in this life. Leave it all up to Him. Send a portion to them that have not, and you will see that God will remember you.

In the book of Malachi, the people asked the Lord what profit was in it for them when they followed the Lord. They said the proud are happy and they that do wickedly have it made. They that tempt God are getting away with evil. God told them that the day will come when they will return and discern between the righteous and the wicked—between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. In the day the Lord makes up his jewels, He will remember them and spare them like a man would spare his own son who always did as he was told.

Verse 20: "Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD."

After we receive the promise from God, we have need of one thing before our promise is materialized—we need patience. We must wait on our promise. Sometimes the wait is long and hard. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Just as it took nine months before Hannah's prayer was answered, we must also wait until it is God's time. The next verse in Ecclesiastes says, "A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."

Samuel means: because I have asked him of the Lord. Many times we don't get a promise from God because we never ask. Sometimes we think, "Oh well, I can handle it," or "I don't want to bother God with my little problems." That is the reason Proverbs gives us this advice: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." In everything we do, God should be our leader and counselor.

Verses 21-22: "And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide forever."

You would think Hannah would go back to Shiloh and praise the Lord for her son, but she went not up. She said she would wait until he was weaned. Then she would bring him, and he would abide forever.

What do you think this is saying to us? What she said is for our instruction and our learning. If God talks to kings, rulers, and priests, He is also talking to people who are supposed to be leading the children of God.

We had an old collie dog that had a bunch of puppies two or three different times, and she raised them very well. God even let that dog know when the pups got a little size and started to bite her it was time to start kicking them away. If you have a new convert that is looking to you like you were something special and he (or she) is beginning to get on your nerves, wean him as soon as you can and get him started looking to Jesus and the Word of God. Tell him Jesus is his Shepherd. Jesus is his happiness and his way of life from now on. If you don't wean him as soon as possible, he is not going to be a very strong Christian.

We should take him to the house of God and turn him over to God and say, "Here he is, now you take over." He may not even know who God really is. Samuel didn't. Later on, we'll see that in the middle of the night God called to Samuel, and he jumped out of his little bed and ran into Eli, the priest. Eli informed him that he had not called him. He went back and lay down, and the Lord said, "Samuel," again. He jumped up and ran to Eli again, and Eli said he didn't call him. After the third time, Eli realized that the Lord had called Samuel. Eli then told Samuel to go and lie down again, and when He calls again, say, "Here I am." (See I Samuel 3)

Spiritual children should be weaned as soon as possible and turned over to God, like Hannah did with her son. She had tremendous wisdom. Later she prays the prayer of thanks unto the Lord, which is very beautiful. There are times when you do run and fight a new convert's battles for them, and when they come to you, you pray for them. Soon, however, you have to teach them where to turn and run when they need help.

When Jesus died on the cross, there was lightning, thunder, and then the veil in the temple was rent in two. There was no longer any need for the priest to enter and sacrifice for our sins. No longer is there an intercessor that goes in before God for you. You can pray for your spiritual children, but you better wean them and give them up to God, or they will always be children. They should learn to go to God, through the new high priest, Jesus Christ.

People might steer us wrong, but God won't. Just like a mother who tries to keep her children with her for as long as she can, preachers also try to keep their congregation leaning on them, for as long as they can. They should, however, teach them how to receive and understand the Word of God, and then let them go. Give them advice whenever they need it, but let the Word of God be their guide. If a person has only one kind of a diet, they usually have some kind of deficiency, and then you have to supply them with vitamins to supplement their diet. Some people have only one line of thought preached to them, but you need the whole counsel of God, so that you might be thoroughly prepared when the devil comes against you.

Many times preachers make quick judgments about God's people. We give them advice before we hear the whole story. Proverbs says that this kind of man is not very wise because he answers a matter before he hears it all (Proverbs 18:13).

Recently, a minister friend of mine stumbled when getting out of the car. He was carrying a cup of iced tea in his hand. Later, my neighbor accused me of patronizing drunks. Someone staggers, and right away we accuse him of being drunk, or as is commonly known—he missed God. Eli thought Hannah was drunk, and she was in the very travail of her soul. On the other hand, we often see good qualities in a young person and right away, we think God has picked this person to be a preacher. Then we start to push that person in that direction. Often it ends in bitter disappointment. Even Samuel, who was raised in the house of God, didn't know whom the Lord was going to pick to be king. So we should wait a little while and not be hasty before we pick out God's anointed.