

1 Samuel 2:1-11

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Date: 01 January 2020

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- [0 : 00] It was in August of 1959 when my grandmother put poetic words to paper.
Tender reflections that recalled a day in her own life some 25 years before.
They were words, verse, song that recalled to her own memory the birth of her firstborn, a daughter who was my mother.
My grandmother wrote those years after, 23 years roll up like a window shade. Suddenly I feel again a proud young father bending close over a new nursing babe or watch him kneel by a bassinet quietly adoring.
Oh, sweet mystery of life to which we have fallen heir. How did we get her? Is she of our designing?
- [1 : 25] Was the pattern cut by our wishes and longings? Where the wisdom to find the parts of many generations?
And the cunning and the skill to knit them together and all so fitly joined? What clever hands had we that could take invisible threads of mind and spirit and weaving them into the warp and woof of this delightful bit of humanity?
And filled with wonder still, we can only say, it is grace. All God's grace. Child of love's embrace.
And who but God is love. If this natural birth be of His gracious hand, how much more the spiritual His reward for Calvary's travail.
How many months or years it was before Hannah put the words to verse concerning the birth of her firstborn, a son who comes to us by the name of Samuel, we do not know.
- [2 : 52] But this we do know that she did. The text which has been read today is Hannah's song.
Her celebration of the birth of one who would become a kingmaker. Three distinct features of the prayer or song today.
The first, verses 1 to 3, her words were so deeply personal. She praised God in poetic verse for what God had done for her.
Did you notice the pronouns early on? My heart exalts in the Lord. My horn is exalted in the Lord.
My mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the Lord for there is none beside you.
- [4 : 07] There is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly. Let not arrogance come from your mouth for the Lord is a God of knowledge.
And by Him actions are weighed. Deeply personal. Even those biting words of verse 3 talk no more so very proudly.
For Hannah knew the months, the years, of enduring the malicious voice of Peninah, Elkanah's other wife, who had born many, of which you can read about in chapter 1.

Hannah knew what it was to be barren. She knew what it was to be on the downside of life. This woman, impossible for us to imagine what life would have been like for her, born somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,100 years ago, born in Palestine, born north and a bit west of Jerusalem, married to a religious man who would annually make the 30 mile or so trek due east to Shiloh, the town that Joshua had set camp up at and the temple to make his sacrifices to God, married to a righteous man, and yet empty, concerning all that life would bring.

It's interesting, her prayers of those years are listed for you in chapter 1. And in verse 10, you see, she was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.

[6 : 24] You'll see her later as she speaks with Eli, that she says she poured out her soul before the Lord. You'll see that her prayers, that is the prayers of chapter 1, were spoken out of my great anxiety and vexation.

Here is a woman long known for pleading that her fortunes might be reversed in the world, and yet endured the persistent maliciousness of those who were in power over her.

Well, no wonder that same word then comes in chapter 2, verse 1, and Hannah prayed. Because the prayers of desperation now had become a poetic verse of celebration.

For God had done something for her in this temporal realm, even the realm of bearing a child. People often wonder today, what should the church do?

Well, whatever you do, pray. Don't tell me that prayer isn't work.

[7 : 52] You'll meet Elijah one day, who lived in an era of maliciousness and bail worship, and what did he do but pray to the Lord on high and fire came from heaven.

You'll meet Daniel one day, who when law enforcement told him that the prayers were no longer acceptable, he did as he always did and prayed.

And the Lord heard him and delivered him. Even later, at the close of 70 years, he prayed and while an angelic creature took three weeks to arrive to him, it was obvious from his words that he had been on the way from the moment Daniel prayed.

Think of Peter, who you might stand before one day. Ask him how he was released from jail when held unnecessarily, and he'll tell you of those in a small room who prayed.

So surprised were they by his arrival at the door that they closed it when he came, not knowing that God had actually worked. God works through prayer.

[9 : 10] Prayer is the work. Or let me put it this way, it doesn't matter what work you do until you pray.

Hannah prayed. A long life of desperate prayers. And in our text, a jig for a son had come.

Has God done something for you? Then praise him. Has God lifted you in some very temporal way?

I'm not even speaking in regard to the salvation of your soul, the mercy of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but merely the manifold mercies of God. Has he been merciful to you in manifold ways?

Well then, praise him. Write the verse. Let your voice be heard in praise to God. For the season of Advent, his arrival is a season of celebratory prayer that shall not be lost upon the church in this hour.

[10 : 36] Hannah prayed because God had done something for her. Deeply personal. Second, her prayer is marked by being profoundly ironic.

Perhaps you noticed in the reading those seven poetic stanzas that encompass verse 4 through 9. Hebrew parallelism where you see Hannah putting down on paper the character of God with profound ironic fullness.

It forms the body of her song. And together those verses bring a single emphasis to the reader. You are to read them and take from them that they weave one strand woven fine that God is in the business of reversing things in the world.

So that those who are high are brought down and those who are down are brought up. This is the way of God to stand in the weakness of a moment and to be present for without weakness His grace does not rest upon thee.

So says Paul. He will triumph and glory and praise God in my weaknesses so that God might rest upon me.

[12:15] And so these verses which in one sense get forwarded like a table of contents into 1 and 2 Samuel for in there we see them all applied to David in his relationship to Saul David in his relationship to his enemies the Philistines he becomes the one whose life we look at and see the bows of the mighty broken and the feeble binding on strength Saul is the one at the close of 1 Samuel 28 who will hire himself out for bread by way of the witch at Endor and yet David is the one who in great distress flees to the house of God and has given provision think of this little phrase in the verse here on 9 but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness for not by might shall a man prevail words which echo

David's victory over Goliath when his brothers thought he was impotent to come to battle the king thought he was unready for battle Goliath thought he was like a dog in the midst of battle and David's triumph comes so that you will know that God does not work by sword or spear but by his own strength he brings deliverance and so the connection between David and his weakness and Jesus as his antitype is not that Jesus is bigger and stronger and greater than David is that he's weaker and meeker he didn't raise his sword in the day of travail and cut off the evil one's head as David did to Goliath our Lord Jesus Christ like a lamb led to slaughter without a word died on the battlefield that the victory of

Christ might be made weakness is the way of God and yet God in that weakness turns over the powers of the world strengthens and sustains and upholds even unto death for in the book of revelation the martyred saints continually pray before God how long how long oh Lord until you come and demonstrate your full and complete reign over every adversary and evidently the answer is just a little bit longer do not be surprised by the fiery trial which you are undergoing and that trial in

Peter's letter is not one that is alleviated by the circumstantial change of a day that God suddenly begins to work powerfully no that trial ends with your death and mine and on that day he will restore confirm strengthen and uphold thee the profound ironic fullness of Hannah's prayer is there so that you and I who grasp for power might treasure the irony of weakness pray but participate in this great reversal I think of!

think of the weakness of the body of Christ for indeed in that weakness he prevails I think of our Lord Jesus Christ and how his opening words in the sermon on the mount treasure the profound nature of weakness for when he began to open his mouth he taught them saying blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted do you hear the reversal blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy the pure in heart for they shall see God blessed he says are the peacemakers those are those who are participating in the ways of the kingdom and rule of

[17 : 24] Christ for they shall be called sons that is heirs of God blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of God somebody came to me just a few weeks ago and said you know someone visited your church on two occasions and left well that happens all the time but this one really troubled me where I was told that they came in walked out two weeks on said well I'm not going to go it seemed clear to me that the church wasn't concerned with issues of social justice and oh how I was saddened and grieved for them and oh how I longed to see someone stop them and look them in the eye and take them by the shoulders and say well you left too soon you left before you understood the names of peacemakers let alone the work that's taking place perhaps you left before you'd met

Lisa or you could have gone with her day by day into Gabrini Green perhaps you left before you understood who Lucy was who works day by day with the children in Englewood perhaps you left before you met Brittany or Curtis who were engaged day by day for the lowest of the low in our city week in and week out in the public schools perhaps you left before you could have brought a meal to someone who was sick maybe you didn't get on that sign up sheet perhaps you left before you could have paid for my trip to Florida when I went into the penitentiary so I could meet with inmates who loved the Lord Jesus Christ behind bars perhaps you left before you knew Marcus and met with him with his former gang bangers at the subway or walked with him into the courthouse or into the county system perhaps you left before you knew

Joan and wanted to give scholarships to those who were with young life I could go on I could go on until our lunch is done but if you think I will take the pulpit there I've acted the fool today I've been a fool reformers give headaches to a PR department and this church will never be turned into a PR department I'm going to spend so much time figuring out how to get the word out you don't know what's going on because you haven't taken the time to introduce yourself well that's far too angry for what

I intended forgive me but the gospel is profoundly ironic God's people are to be prayerful and we must be we are to be participatory and we must be everyone participating in the ways of peace according to our conscience as God would lead us day by day I know today in this city is a day when people are painting a picture and a picture needs to be painted and I want to tell you the most treasured picture I've had in my mind all week it's going to be down that ramp across the hall up a ramp and at a table the body of Christ eating dinner that is the answer the gospel of our

Lord Jesus Christ you want a discussion there it is you want to paint something you want to show the world something it's the weakness of a multi ethnic community at meal who know one another's names who sit in one another's living rooms who walk with one another through life that is my understanding of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in this hour not some trite take away that the gospel is the answer Jesus is the answer but I will tell you the answer the most important picture you can paint be the local church for the local church in this community is the greatest apologetic it is what the world wants so whatever you do participate finally not only is her prayer deeply personal profoundly ironic it is decidedly prophetic look at her closing words verse 10 the adversaries of the

[22 : 55] Lord shall be broken to pieces against them they will thunder in heaven the Lord will judge the ends of the earth he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed well that is a prophetic verse in the midst of her song she has moved from what God has done for her and closed her hymn with what God will do for his anointed so when she opened she said my horn!

is exalted and when she closes she says he will exalt the horn! she moves from a deeply personal experience and places herself into the working activity of God and his character in the world and she knows that her birth is unique for she prophetically says there is a king who is coming interesting word here probably picked up from Deuteronomy 17 or Genesis 17 but all of a sudden it will be the word that carries the material all the way through Chronicles for her son will be the king maker he will anoint both Saul and David and David is the one who in this verse we find fulfillment by the end of 2nd!

Samuel David is the king David is the anointed David is the one whose horn is exalted David is the one through whom God judges take a look 2nd Samuel 23 he will tell it to you himself 2nd Samuel 22 David says at the close of his life verse 2 my God my rock in whom I take refuge my shield the horn of my salvation David says Hannah's prayers decidedly prophetic and fulfilled in me he goes on and talks about how God saved him in verse 4 from his enemies or verse 49 he will say you brought me out from my enemies you exalted me above those who rose against me you delivered me from men of violence for this I will praise you O Lord among the nations and sing praises to your name great salvation he brings here's Hannah's word to his king and show steadfast love here's his word to his anointed to

David and his offspring forever and you and I both know all know that in David that promise of the Lord's adversaries coming completely underfoot is never fulfilled For he died!

But not before a promise was given to him that he would have a son who would sit! on God's throne forever and that that son is the prefigured king even in Hannah's ancient prayer so that when young Mary in Luke 2 knows that she is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit she pulls out her hymnal she takes up an ancient hymn Hannah's song and she writes an adaptation a new arrangement a new song and you call it she calls it my!

[26 : 00] Magnificat! to celebrate the birth of her son in whom God has established a king in the world Hannah all the way back here decidedly prophetic and this is the season to which you and I have come be a person of prayer be a person who participates the kingdom work of God be a person who repents and lives under the lordship of Christ our heavenly father this ancient song which some might say has no wisdom for the day oh how we have seen the implications of advent lord give us a joyful song to sing give us kingdom work to do give us a heart that willingly bends our knee to the king before he comes in whose name we pray amen