

Hannah's Dedicates Samuel (1 Samuel 1:21-28 & Luke 2:22-24)

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We're continuing our series on the OT book of 1 Samuel.

Please have your Bibles turned to 1 Samuel chapter 1 - we're looking at verses 21 to 28.

You can take notes on the outline in your Bibles.

Let's pray before we take a look at this passage

Let's pray

Context

Just a quick recap on last week...

[PowerPoint 1-Context]

It's around about 1064BC

The Israelites are in the Promised Land of Canaan

The people are ruled by Judges - who try to help the people obey God's rules

Judges like: Ehud, Jephthah, Gideon, Samson and Deborah

During this period of the Judges ruling

The nation is in spiritual decline - a pattern of sin & rebellion against God; God's judgment, repentance and a new judge appointed - then the process repeated - spiralling out of control

And so the assessment of the nation is summarised in Judges 21:25

[PowerPoint 2-Judges 21:25]

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit

Then we saw in the first 20 verses of 1 Samuel last week...

A lady called Hannah who cannot have children

Prays to the Lord and makes a **vow** that if the Lord provides her with a son, she will dedicate this son to the Lord's service for the whole of his life

God graciously answers Hannah's prayer

And she gives birth to a son called Samuel - which means "asked of God"

So this week

How will Hannah keep her vow?

The Vow Made (1 Samuel 1:10-11)

Let's be clear then what a **vow** is:

[PowerPoint 3-Vow Definition]

A solemn or serious promise or decision to a prescribed role, calling or course of action

[PowerPoint 4-Vow Made]

Now let's have a closer look at Hannah's vow in verses 10 & 11 of chapter 1:

¹⁰ In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly.

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."

Although Hannah was in deep anguish and weeping bitterly

She did the right thing and took this sorrow to the Lord - rather than blaming God - rather than being angry with God - and walking away from Him

Which we can tend to do when we're upset - can't we?

And notice how she addresses God in v11

As the **Lord Almighty** - literally the Lord of the Heavenly Armies - He is the one she turns to as her protector

YHWH - is the word used - the Hebrew word for God when we're talking about His covenant faithful relationship with His people - and she refers to herself as God's servant - not forgetting her relationship with God is a personal one - yet understanding that God is her Lord and master

And then look at her vow - normally a Levite priest was priest from age 30 to 50 (Numbers 4:2-3) - but here Hannah took what already belonged to the Lord - her son - and gave him to the Lord - for his whole life (not 20 years) - and committed him to a Nazirite vow (explain)

That is an amazing vow!

(pause)

The Vow Kept (1 Samuel 1:21-28)

And as we hit today's passage in verses 21 to 28 - of chapter 1

[PowerPoint 5-Vow Kept]

We see how Hannah kept her vow

She waited until Samuel, her son, was weaned - which culturally took 2-3 years in those days

And Hannah's husband, Elkanah, is in full support of Hannah keeping her vow
He continues to make the annual sacrifices until Hannah is ready to fulfil her vow and bring Samuel to serve the Lord

Look at how graciously she comes to present Samuel to Eli, the priest, at the tabernacle (temple)

See v27-28

²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸ So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.”

Making and Keeping Vows?

The way Hannah made her vow and kept her vow

[PowerPoint 6-heading]

Raises the question - as to whether we should make a vow to the Lord

Not necessarily about our children - but about anything?

Should we make a vow?

[PowerPoint 6a-Ecc 5:4-5]

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 says:

⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. ⁵ It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it.

So these verses make it clear that we must be careful when making a vow to God - that we do keep it. God will not be pleased if we do not keep our vow or promise - so it's best not to make a vow if you're not able to keep it

Jesus confirms this OT quote in the Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5:33-37 - but He also raises the bar -

[PowerPoint 7-Matt 5:33-37]

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is

the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

So Jesus is basically saying - don't make swear by God or by ourselves - make our word our bond - if we mean Yes - say Yes - if we mean No - say No - and don't change our mind. (A similar thing is said in James 5:12)

The bottom line is if we say we will do something - we do it

And if we say we won't do something - we don't do it!

[PowerPoint 8-Vows we make/keep]

So what vows or promises do we make before God - in our lives today?

- Marriage - we make promises before God to be faithful to our husband or wife - and to love and honour them - in sickness and in health - till death do us part...
- Church
 - Ministers and elders - promises that they *believe the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only rule of faith and practice? And to give conscientious attendance of meetings of Session, Presbytery and Assembly*
 - In infant baptisms - the parents of the child promise *to teach the child from the Scriptures how to trust in Christ as their Saviour, to pray for the child, to set a godly example in their actions, and that by God's grace, the child may be a faithful follower of our Lord Jesus Christ all their days? And the congregation promise to pray for the child being baptized and where possible help in teaching the child about Jesus*

- Membership of our church - people entering into membership – state that they believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and confess that Jesus Christ is their Saviour and Lord. And they promise to join regularly with fellow Christians in worship on the Lord's Day
- When people do their annual child protection training at church – they are promise to protect children from any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse – and they promise not to abuse their position of authority in the church
- In court - we promise to tell the truth
- When a friend or family member - shares something secret or confidential – and we promise not to share it – we must keep it confidential – and not gossip about it – or tell anyone

How seriously do we take our vows and promises?

(pause)

As a wealthy oil tycoon lay on his deathbed, his pastor talked of God's healing power. "Pastor," he gasped, "if God heals me, I'll give the church a million dollars." Miraculously, the man revived and within a few short weeks was out of the hospital.

Several months later, he and the pastor chatted outside the local hardware store one day. "You know," the pastor said, "when you were in the hospital dying, you promised to give the church a million dollars if you got well. We haven't got it yet?"

"Did I say that?" the oil tycoon asked. "I guess that just goes to show how sick I really was!"

God expects us to take our vows and promises much more seriously than that!

(pause)

Look how God keeps His promises

[PowerPoint 9a-God's Promises]

From Deuteronomy 7:9

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

1 Chronicles 16:15 says similar

God is always faithful and always keeps His promises

[PowerPoint 9b-Yes in Jesus]

In fact according to the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:20 - he says this:

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

You see ALL God's promises are kept - and find their complete fulfilment in our Lord Jesus

- In Genesis 12:1-3 - when God promised Abraham everyone would be blessed through one of Abraham's descendant - that descendant is Jesus - Jesus says so in John 8:56
- When God promised Israel - "I am the Lord God who brought you out of Egypt into the Promised Land" - that promise points to Jesus leading us to the Promised Land of Heaven (Lev 26:12-13)
- When God fed the ancient Israelites in the wilderness as they made their way to the Promised Land - with bread (manna) from Heaven -

that promise pointed to Jesus - the Bread of Life (John 6:35) - who gives eternal life

- When God promises to be near us when we pray (Deut 4:7) - Jesus taught us how to pray - and gave us the Holy Spirit - who can turn our groans into prayers (as we learnt last week)
- When God promises us protection in Psalm 23 and Psalm 121 - He gave us Jesus the Good Shepherd - who not only came to find the lost sheep - people lost from God - but as this Good Shepherd He lay down His life for His Sheep - so we could have life to the full (John 10:10) - life that leads to eternal life - because God so loved the world (John 3:16) - and Jesus promises that no one can snatch us from His hand (John 10:28)
- When God promises He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deut 31:6; Heb 13:5) - He sent His Spirit to live in us - and His Son interceding for us in Heaven - to prove He never leaves us
- When God promises that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32) - He gave us Jesus as the one who saves us from sin and death
- When God promises His Word won't return to Him empty but accomplish His purposes - in Isa 55:11 - He then sent His Word - Jesus - to live on Earth - and Jesus - the Word - accomplished God's rescue plan - just as God intended
- And God promised and gave the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) which teaches us and remind us of everything that Jesus said (John 14:26)

All these promises God made - are fulfilled in Jesus and so we can trust the promise that He's coming back (John 14:2-3)

The challenge for us today: If God takes all His promises seriously and keeps all His promises - shouldn't we?

(pause)

The Dedication (1 Samuel 1:21-28)

Back to Hannah and Samuel...

When Samuel was weaned

Hannah and Elkanah completed their vow by dedicating Samuel

So we better be clear what dedication is:

[PowerPoint 10-Dedication Definition]

- Set apart and consecrated (make or declare sacred to God for a religious purpose) to God
- Devote wholly and earnestly one's life to God

So how do we devote our whole life to God?

There's a story of a Christian woman who asked her minister

"Will you please tell me what your idea of consecration or dedication is?"

Holding out a blank sheet of paper the minister replied, "It is to sign your name at the bottom of this blank sheet, and to let God fill it in as He sees fit."

[PowerPoint 11-The Dedication]

As we've seen Hannah and Elkanah took their vow seriously and so they presented the child Samuel to the Lord - along with the appropriate sacrifice to the Lord

The same thing happened in our NT reading from Luke 2 when Mary and Joseph presented baby Jesus to the Lord

The OT Law required that the first child be presented to the temple

Exodus 13:2

"Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal."

Why the first born?

Because of the Passover - see Num 3:13

For all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD.

In actual fact - everything belongs to the Lord

Psalm 24:1 says:

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

1 Cor 10:26 says the same

We only have anything because the Lord allows it - and everything and everyone belongs to Him - not us!

So our possessions are His - but He gifts them to us and He allows us to have them

Our children are His - but He gifts them to us - and He allows us to have them

So the challenge for us today - are we committed like Hannah and Elkanah?

Are we committed to dedicating our children, our grandchildren, our nephews, our nieces, our Jaffa/Xcelerate children, our Sunday School children and our school children - committed to dedicating them to the Lord?

Are we committed to praying for them - Hannah prayed and God answered - God is faithful - especially when we pray according to His will - and it's His will for us to produce Godly offspring

So are we committed to praying for them to come to know the Lord and having a saving relationship in our Lord Jesus?

Are we committed to teaching them God's Word?

When Hannah prays her prayer - there is a sense in which she knows that the Lord will answer

See v18 -

She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes" Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast

Why is Hannah able to sense the Lord will answer?

Because:

- a) First - because of her faith in the Lord's faithfulness and goodness and the fact that in her personal relationship with YHWH God - He is approachable
- b) Second - because it is God's plan that children believe in Him - As Jesus Himself says in Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to

me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Conclusion

To conclude then today

[PowerPoint 12-Conclusion]

Will we leave this place today?

Taking our promises before God - seriously and committed to keeping our promises?

Will we leave this place today?

Dedicating all children in our care - and dedicating ourselves - in fact dedicating our whole lives to the Lord as Samuel did?

Because remember the bottom line from:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - as Paul says:

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

Let's pray...