

1 Samuel 2:1-10**Hannah's Prayer**

2 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.

3 "Do not keep talking so proudly
or let your mouth speak such arrogance,
for the LORD is a God who knows,
and by him deeds are weighed.

4 "The bows of the warriors are broken,
but those who stumbled are armed with strength.

5 Those who were full hire themselves out for food,
but those who were hungry are hungry no more.

She who was barren has borne seven children,
but she who has had many sons pines away.

6 "The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the grave and raises up.

7 The LORD sends poverty and wealth;
he humbles and he exalts.

8 He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

he seats them with princes
and has them inherit a throne of honor.

"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
on them he has set the world.

⁹ He will guard the feet of his faithful servants,
but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.

"It is not by strength that one prevails;

¹⁰ those who oppose the LORD will be broken.

The Most High will thunder from heaven;
the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

Luke 1:39-56

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

- ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
- ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
- ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
- ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
- ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”
- ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

Sermon: The Mighty One has done great things

Please have your Bibles in front of you – we’ll be looking at both Bible passages –
from 1 Samuel 2 and Luke 1

There’s an **outline** for you to **take notes** – if that helps you **concentrate**.

Let me ask **God** for His **help** and **guidance** first – let’s **pray**...

Intro/What great things has the mighty one done for you?

Last week - we saw how the **angel Gabriel appeared to Mary** and said she would **give birth to Jesus** – the Son of God - the **Messiah** – even though **Mary is a virgin** [see Luke 1:26-38]

And we **concluded** that **nothing is impossible for God!**

This week we see how **God makes the impossible – possible**

Our focus this morning is on what Mary says in Luke 1:49

[PowerPoint 1-Intro]

In Luke 1:49 Mary says – **The Mighty One has done great things for me – and Holy is His name**

What great things has the Mighty One – God – **done for you?**

You might want to **write** some things **down?**

After all King **David** in **Psalm 103** says this:

[PowerPoint 2-Psalm 103:1-2]

Praise the LORD, my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

²Praise the LORD, my soul,

and forget not all his benefits—

I'll give you a minute or so – to write down or think about what great things – the Mighty One, God, has done for you

(pause)

Ask for some answers?

- Sent Jesus to save us from sin and death
- Given us His Word
- Given us His Holy Spirit
- Given us a family
- Given us a church family
- Provides food, clothes and shelter

In our **2 Bible readings today** – we have **2 women** – **Hannah** and **Mary** – **both** rejoicing over the **birth** of a **baby** – but in totally **different circumstances**.

They are basically saying thank you to God – the Mighty One - **for what He has done for them.**

What about us – **do we say thank you to God** – always/sometimes/rarely?

(pause)

Let's take a **look** at **both Hannah and Mary's stories** and see what **great things** the **Mighty One** did for them

Then we'll **look** at what the **Mighty One** has **done** for us!

What the Mighty One did for Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

[Please turn to 1 Samuel 2]

[PowerPoint 3-Heading – Hannah]

- The **context** from **chapter 1** - is that a woman named **Hannah cannot** have a **child** and she is being **ridiculed** by her husband's **other wife Peninnah** – not a good idea to have 2 wives?
- Every time Hannah and her husband Elkanah and his other wife, Peninnah, went to the House of the Lord - Hannah was ridiculed because she can't have a child
- Her husband says to her in 1:8: "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"
- Probably **not the best thing** to **say** to his **wife [Illustration-Heather/Cats]**
- So, **Hannah prayed** in 1:11 and said **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**
- The **Lord answered Hannah's prayer** and she became pregnant and had a son – called Samuel (which means "heard of God")

[Just a word of caution here – you may be a someone here or know someone who hasn't had children – they does not make someone a failure – or mean that person should be ridiculed – it just means God has other plans for that person – and has freed that person up to serve Him in a different way]

- Back to Hannah's story - when Hannah's **son** – Samuel - was **weaned** – Hannah **dedicated** him to the Lord's service in the house of the Lord
- Then Hannah said a prayer of thanks – which is today's reading from 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Her prayer says what God has done:

- Now remember she has just made the **biggest sacrifice of her life** – she has been **blessed with a son** – and then **given him to the Lord's service** – and she might see **him once a year if she's lucky!**
- But look what she says in v1 – her **heart rejoices** in the Lord
- Could we do that?

(pause)

- Notice she **rejoices in the Lord** – she **can't rejoice in leaving her son** but she **can** rejoice in the Lord. In the most **desperate situations** when we **can't** rejoice in anything else, **we can still rejoice in the Lord**
- But look how Hannah feels – still v1 – in the Lord my **horn** is lifted **high**
- **Horn** here represents **strength** – because the **strength** of an **ox or bull** was expressed by its **horn**
- **Hannah feels so strong** – like she's been **lifted up by God** – because He has **answered her prayer**
- She feels **so strong** – v2 – she can **boast over her enemies** – those who have been ridiculing her for not having a child – **especially Peninnah**
- God has **delivered her from that ridicule**

- She realizes v2- God is **holy like no one else** – He is **unique** – she says the same thing in a different way – **there is no one besides you**
- As far as Hannah is concerned God is a **solid rock foundation**, she can **build** her **life on**
- We can say the same thing – **God** is the **rock-solid foundation** – **we** can **build our lives on**
- She goes on to describe God as a **God of reversal**
- God can **deal with** the **proud** and **arrogant** – v3 - Hannah tells the proud and arrogant not to speak – because **God knows everything** – and next to God **we know nothing** – whereas **God knows** even our **hearts** and will **judge** our **words** and **thoughts** and **actions**
- God can **reverse** the **fortunes** of the **proud** and **arrogant** in lots of ways
 - V4 -Those relying on **military weapons** – can have their **weapons broken**
 - V5 -Those who were **full of food** – are now **begging** for food
 - V5 - Those who **had many children** are now **pining** for them because they've all gone
 - It **doesn't pay** to be proud and arrogant and to **rely on ourselves only** – and to not **rely on God**
- And God can also **reverse the fortunes of the weak**
 - V5- He supplies **food** for the **hungry**
 - V5- The **woman** who **can't have children** – suddenly has **7 children**
- The bottom line is - **God is in control**
 - **God** is in **control** of **life and death** – not humans – v6
 - **God** is in **control** of who has **poverty** and who has **wealth** = v7
 - Still v7 - He **humbles** people (brings them low) so people don't have tickets on themselves – and He **exalts** people who are struggling (He lifts them up) –

- **Hannah knew** that God first set her **low** and **closed** her **womb** (back 1 Sam 1:6) – and she knew God brought her **high** again and **opened** her **womb**
- The reason Hannah knows God is in control – v8b – is because the very **foundations** of the **Earth belong to God** – the **Creator of everything**
- And God will always look after his **faithful servants** (like **Hannah**) – v9 – but the **wicked** will remain **stuck** in the **darkness** of their **sin**
- V9b – **human strength can't prevail** if that person is opposing God – those **who oppose God will be broken** for sure – v10a
- **God** uses His **power** to **set things right**. It isn't enough for us to believe God has this power. We must **know He will** also use that **power** for His glory and righteousness.
- God is so **in control** of everything that at end of v10 – **God will give strength** to His **King** and exalt the horn (strength) of His **anointed one**
 - At the time of Hannah – Israel did not have a king (human) and didn't seem to want one. So, **when Hannah spoke of a king**, she **looked forward** to a time **when Israel would have a king** – **and then ultimately, she looked forward** to the **Messiah King**, who would finally **set all wrongs right**. He is God's anointed one – that is **Jesus**.
 - This is the **1st place in the Bible** where **Jesus** is **referred to** as the **Messiah** (mashiyach)

[PowerPoint 3a]

So, **what great things** has the **Mighty One** done for Hannah?

- **Provided** her with a **son** and **delivered** her from **ridicule**
- Given her **insight** into how He will make **right all the wrongs** in this world
- And given her **insight** into sending a **Messiah King** – which leads us into our NT passage – from Luke 1:39-56

[Please turn there now]

What the Mighty One did for Mary (Luke 1:39-56)

And what the Mighty One has done for Mary

[PowerPoint 4-Heading-Mary]

- When Mary found out she was to have a son through the power of the Holy Spirit
- We pick up the story from v39-40
- She **hurried to her cousin Elizabeth's home** in the hill country of Judea
- A couple of **reasons** for Mary going there
 - She can avoid awkward questions about her own pregnancy
 - She can share the news of her pregnancy with Elizabeth her cousin, who is also expecting
 - Recently two of our daughters were pregnant at the same time – and they shared all those pre-natal things women do – the morning sickness, the baby kicking, the ultrasounds, the plans for the nursery etc.
 - It's a lovely **bonding time** – for **Mary** and **Elizabeth**
- When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting 2 amazing things happened in v41
 - 1st - Elizabeth's baby – John the Baptist – leapt in her womb
 - And 2nd - Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
 - We shouldn't gloss over what's going on here – back in v15 of Luke 1 – the angel said that the baby that Elizabeth would carry – John – ***would be filled with Holy Spirit even before He is born***
 - So, through the Holy Spirit – John inside Elizabeth's womb – **recognizes that the Lord is in Mary's womb** – basically “the unborn John speaks of

the unborn Jesus in Mary's womb" - and **leaps for joy** – and the **Holy Spirit communicates this joy to Elizabeth too**

- Elizabeth believed that the baby in Mary's womb was the Lord Himself – v43 – she could only know that because she had been filled with the Holy Spirit -v41
- And Elizabeth also recognized that Mary's faith played an active role in receiving the promise. God promises should never make us passive; they should prompt us to seize them by faith. Elizabeth wanted to encourage Mary's faith, so she declared in v45 - **Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!**

With that **Mary breaks into song** – her song is **similar to Hannah's prayer**

The song is often called the **Magnificat** – **Latin** for first few words of Mary's prayer

As well as resembling Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10), Mary's song also has **many references to the Old Testament** [no time to look at that now].

But it shows **Mary** was a woman who **studied and knew God's Word**. The **Scriptures** were **on her heart** [perhaps - especially scriptures related to women – like Hannah, Ruth and Esther] - [We can learn from Mary here – and study, know and have scriptures on our hearts]

And her **heart for God's Word** came out **through** her **song**. Perhaps she **thought about Hannah's** prayer as she made **her journey** to Elizabeth's house

In this **song**, Mary **catalogues what the Mighty One has done for her**:

- V47 - She **glorifies the Lord** – that he has **provided** a **saviour** – notice she says **my saviour** – she knew she was sinful, like all of us, and **she needed a saviour as we ALL do**

- She understands the **great privilege and honour** she has in **carrying the Lord as her baby** – and that she is greatly **blessed** – v48
- **The mighty one has done great things for me – Holy is His name** – she says in v49
- **The song celebrates God’s goodness, faithfulness and power**
 - The song shows the **futility of trusting in ourselves**
 - God **scatters the proud** who trust only in themselves (v51) but He shows **mercy to those who have reverent fear of Him** (v50) – and He **lifts** up the **humble** (v52)
 - The song shows the **futility of trusting in military and political** power instead of God
 - God **brings down rulers** from their thrones (v52) – where are all the great Empires now? God is the only King and ruler!
 - God **will always help His servant Israel** – because of the **promises** He **made to Abraham** [**a promise of Land, a great nation with many descendants and the promise that through one of Abraham’s offspring all nations on Earth would be blessed (Gen 22:18)**] – and **God always keeps His promises**
 - The song also shows the **futility of trusting in wealth and riches** instead of God – and that we shouldn’t forget that wealth is only possible because God allows it
 - So, those who are **hungry** are **filled** (v53) and those who are **trusting** in their **wealth and riches** are sent away **empty** (v53)

Just like Hannah’s prayer, **Mary’s song** is a **reversal of fortunes too**

[PowerPoint 4a]

So, **what great things** has the **Mighty One** done for Mary?

- **Blessed** her with the privilege of carrying **the Son of God – The Messiah – the Saviour of the World – there's no greater honour**
- Given her **insight** into His **goodness, faithfulness and power**
- Shown her that He is a God who **always keeps His promises**
- And He is a God who **reverses fortunes – and nothing is impossible for Him**

What the Mighty One does for us

So, what has the Mighty One done for us?

[PowerPoint 5]

- Well - He **reverses our fortunes too**
- Our sin and rebellion deserve punishment – as Romans 6:23 says – **For the wages of sin is death**
- But through the **Promise** of a **Messiah** in **Hannah's prayer**
- And through the **fulfilment of that promise in Mary's virgin birth of Jesus**

[PowerPoint 6]

- We now have the **way to be right with God** – because the rest of the verse from Romans 6:23 says – **but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
- The **Mighty one offers** us a free gift of **forgiveness and eternal life – through the Christmas gift of Jesus**

Response (Ephesians 2:8-10)

How should we respond?

Well first we need to **accept His Christmas gift of grace in sending Jesus!**

And second - then **express** our most **heartfelt thanks** for the gift of grace He has given us

[PowerPoint 7-Response]

Then our **response** can be found in (**Eph 2:8-10**)

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

So, we are saved by God’s grace (undeserved favour), through our faith in Jesus (and God even gives us this as a gift) – and we’re saved for good works – which God has ready made for us.

One of those good works – must surely be – to **share this grace gift of Jesus with everyone** else. **Christmas** time is a **great time to share our faith** in Jesus!

[In your bulletins – you have a flyer for our Christmas events coming up at church – why not invite someone along]

And perhaps we could **write our own prayer of what God has done for us**. I’m happy to **publish** those in our bulletin – if you send them to me.

And our **prayer** must surely be praying for God to **reverse the fortunes** of those who **don’t already know Jesus** and are currently **lost from Him**.

Let’s pray...

Heavenly Father, thank you for the great things you have done for us!

We thank and praise you that you sent Your Son -Jesus - to fix the problem of sin and death – for all who care to believe in your Son.

In this season of Advent – help us to share the precious gift of Jesus – so those who are lost from God – can be found and saved by Jesus. In His name, we pray...AMEN.