

THE ONCE-A-YEAR MOTHER

1 Sam. 1:27, 28

The complete Scripture reading: 1 Sam. 1:1-2:21.

Intro: I have in mind three groups in bringing this three-message series:

- 1) Those whose children are grown.
- 2) Those who are presently raising their children.
- 3) Those who trust in the providence of God that some day they will be parents.

That should get most, if not all, of us.

Much is being said and written about the home today. Some of it is according to Scripture; some is not. But we must believe that the Lord would not fully consider this in giving us His Word, and that He has given us within the pages of Scripture all that any parent needs to know in order to raise children for the glory of God.

There are three relationships that a parent has to be concerned about -- and in this order. If there is a breakdown in any one of them, there can be failure. They are:

- 1) Our relationship to God.
- 2) Our relationship to each other as parents: the husband and wife.
- 3) Our relationship to our children.

In most cases these are going on simultaneously, but they have to continue throughout life. So we have their in their order of priority, but we do not move away from one into the other.

It is upon these relationships that I want to focus attention in this series of messages -- one at a time.

And I want to use examples from Scripture, i.e., the lives of men and women in the Word of God, as a basis for the teaching. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE GREAT DANGER THAT WE MUST AVOID WHEN USING EITHER THE BIOGRAPHIES OF SCRIPTURE OR THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SAINTS WHO HAVE LIVED SINCE THE SCRIPTURES WERE COMPLETED. IT IS THIS: WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE LORD DOES NOT DEAL WITH ANY OF US IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY. WE CAN GET DIVINE PRINCIPLES FROM THE LIVES OF OTHERS, BUT WE MUST NOT EXPECT AN EXACT DUPLICATION. The Lord is always the same, but we are different and our circumstances are different -- and so the Lord's way of dealing with us will always be different!

With all of this in mind, I want to ask you to turn to 1 Sam. 1:27, 28 where we have in capsule form a summary of all that we read about in ch. 1 and the first 21 verses of ch. 2 in 1 Samuel.

Let us call her the once-a-year mother!

That does not sound very good, but look at ch. 2, vv. 18, 19.

With v. 21 we leave Hannah and she is not mentioned in Scripture again, but what tremendous lessons she leaves behind!

Let us notice first . . .

I. HANNAH'S NATURAL DESIRE: She wanted to be a mother.

How often God works through natural circumstances, our normal desires, to indicate what He wants to do for us.

We must see, however (as already indicated), that the Lord was not dealing with Hannah as He had seen fit to deal with Peninnah. And this was undoubtedly part of Hannah's problem.

II. HANNAH'S THREE AGGRAVATIONS.

A. First, she would have wanted a child even if she had been Elkanah's only wife. So she was frustrated by this unsatisfied desire.

B. Second, Peninnah tormented her. See 1:6, 7.

She did it constantly.

But she seemed to take special delight in doing it when they went to "the house of the Lord" each year to worship the Lord.

Can you not imagine how Hannah dreaded those trips?

C. Third, and worst of all, it seemed that the Lord was against her.

Note: Two times in ch. 1, "but the Lord had shut up her womb" (v. 5); "because the Lord had shut up her womb" (v. 6).

A few weeks ago I read the words to John Newton's hymn, "I asked the Lord that I might grow." Usually someone asks me for the words when I read a poem like that, but no one did that time. However, in it Newton tells what the Lord often does when He is answering this prayer. Newton tells how he began to feel the presence of sins he had never recognized before, and then the forces of hell seemed to be released against him. BUT THE WORST PART OF IT WAS THAT THE LORD HIMSELF SEEMED TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE WHEN HE WAS THE ONE WHO COULD HAVE DONE

SOMETHING ABOUT IT! This is how Newton expressed it:

"Yea more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low."

This is what was happening to Hannah. This was the worst aggravation of all!

What did Hannah do? This is the crucial point in her experience. And this is where we can learn a great deal from her.

III. HANNAH'S REACTION.

Did she give up? No!

Did she rebel against the Lord? No!

Did she quit going up to "the house of the Lord"? No!

What did she do? She prayed and prayed and prayed year after year after year. We are told about one year in particular when the answer was given, but you can be sure that this had been going on for years!

Cf. R52
12:13
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How many years? We are not told because we would take that as a pattern for ourselves. The Lord works differently and on a different schedule for each of us. Remember that!

The greatest thing that can happen to a parent, or to a prospective parent, is to be brought to the place in life where we KNOW that all we have is the Lord!

From this point on the important thing in the story is what was going on between the Lord and Hannah; Samuel was the one who reaped a great many of the benefits. What a privilege to have such a mother.

But we are getting ahead of our story.

IV. THE LORD'S ANSWER: a baby boy was born -- a son whose influence was to be felt for years from one end of Israel to the other!

And Hannah named him, "Samuel" -- heard of God.

She had said in v. 11, "and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid," and v. 19 of ch. 1 concludes with, "and the Lord remembered her." Could a parent be assured of a greater truth?

Cf. 1 John 5:14, 15.

What was the sequel?

V. HANNAH'S RESPONSE.

Three things we need to note:

- A. She gave Samuel to the Lord. See our text with v. 26.
Like Abraham gave Isaac. The Lord must be first.
- B. Her heart was opened to the Lord and to His purposes as never before. See 2:1-10.

We could not begin to number those men and women who have learned these great truths from Hannah -- not the least of whom was MARY, the mother of our Lord. See Luke 1: 46-55 -- some taken directly from Hannah.

- C. Her annual visits to see Samuel. Cf. 1 Sam. 2:18, 19.

The Lord gave her more children, but we are interested in Samuel.

She did more with those annual visits than many of do even though we have our children with us all of the time!

WHY?

Because in her desire to be a mother, and in the realization of that desire in answer to prayer, Hannah was made to learn the joy and blessing of placing all of her hopes in the Lord.

Concl: What does this all teach us? Why does the Lord put us through hard places -- not perhaps just like Hannah, but hard nevertheless.

Let me answer with the last two verses of Newton's hymn. Newton pictures himself as crying out to the Lord like Hannah did:

"'Lord, why is this?' I trembling cried,
'Wilt thou pursue Thy worm to death?'"

And the Lord is pictured as answering,

"'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied,
'I answer prayer for grace and faith.

'These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in me.'"

Do you want to be everything the Lord wants you to be for your children either now, or whenever you have them? Then let the Lord be everything to you now. The burden you face is sovereignly designed to draw you to HIMSELF!