

LITTLE SAMUEL'S GARMENTS

Lesson 4

I. One of the most compelling stories for women in the Bible is the account of Hannah and her prayer for a child.

- A. Many women have felt the same unfulfilled longing for a child.
1. The women of the Old and New Testament considered their barrenness as punishment from God for some unknown sin.
 2. Many women of the Bible were said to be barren before they finally had a child:
 - a. Sarah, wife of Abraham – mother of **Isaac** (Genesis 11)
 - b. Rebekah, wife of Isaac – mother of **Jacob** and Esau (Genesis 25)
 - c. Rachel, wife of Jacob – mother of **Joseph** and Benjamin (Gen. 29)
 - d. Manoah's wife – mother of **Samson** (Judges 13)
 - e. Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, mother of **John the Baptizer** (Luke 1)
 3. Notice, however, that God had a special purpose for the sons of each of these women who remained barren for so many years before they were rewarded with the desire of their hearts.
 4. **Psalm 127:3** – "*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.*" While this verse teaches that children should be looked upon as a "reward", it is not to be assumed that barrenness is punishment.
 5. Similarly, in the life of Job, the people of his time obviously believed that when tragedy came upon a man, such as Job, it was considered punishment for sin, just as his riches indicated that he was righteous.
 - a. Since we have the benefit of knowing the whole account of Job and the circumstances that surrounded his tragedies, we know that God did not intend it as punishment, but a test of Job's faith (to prove a point to Satan).
 - b. In the same way, these women of renown did not suffer barrenness for their sin or lack of faith. They were simply a part of God's plan and were entrusted by God to give birth to patriarchs, judges and prophets.
 6. When the Israelites were being prepared to go into Canaan to conquer its inhabitants, God made them this promise:
Exodus 23:25-26 – "²⁵ *So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you.* ²⁶ *No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.*"
 - a. The fact that God promised that no one would be barren **IF** they faithfully served Him in Canaan, simply means that God can overrule the natural birth process by eliminating barrenness, just as He was able to suspend the natural illnesses that all people are susceptible to.

- b. It has always been, and it still is today, that some women have medical problems that prevent them from conceiving. While this is heartbreaking for many women, it is not to be construed as punishment.
 - B. Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah. In fact, she was Elkanah's favorite.
(I Samuel 1)
 1. The other wife was Peninnah. She had sons and daughters but Hannah had no children.
 2. Once each year Elkanah took his family to Shiloh to offer sacrifices and worship God.
 - a. Elkanah gave portions of the offerings to Peninnah and all her sons and daughters.
 - b. But Elkanah loved Hannah more so he gave her a double portion of the offerings.
 3. Peninnah made Hannah's life miserable by constantly reminding her that the Lord has "closed her womb".
 - a. While they were at Shiloh, Hannah was so discouraged and unhappy that she wept and could not eat.
 - b. Elkanah asked Hannah why she grieved so, since he tried to be better to her than ten sons.
 4. When they had finished eating, Hannah went near the Tabernacle where Eli, the priest, was sitting in the door of the Tabernacle.
 - a. Hannah prayed and wept in anguish and then she made a vow saying:
I Samuel 1:11 – *"O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."*
 - b. Eli saw Hannah as her mouth moved but no words were coming out because Hannah was "speaking in her heart" (vs 13).
 - c. Eli thought Hannah was drunk and he scolded her. But Hannah said: *"I am not drunk, but have poured out my soul before the Lord."* (vs 15)
 - d. Eli then told Hannah that her petition would be granted, even though he didn't know what her petition was.
 - e. Hannah went away no longer sad. (vs 18)
 - C. When Hannah and Elkanah returned to her home, her petition was answered and she gave birth to a son, named Samuel, which means "I have asked for him from the Lord".
 1. In the first few years of Samuel's life, Elkanah continued going to Shiloh annually to sacrifice and worship, but Hannah and Samuel did not go.
 2. Hannah kept Samuel at home until he was weaned, which may have been about four years old (according to Jewish history).

- a. When Samuel was weaned Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh to offer sacrifices.
- b. Hannah spoke to Eli saying:
I Samuel 1:26-28 – *"...I am the woman who stood by you praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed and the Lord has granted me my petition... Therefore I also have **lent** him to the Lord **as long as he lives** he shall be lent to the Lord."*
- c. Hannah and Elkanah went back home and left Samuel to serve the Lord with Eli, the priest.
- d. Imagine how difficult it would be to leave your only child to be raised by someone else.
- e. However, Hannah had made a vow to God which she was required to fulfill. (we spoke about the seriousness of making vows to God in a previous lesson)

II. Samuel Begins His Service To God

- A. Hannah and Elkanah could only see Samuel once each year as they came to Shiloh to offer sacrifices.
 1. "Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod."
 2. In our lesson on the "Priestly Garments", we learned that an ephod was an apron-like garment that was worn over a tunic or robe.
 - a. The Levitical Priests wore a plain linen ephod, like Samuel's.
 - b. The High Priest wore a very elaborately decorated ephod.
 3. Eli blessed Hannah and Elkanah each year as they brought their sacrifices to Shiloh saying *"The Lord give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the Lord."* **I Samuel 2:20**
 4. Hannah gave birth to three more sons and two daughters.
 5. It appears that the vow Hannah made to "lend Samuel to the Lord" was a Nazirite vow on behalf of Samuel.
 6. The details of the Nazirite vow are given in **Numbers 6:1-27**.
 - a. The Nazirite vow was voluntary, and could be made by a man or a woman.
 - b. Wine was forbidden (or any fermented drink) as well as the grapes or raisins.
 - c. Cutting the hair on their head was forbidden
 - d. There was no set length of time for a vow. Apparently the person making the vow had to decide how long their vow would last, with a specific beginning and ending set.
 - e. One under this vow could not go near a dead body or would he would become defiled. If someone died near him and he accidentally became defiled, he had to go through a seven-day purification ritual. On the seventh day he would shave his head and start his vow all over.

- f. When the period of time for his vow was finished, sacrifices had to be offered: 1 male lamb (a burnt offering), 1 ewe lamb (a sin offering) and 1 ram (a peace offering). He would shave his head and place the hair under the ram and burn it with his offering.
7. It is interesting to note that Hannah dedicated Samuel to this Nazirite vow for **the rest of his life**.
8. Other men in the Bible that we know who were under the vow were:
 - a. Samson – Judges 13:5
 - b. John the Baptizer – Luke 1:13-17

III. Imagine How Hannah Must Have Felt As She Watched Her Son Become So Influential In The Service Of God.

- A. Samuel was eligible to serve God as a **Levitical Priest** under the High Priest, Eli, because Samuel was a descendant of the tribe of Levi who were all dedicated to God .
 1. The entire lineage of Samuel is given in **I Chronicles 6:33-38**.
 2. The sons of Levi were Gershon, **Kohath**, and Merari. Samuel's father, Elkanah was from the family of Kohath. Kohath's sons were: Amram, **Izhar**, Hebron and Uzziel
 3. Amram was the father of Moses and Aaron – the High Priests had to be in the direct lineage of Aaron.
 4. Samuel was from the lineage of **Izhar**, son of Kohath, son of Levi.
- B. Hannah could not have known how Samuel would be used in God's plan.
 1. She knew that her son would have been dedicated to God as a Levite, but he would only have served on a rotating schedule while he was between the ages of 25 and 50 years old. (**Numbers 8:23-25**)
 2. Hannah vowed that her first born son would be dedicated to God for his entire life and apparently he was to be bound to the Nazirite vow since she specified that "no razor would touch his hair".
- C. Samuel's service to God was elevated far above that which his mother could have envisioned.
 1. Samuel was chosen by God to be a **Prophet** when he was still a boy. (**I Samuel 3:20**)
 - a. Samuel heard a voice calling his name three times in the night.
 - b. He thought it was Eli, but Eli said he had not called.
 - c. Eli understood that it was God speaking to Samuel so he instructed Samuel to say "*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.*" (**I Samuel 3:9**)
 - d. The first prophecy Samuel received was a warning that God's judgment was about to come to Eli and his evil sons, because Eli did not restrain them.
 - e. This prophecy came to pass when the Philistines attacked Israel and defeated them soundly, even capturing the Ark of God.
 - f. A survivor of the battle returned to tell Eli that his two sons had been killed in the battle and the Ark had been captured by the Philistines. When Eli

- heard that the Ark had been captured he fell off his seat backwards and broke his neck. He had been Israel's judge for 40 years.
- g. The Lord struck the Philistines and they suffered in many ways as long as they kept the Ark. The people were even struck with tumors.
 - h. They decided to send the Ark and some gold as a "trespass offering" back to Israel on a cart pulled by two cows with calves. The calves were kept behind and the cows were sent off with no driver.
 - i. The Philistines said "If the cows come back to their calves, then these tumors are not from the God of Israel, but if they go on to Israel we will know this trouble is from their God."
 - j. The cows headed straight to Israel and the Philistines watched them until they entered the border of Israel, then they went home.
2. Samuel is first mentioned as a **Judge** in **I Samuel 7:6** after the death of Eli.
- a. The Ark remained there 20 years and the people lamented to the Lord because the Ark had not been returned to the Tabernacle.
 - b. Samuel told them they had sinned against God and they must confess their sin. So the people followed Samuel's instructions
 - c. Samuel ordered the Israelites to Mizpah where he would pray for them.
 - d. Samuel offered a lamb as a sacrifice and as he did so, the Philistines came near to battle against Israel.
 - e. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines and so confused them that they were overcome and the men of Israel pursued them and drove them back.
 - f. The hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days that Samuel served God.
 - g. Samuel judged Israel from his home town of Ramah where he had built an altar to the Lord.
3. Of course, Samuel was a **Levitical Priest** because he was an ancestor of Levi. This is evident because he was qualified to offer burnt offerings.
- a. After the Ark of God was captured by the Philistines, it stayed at the home of Abinadab for twenty years.
 - b. When the people approached Samuel about bringing it back to the Tabernacle, Samuel *"If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."* (**I Samuel 7:3-4**)
 - 1) The people followed the instructions of Samuel and tore down the foreign idols.
 - 2) They fasted and confessed that they had sinned against God.
 - 3) Then Samuel offered a lamb as a burnt offering to the Lord.
 - c. Later when Israel demanded a king and Saul was anointed as the first king of Israel, he was facing the Philistine army of 30,000 with only 2,000 in his army. (**I Samuel 13**)

- 1) Saul's army was afraid and began to desert.
- 2) Saul was waiting for Samuel to come to offer a sacrifice as a way of seeking God's blessing on the battle.
- 3) When Samuel didn't come for seven days, Saul decided to offer the burnt offering himself.
- 4) Samuel arrived just as Saul had finished with the burnt offering and he said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God." This commandment he was regarding the consecration Priests and Levites, who were the ones qualified to offer burnt offerings to the Lord.
- 5) Samuel was qualified through his lineage from Levi and Saul was not qualified since he was from the tribe of Benjamin. (**I Samuel 9:1-2**)

IV. As Hannah Dedicated Her Son To The Lord, She Understood That Her Influence On Him Would Be Limited.

- A. Her love for God was made evident in her prayer when she promised to give her son to the service of God all the days of his life"
 1. When Hannah received a son in answer to her prayer, it must have increased her faith enormously.
 2. It is logical to believe that Hannah continued to pray for her son after his birth and all during his life as he served God.
 3. The only way she was able to show her love and to encourage her son in his work was to provide a new coat each year as she came to worship and sacrifice to God each year.
 4. No doubt that coat served as a constant reminder to Samuel of the dedication of his parents to God and only added to the teaching he received from Eli.
- B. The biggest responsibility of any parent still today is to find ways to continually encourage our children and grandchildren in the faith and service to God.
 1. Nothing our children ever accomplish will ever be as important as their spiritual strength and faithfulness to God.
 2. Of course we want our children to be educated and to find honorable and productive careers to support their families.
 - a. What eternal benefit will their worldly accomplishments provide them?
 - b. Jesus reminded us of this in **Matthew 16:26** – "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 3. If we can only teach our children and grandchildren that making the will of God our primary priority, then they will be rewarded with the things they need in life.
 - a. **Matthew 6:20-34** – "*...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.* ²¹ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

- b. I must admit that it is very challenging today to think about eternal treasures that are not visible, when they are so inundated with the treasures this world has to offer. But that is why the parent's responsibility must be taken so seriously.
- c. **Matthew 6:31-33-34** – "³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."
- 4. We may not be able to dedicate our children to the service of God in the same way as Hannah did, but we can dedicate ourselves to being the best possible influence on our children (even when they are grown) and our grandchildren.
- 5. We certainly can't count on their getting a godly influence from those in the world.
 - a. There will be many in the world working to undo our influence as much as possible.
 - b. We must be faithful in our own lives as an example to them.
 - c. We must remember them constantly in our prayers that they will be wise enough to overcome the temptations of the world and to serve God with all their heart.
 - d. We must give them encouraging words as often as possible.
 - e. These are some of the ways we can follow Hannah's example in encouraging her son by making him a coat each year.