

## **OFFER UP**

### **1 Samuel 1**

Moms ... Happy Mothers' Day! If it were not for you ... we would not be here ... literally. We just want to thank you for all the things you have done for your children! You are the ones that have taught us most of what we know.

Let me share with you some of the things you have taught us ...

- You, mothers taught us **HOW TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE** ... “If you’re going to kill each other, do it outside ... I just finished cleaning the house.”
- You, mothers taught us **ALL ABOUT RELIGION** ... “You better pray that will come out of the carpet.
- You, mothers taught us **TIME TRAVEL** ... “If you don’t straighten up, I’m going to knock you into next week.”
- You, mothers taught us about **FORESIGHT** ... “Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you’re in an accident.
- You, mothers taught us about **OSMOSIS** ... “Shut your mouth and eat your supper.”
- You, mothers taught us about **CONTORTIONISM** ... “Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck.”
- You, mothers taught us about **LOGIC** ... “If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you are not going to the store with me.”
- You, mothers taught us about **MEDICAL SCIENCE** ... “If you don’t stop crossing your eyes, they are going to freeze that way.”
- You, mothers taught us about **HUMOR** ... “When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don’t come running to me.”
- You, mothers taught us about **ROOTS** ... “Do you think you were born in a barn?”
- You, mothers taught us about **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION** ... “Stop acting like your father.”

- You, mothers taught us about JUSTICE ... “One day you will have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you ... then you will see what it is like.”

We are starting a new series this morning called “Fantastic Families”.

Preaching a series on the family can be devastating to some.

- Some of you might have liked to have children and could not. And sermons like this are tough to sit through
- Some of you have had children that did not turn out the way that you had hoped. And sermons like this are tough for you to sit through also.
- Some of you came from dysfunctional families and sermons on family are not good reminders of times past.
- And some of you might have decided to stay single or have chosen not to have kids so the only family you have is extended family. And some of those ... the more extended they are the better ... right.

I have been praying all week for you who might be in one of these situations. I have prayed that God would give you some kind of release from the pain that you have been carrying ... and that maybe something said over the next several weeks might be a salve to your hurting heart! Please bare with me ... the rest of us need to hear from the Lord on this subject ... and I don't know how else to do it!

Kevin Lehman, a noted author of a number of parenting books was recently sharing a story on the *James Dobson Program*. Lehman said he was on an airplane seated next to a man about 70 years of age. They visited for quite some time and finally the man said “What do you do for a living?” He said “Well I talk and give speeches around the country and write books on helping people be better parents.” The man said, “Really, that is amazing”. He said “Young man, where do you get so much wisdom on parenting at such a young age?” Kevin said, “I really didn't think about it,” I just quickly said “Well, I got it all from one book.” The man got his palm pilot out, turned it on, got all set and said “Okay what's the name of it?” Kevin said, “It is the Bible, B-I-B-L-E.”

I agree with Lehman ... I believe the Bible is the best book available on developing people the way that God wants us to be ... and that certainly includes families.

That is why we are going to turn this morning to **I SAMUEL 1** and see how a mother who is not extremely well known raised her child. Hopefully we can learn some lessons from her that will help us to raise our children ... or influence other people's children or grandchildren in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

This story in **1 SAMUEL** begins by introducing us to a woman ... who more than anything in the world desired to have a child. And there are several reasons for that ...

- One is that that is just the natural thing for most women. They want children
- Another reason is that having children was a sign of God blessing you. And if you could not have children ... it was a sign of God cursing you. You did something wrong that God did not like so he withheld. And of course ... if your husband had other wives ... and they are having children ... they might have a tendency to rub it in a bit.

The woman who is the main character in this true story is Hannah. Hannah was one of Elkanah's wives and they lived in the hill country near Jerusalem. You noticed I said one of his wives.

It was common for a man to have more than one wife in the Jewish culture at that time. (Not sure why you would want to do that ... but they did).

The issue I mentioned a moment ago was taking place in Elkanah's family. His second wife was having kids ... Hannah was not. And it was constantly being thrown in her face. "Nah, nah, nah, nah ... you can't have any kids." And like it would any woman in this same situation ... it crushed Hannah! She wanted a child more than anything ... but it was not happening!

The Scriptures go on to tell us that Hannah continuously prayed to God about the situation. She didn't give up her faith and hope in the Lord ... she knew that He could come through if He just wanted to! And Hannah was

specific in her prayers ... she wanted a son. She even made a vow to God. Lord, bless me with a son and I will offer him up to you to be your servant.

She was so intense in her prayers that one day she was in the Temple praying ... the High Priest Eli ... saw her lips moving while she was praying and thought that she was drunk! She wasn't ... she was intense in her prayers.

Listen to how **1 SAMUEL 1:13-17** records it ... <sup>13</sup> Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk <sup>14</sup> and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine." <sup>15</sup> "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. <sup>16</sup> Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." <sup>17</sup> Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

Hannah heads home after her conversation and the blessing from the High Priest ... and listen to what happens next ... **1 SAMUEL 1:19-20a** ...

<sup>19</sup> Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. <sup>20</sup> So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son.

You ever wonder why God waited so long before he gave Hannah a child? We don't really know why ... only God does. BUT ... I wonder why it was just at the time that Hannah said that she would offer Samuel up to God that God decided to answer the prayer.

Maybe it was the motive that was the problem.

- Hannah was embarrassed because she had not had a child.
- She was probably a bit vindictive in her thinking ... "If I have a child then Elkanah's other wife will have to eat her words."
- Maybe she was seeking joy from having a child rather than seeking joy in the Lord.

Maybe it was none of these things ... but for some reason God did not give Hannah a child until she was willing to offer him up to God.

Let's read on ... **I SAMUEL 1:20b-28** ... She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him." The name 'Samuel' literally means "asked of God" in Hebrew. There was no doubt in Hannah's mind where Samuel came from ... God had answered her prayers.

In the rest of our passage this morning we can learn some lessons from her that needs to be applied in our parenting ... again ... whether it is our kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews, or someone else's kids who are not being raised in the Lord. WHAT DID HANNAH DO WHAT WE NEED TO IMITATE? ...

### 1 ... SHE NURTURED SAMUEL

Look at **VERSES 21-23** ... <sup>21</sup> When her husband Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, <sup>22</sup> Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always." <sup>23</sup> "Do what seems best to you," her husband Elkanah told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

We are not sure how old Samuel was by the time he was weaned. It is according to how you translate the word 'wean'.

- If you translate it as weaned from Hannah physically nursing Samuel ... then he was probably about 3 or 4 years old. It was the practice of the Hebrew mothers to nurse their children until they reached about that age.
- If you translate the word 'wean' as it is sometimes translated ... then it is when he was considered mature ... able to make it on his own. Josephus ... a Hebrew historian indicates that Samuel was probably about 11 years old when God called out to him in the Temple that we find in **CHAPTER 3**. So, he could have been older than we might guess if we were looking through the eyes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century American culture.

I wonder what took place for those few years that Hannah had Samuel at home? What did she teach him?

I can almost guarantee you that Hannah taught Samuel the importance of living for God! And I believe that because of the way Samuel served the Lord throughout his life. Those characteristics most often start at home.

I believe she took the command found in **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9** seriously ... <sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates

In the same way that Hannah taught her son to live for God ... that is the most important job that you and I have as parents ... or those that stand in the place of parents who are not doing the job of raising their children in the Lord.

You cannot teach your child anything more important than this ... live for God! Everything else you teach them is only temporary! Living for the Lord is eternal.

- You might want to teach them to play sports ... great ... but teach them that sports is an opportunity to develop Christian character
- You might want to teach them how to make money. Fine ... but teach them to be good stewards of that money ... and teach them that investing in God's kingdom certainly gives the best returns.
- You might even want to teach them how to look attractive ... Not a problem ... as long as you teach them that the most attractive thing is a sweet spirit that emulates the Spirit of God.

Nurture your kids ... or the kids you influence to live their lives for the Lord.

## **2 ... SHE TAUGHT SAMUEL TO WORSHIP GOD**

**VERSE 24 ...** <sup>24</sup> After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.

Several years ago ... I would watch Jimmy Houston on TV. He was a fisherman. My daughter would probably tell you that there is only one thing worse than fishing ... it is watching someone else fish. Nevertheless ... I would watch his TV show ... trying to learn some new tricks. One of the things I liked best about Jimmy Houston was that almost every time the show came to an end he would say ... “Dads, take your kids to Sunday School ... don’t sent them ... take them.” It was worth watching the show just to hear him say that.

**VERSE 24** tells us that when Hannah went to the Temple to worship God by offering a sacrifice ... **she took the boy with her.**

### **Worship is more caught than taught!**

- Let your children catch you reading the Bible at home each day
- Let your children hear you pray at each meal and with them before they go to bed.
- Let your children catch you sharing your faith with someone who does not know Christ as their Lord.
- Let your children catch you serving other people in the name of Christ
- Let your children catch you giving your offerings for the work of God’s kingdom
- Let your children catch you singing praises to God the Father
- Let your children catch you participating in the Lord’s Supper.

Those are all ways you worship God. Do it in front of ... and with your children. Let them catch from you the most important thing you can show them ... Worshipping the God of the Universe!

### **3 ... SHE OFFERED SAMUEL UP TO GOD**

<sup>25</sup> When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli,  
<sup>26</sup> and she said to him, “Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. <sup>27</sup> I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. <sup>28</sup> So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.

In Canaan the Canaanites worshipped a god called Molech by offering their children as sacrifices. Moloch was a bronze statue heated with fire and the parents would throw their children into that fire as a way to appease Molech. If you did not have any children then you could buy one from the poor and sacrifice it.

That is not what we mean here when we say offer them up. We do not offer our children up to God so he can burn them to death. In fact, just the opposite! It is so they do not burn for eternity. God wants us to offer our children up to him so he can give them life! Life the way it was meant to be lived.

The fact is this ... our kids do not belong to us anyway. They belong to God. He loans them to us. When we willing offer them up to him ... then they can become what God has wanted them to be all along.

The problem with a lot of our kids today is that we stand in the way of God ... holding on to our kids when ... if we would just realize it ... if we would let loose and offer up ... they would be so much better off!

We need to learn that proverbial lesson ... “Let go and let God.”

## CONCLUSION

Hannah shows us some great lessons when it comes to raising children!

- She has taught us that we need to nurture them while they are young.
- She has taught us to that we need to teach our own children how to worship God
- And She has taught us to offer our children up to God.

Notice what the end result was ... **VERSE 28b** ... **And he worshiped the LORD there**

You want your children to be children of God ... nurture them ... teach them to worship ... and offer them up.

**Just as Hannah handed little Samuel over to the Lord—the ultimate aim of parenting ... the real anticipation of the cradle ... is one day to hand our child over to the Lord.**

For some of us to do that ... we have some changes to make in our own lives ... don't we? I am not talking about stretch marks or heart burn ... or late night trips to the bathroom! I am talking about us taking on the name of Christ! We cannot give our children something that we do not have ... and of all the things we can give our child as we anticipate the cradle ... a Christian parent is the best