

Message Outline

Theme and Goal: **Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.**

P_____ is the most C_____ spiritual practise among people today.

Tim Keller's definition of an idol: " an idol is a G_____ thing that becomes an U_____ thing. A good thing you ought to enjoy becomes the very C_____ of your life. The thing about which you say, "Because I have that, I have H_____; because I have that, I'm W_____; because of that, I have M_____, " more than your relationship with G_____, is the thing that actually becomes your functional S_____. That is the thing that is your real H_____."

1 Samuel 1 :3-18

Year after year Elkanah would go up from his city to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD. 4 And whenever the day came for Elkanah to present his sacrifice, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved her even though the LORD had closed her womb. 6 Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival would provoke her and taunt her viciously. 7 And this went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival taunted her until she wept and would not eat. 8 "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah asked. "Why won't you eat? Why is your heart so grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

Hannah Prays for a Son

9 So after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. 10 In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. 11 And she made a vow, pleading, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever come over his head." 12 As Hannah kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine!" 15 "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman oppressed in spirit. I have not had any wine or strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; for all this time I have been praying out of the depth of my anguish and grief." 17 "Go in peace," Eli replied, "and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of Him." 18 "May your maidservant find favor with you," said Hannah. Then she went on her way, and she began eating again, and her face was no longer downcast.

So in that society women were pretty much forced to make M_____ and C_____ their idols.

There was great shame and humiliation associated with I_____, the woman was considered to be W_____ if she couldn't have children.

Hannah was in so much grief and pain that she wailed to God in

B_____ of H_____

vs. 18 "Then she W_____ her way and ate something and her F_____ was no longer D_____."

A S_____ happened in Hannah's heart and mind. She focused on the Almighty God in her prayer and she was C_____.

Prayer doesn't change G_____, it changes U_____.

The word for prayer in Hebrew is "palal" which literally means to "F_____ down to the ground in the presence of one in A_____ pleading a C_____".

So Hannah has come to the realization that she is to have nothing to do with either I_____ – a S_____ or a H_____.

G_____ is the One who she worships and G_____ alone.

And Hannah has come to the point that she can D_____ her son to the Lord in fulltime service as a N_____.

But God wants us to get our I_____ and S_____ and S_____ from Him and Him alone.

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.

Applications:

P_____ out your heart to God

P_____ Waiting times are growing times.

P_____ Expect that God will C_____ your heart.

Soul Food Day 1

1 Sam. 1:1-8

1 Now there was a man named Elkanah who was from Ramathaim-zophima in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2 He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

3 Year after year Elkanah would go up from his city to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD. 4 And whenever the day came for Elkanah to present his sacrifice, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved her even though the LORD had closed her womb.

6 Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival would provoke her and taunt her viciously. 7 And this went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival taunted her until she wept and would not eat.

8 "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah asked. "Why won't you eat? Why is your heart so grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

In this story we have Hannah, a woman who turns to God in prayer because of her impossible situation – a husband who loves her more than his second wife, Peninnah, but it's Peninnah who has children and Hannah doesn't. It's a very messy love triangle in which everyone is miserable. In that society, in that era, having a family was what gave a woman worth and dignity in the eyes of others around her. That society forced women to make idols of family and bearing children. Even Elkanah, Hannah's husband, wants Hannah to make him her idol – he says why is your heart so grieved, why don't you eat? Am I not worth more to you than 10 sons?

So what is an idol, you ask? Tim Keller's definition is this: *"an idol is a good thing that becomes an ultimate thing. A good thing you ought to enjoy becomes the very center of your life. The thing about which you say, "Because I have that, I have honor; because I have that, I'm worthwhile; because of that, I have meaning," more than your relationship with God, is the thing that actually becomes your functional salvation. That is the thing that is your real hope."* Idols aren't something of the past, we also make idols of things or people such as our children, or lack thereof or our spouse or lack thereof, or our career or lack thereof, or our money, or lack thereof, etc.

Question: What idol(s) do you have in your life?

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
 - What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 - What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
 - Now talk to Jesus...
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Soul Food Day 2

1 Samuel 1 :9-18 Hannah Prays for a Son

9So after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.

10In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. 11And she made a vow, pleading, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever come over his head."

12As Hannah kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. 13Hannah was praying in her heart, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard.

So Eli thought she was drunk 14and said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine!"

15"No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman oppressed in spirit. I have not had any wine or strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; for all this time I have been praying out of the depth of my anguish and grief."

17"Go in peace," Eli replied, "and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of Him."

18"May your maidservant find favor with you," said Hannah. Then she went on her way, and she began eating again, and her face was no longer downcast.

Hannah goes to the temple to pray for a son. She pours out her anguish and grief to God in prayer; she is totally fed up with Peninnah's heckling and teasing her because she is childless. Eli, the priest, thinks that she is drunk because she is moving her mouth but no sound comes out.

In our modern religious culture prayer is a communication between man and God (Elohiym) and while this definition could be applied to some passages of the Bible (such as Genesis 20:17) it is not a Hebraic definition of the Hebrew word *palal*, which is the word for prayer in verses 10 and 12. By looking at the etymology of this word we can better see the Hebraic meaning. The word *palal* comes from the parent root *pal* meaning "fall" (The root *pal* is most likely the root of our word 'fall' which can etymologically be written as phal). *Pal* is also the root of the Hebrew word *naphal* also meaning "fall". The word *palal* literally means to "fall down to the ground in the presence of one in authority pleading a cause".

There is another Hebrew word for prayer and that is *tefillah* coming from the root word *palal*– which has an added meaning of self-evaluation; to evaluate oneself in terms of the holiness of God. They would use prayer as a way to compare their actions, behavior and attitude against God's holiness. Hannah, prayed for a son – *O Lord Almighty if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me and do 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.* Hannah is acknowledging God's holiness and that God is almighty and comparatively she is God's lowly servant and wants to be of service to God.

While in prayer in the temple where Hannah falls face down to the ground, Hannah comes to the point of giving up these idols (see Soul Food Day 1) and sees that her identity is in God; that her worth and her value is not based on societal norms like having children or a husband but in the fact that she can trust the Almighty God with her life and those other things don't matter. When Hannah prayed she understood that God is Almighty and she could trust God with her life. The text doesn't give us much to go on in terms of what happened during that prayer time but before she prayed she was downcast and felt miserable and couldn't eat. After she prayed she went on her way and was able to eat and she was no longer downcast!

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us!

Application

What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?

What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Now talk to Jesus...

Soul Food Day 3

1 Samuel 1: 10-11

10In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. 11And she made a vow, pleading, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever come over his head."

It seems strange that Hannah would dedicate her son – the one she is praying for - to full time service to God at the tabernacle with Eli the High Priest. Here she is praying for God to give her son and then she will give him back to God. It seems like Hannah is bargaining with God.

This is what Tim Keller says about this, " Again, you don't understand unless you understand what this particularly means to really figure out the surrender she's actually doing before God. In those days, if you wanted to go into ministry (that meant to be a priest), you had to be a Levite. You had to be of the tribe of Levi. But if you were of another tribe and you wanted to go into full-time ministry, you could become a Nazirite. In Numbers 6 it lays this out.

A Nazirite was a person from another tribe who wanted to go into full-time ministry as essentially a lay priest, as someone who was a full-time assistant to the priest who lived in the tabernacle from the time he was a little boy to be raised up there, and he was a full-time assistant priest, as it were. The two marks of being a Nazirite, which was a lay priest, basically, were that you could not drink strong drink and you never cut your hair. Those were your markers.

Do you know what Hannah is doing? Do you realize what has happened here? A Nazirite child is of no help to the economy of the family; makes no contribution. Second, a Nazirite child cannot take care of you in old age, because the child is away in ministry. Thirdly, not only that, a Nazirite child doesn't even give you any emotional support. He's not with you. You can't carry him around. When all of the other women are walking around with their sons, your son is not going to be with you."

What Hannah is doing here is looking at a theological reason for wanting a child – she is looking beyond the reasons that women wanted children – for emotional support and also for power in the community. The theological reason is that she wants her child to serve God. She's saying, "All my life I've wanted a child for me, but now I want a child for You. I want a child who can work in your mission. I want a child who can work in your ministry." God and his mission is the end and the son is just the means. She has shifted her hope. She has shifted her self-image. She has shifted the center of her life from having a child to being part of God's mission in the world. And how do we know that? Because further on the passage we read that Hannah arose and was no longer downcast and could eat again. What does that mean? In prayer her thoughts shifted; the Holy Spirit was working in her heart. Even though she wasn't pregnant yet – or didn't even know for sure that she was going to have a son, she was no longer downcast in her spirit – she went her way and ate. Her heart was changed through prayer. She knew that she could trust God with the outcome. She was at peace.

What is it that you want to pour out to God in prayer? Why not do so now? Let God's peace reign in your heart.

Prayer doesn't change God, but changes us!

Application

What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?

What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Now talk to Jesus...

Soul Food Day 4

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

2 Hannah prayed and said,

"My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in my God.^[a]

My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in my^[a] victory.

2 "There is no Holy One like the Lord,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.

5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

6 The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.

8 He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.^[a]

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.

9 "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.

10 The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High^[a] will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;

he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed.

Prayers of Generosity

In one of the most beautiful prayers, Hannah teaches us true faith. The Lord has given her hope and a future so much so that Hannah eagerly gives away the one thing she truly wanted back to the Lord – her son. In response to the generosity of God, Hannah sings a prayer of praise.

In the midst of the prayer, Hannah looks toward the future generosity of God. One day God will, “give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed”. Also, the Lord “brings death and makes alive, he brings down to the grave and raises up”. Hannah, through her words and deeds, was pointing to the greatest gift of all: Jesus.

Hannah gave away her son. God gave his one and only Son into the world: Jesus the anointed one. In Jesus, the barren bear fruit and the poor are lifted up. God anointed Jesus for a mission: to proclaim God’s kingdom in life and provide victory over our enemies through resurrection from the dead. God allowed the death of Jesus only to raise him up again. Now in Christ we have victory over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:55).

We can now know personally the Holy Lord the Rock of our lives. Once we are given and receive this gift, the only appropriate response is to praise! Just like Hannah’s praised God humbly and faithfully, the mother of Jesus, Mary, did the same in her prayer in Luke. You can see the similarities below:

Mary’s Psalm (Luke 1:46-55)	Hannah’s Psalm (1 Samuel 2:1-10)
<i>My soul doth magnify the Lord,</i>	<i>... mine horn is exalted in the Lord</i>
<i>And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.</i>	<i>My heart rejoiceth in the Lord... my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.</i>
<i>For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.</i>	<i>Hannah calls herself a “handmaiden” in 1 Samuel 1:11.</i>
<i>For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.</i>	<i>There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee:</i>
<i>And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.</i>	<i>..for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them.</i>
<i>...he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.</i>	<i>...The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.</i>
<i>He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.</i>	<i>...The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.</i>
<i>He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.</i>	<i>They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased:</i>

<i>He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;</i>	<i>He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail...</i>
<i>As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.</i>	<i>...and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.</i>

<http://www.womeninthescrptures.com/2012/02/magnificat-and-hannahs-psalm.html>.

Both Hannah and Mary worshiped the same generous God with a similar generous spirit.

How will you respond to God' generosity?

Application:

- What did you hear?
- What do you think?
- What would you do?
- Now talk to God...

Soul Food Day 5

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

2 Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord;

my strength is exalted in my God.^[a]

My mouth derides my enemies,

because I rejoice in my^[b] victory.

2 "There is no Holy One like the Lord,

no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so very proudly,

let not arrogance come from your mouth;

for the Lord is a God of knowledge,

and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty are broken,

but the feeble gird on strength.

5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,

but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,

but she who has many children is forlorn.

6 The Lord kills and brings to life;

he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;

he brings low, he also exalts.

8 He raises up the poor from the dust;

he lifts the needy from the ash heap,

to make them sit with princes

and inherit a seat of honor.^[c]

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,

and on them he has set the world.

9 "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,

but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;

for not by might does one prevail.
10 The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High^{gd} will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed.

God of Justice

Hannah's prayer reveals to us a central character attribute of God: his justice. When many of us think of Justice, we may think of God's wrath on sinners. However, in the Old Testament that is not how the word justice is used. The Old testament understanding of wrath predominately uses the word "vengeance". Whenever the Bible in the Old Testament uses the word justice it means God, "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 honour."

Justice occurs when the powerful use their power to help the powerless. Injustice occurs when the powerful use their power to maintain their own throne and crown. A central image of justice is the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25). Every fifty years (after the economic cycle has caused the rich to become richer and the poor are forced to sell their land, incur debts and even sell themselves into slavery), God required his people Israel to redistribute all the wealth and power: land would go back to the original family, debts would be forgiven and slaves would be set free. Hannah is likely using this image to glorify the greatness and love of God.

She would have a great longing for this as she was poor herself. Her desire for a child did not just mean the fulfilment of her desire to be a mother; it would mean the difference between financial security and insecurity. Children constituted labour, wealth, and reputability in the community. Without children, a woman like Hannah was as low as you can go.

While majority society tends to look down on the poor and needy, it is in God's nature to desire raise them up. When Jesus appeared he was not born in a palace but a stable. He did not preach "blessed are the wealthy with many children" but "blessed are the poor and barren". He did not become an earthly King, but came to the capital city on a donkey and was crucified as a political criminal.

To the poor God wants to lift you up as he lifted by the lowly Jesus. The Risen Christ wants to use his power to raise up the poor and humble who know their place before God. To the rich and powerful, especially the religious who feel justified before God, God will bring you down. God will humble you so that you can receive his grace.

Which one are you? Learn to sing Hannah's prayer. Learn from the poor who are humble and give away your riches as a way to participate in the justice of God.

Application:

- What did you hear?
 - What do you think?
 - What would you do?
 - Now talk to God...
-

houseChurch Material

Have different readers share the verse from 2 or more translations

Reflect between each reading

1 Samuel 1 :3-18 Year after year Elkanah would go up from his city to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD. 4 And whenever the day came for Elkanah to present his sacrifice, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved her even though the LORD had closed her womb. 6 Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival would provoke her and taunt her viciously. 7 And this went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival taunted her until she wept and would not eat. 8 "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah asked. "Why won't you eat? Why is your heart so grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

Hannah Prays for a Son 9So after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. 10In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. 11And she made a vow, pleading, "O LORD of Hosts, if only You will look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, not forgetting Your maidservant but giving her a son, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever come over his head." 12As Hannah kept on praying before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. 13Hannah was praying in her heart, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk 14and said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine!" 15"No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman oppressed in spirit. I have not had any wine or strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; for all this time I have been praying out of the depth of my anguish and grief." 17"Go in peace," Eli replied, "and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of Him." 18"May your maidservant find favor with you," said Hannah. Then she went on her way, and she began eating again, and her face was no longer downcast.

Application

- 1 What did you hear during the reading? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged from the reading?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
4. Share any of the above discoveries with your hC. Ask each other, "What is your nugget?"

Discussion

1. Discuss what an idol is. What were the common idols for women in Hannah's time? What does it mean that we make idols in our lives? Do you have an idol currently? Or have you had an idol?
2. Discuss what it means that "Prayer doesn't change God, but it changes us" in terms of Hannah's journey. What about in your own life – was there ever a time when you poured your

heart out to God because you wanted something so badly and God changed you? What was the outcome?

3. Hannah gave up Samuel to be a Nazirite in the tabernacle, this was the son she prayed for so earnestly. How was she able to do that? Have you ever come to a point in your life that you could do something similar by the grace of God?

Now talk to Jesus.