

Sermon Text: Selections from 1 Samuel 1 & 2: Hannah and Samuel

Sermon Theme: A Mother's Heart: A Blessing from God

We've all said it at least once..... "that's the way my mother used to make it." Or something similar, but not as nice, "that's not the way my mother used to make it."

Many of us have been shaped by God's gift of mother. Maybe we parent in a similar way that we were parented by our mothers and our fathers. Many of us remember running not to dad, but to mom when we had fallen off the swing or the bike. Many of us remember mom doing the little things that made a house a home. Mothers have a great influence in our lives, from our likes and dislikes to the smallest things like the way a certain dish or dessert might taste.

Mothers are blessings that the Lord has given us to watch over us, protect us, lead us and help us through this life. But when we talk about Mothers we are not only talking about biological mothers. We thank and praise God for the gift of anyone who has loved and cared for us like a mother.

This could be a biological mother, grandmother, aunt, step-mother, adoptive mother, foster mother, friend's mother, or even a father who has stepped into a mother's role when needed.

God blesses us with people in our lives that have a Mother's Heart. This morning we see this very special blessing of a Mother's Heart in a woman, a mother, named Hannah. We will see that of all the ways that God blesses us through our mothers, a mother teaching us about our God and Savior is the greatest blessing.

In the Old Testament wife and mother were synonymous. There were no working moms, career moms or daycares. The career of a mother was to keep the house and home in order and to raise the children.

Hannah's mother's heart was largely empty because she did not have any children. She knew the blessing that children were and longed for the day the blessing would come to her. The years passed and Hannah did not have any children. Finally, Hannah became overwhelmed with grief that she went to the Lord in prayer and made a promise. **Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.** ⁸ Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

¹⁰ **In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.** ¹¹ **And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon 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, and no razor will ever be used on his head."**

A mother's heart is a great blessing because it sees the blessing of children. It can be very difficult for a mother who yearns for children, but has not yet had any. The turmoil of mind, the searching for answers, the endless thoughts of being inadequate, all of these thoughts went through Hannah's mind because she did not have the blessing of children.

There was a very different outlook on children in the Old Testament than there is now. It is common today for people to "choose" not to have any children. We talk about our children as being planned or after-thoughts. We talk about having them when we are ready, but not before we get too old. Some people talk about children as a burden or an imposition on their life.

Sometimes children are even despised. There are tests so that we can abort a child if it is not genetically correct. I heard a star once say that the abortion he and his wife got in college was the greatest thing that had happened to him and his career.

Maybe we wouldn't ever despise our children as some do, but we are not always as thankful for the gift of children God as we should. Sometimes we may become angry with them when they are being annoying, we might snap at them for being too loud, or discipline them for the wrong reasons. Sometimes, we don't treat them as the blessings they are.

In the Old Testament, children were the greatest blessing from God besides forgiveness and eternal life. Children were treasured and a large family was an extra blessing. In Psalms, King Solomon said, **"Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.** ⁴ **Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth.** ⁵ **Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them."**

This was the heart of a mother that was in Hannah. She saw her child, which she didn't even have yet, as a great blessing from the Lord. She yearned for this blessing and prayed for this blessing.

God answered the fervent prayer of this mother with a son. Hannah showed her true mother's heart by praising the Lord when she had her son. **"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. ²⁴“There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. She named her son Samuel which means, “asked of the Lord” or “the Lord heard.”

We don't always praise the Lord for the children we have. Sometimes everything is wonderful until we have our children. Then after we see how much work they are, then we struggle thinking they are a burden. Whether that burden is financial, emotional, time or another reason, we don't always thank the Lord for the blessing that he has given to us. Instead, we find reasons to complain about the child that he has given to us.

Hannah praised God for her son even though she had reason to complain. Remember that vow she made. How many women would willingly give up their first born, or any born for that matter, after raising him for 3 or 4 years? Hannah could have tried to break her vow, she could have rationalized that as loving Samuel and wanting the best for him. She could have started to hate God that she would have to follow her vow. She could have found reason to turn her praise into grumbling, but she doesn't. Her mother's heart continued to praise the Lord even as she gives her son to the Lord to serve him.

²⁴After 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. ²⁵When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, ²⁶and she said to him, “As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. ²⁷I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸So 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.

This must have been hard for Hannah, how could it not have been? Hannah showed one of the most important blessings of mother. Hannah wanted something for her son that all mothers should want for their children. Hannah showed her mother's heart by giving her son the Lord.

That might sound strange because she gave her son to the Lord and dedicated him for service, but she also gave her son the opportunity to learn about his Lord and Messiah at the temple, something that couldn't be matched at home.

What do you want for your children? Some may say to grow up well, to be successful, to have a good life, to be with you in heaven? If you had a minute to read through our bulletin insert about mom this morning you saw that many of those who wrote about their mothers had a mother like Hannah. They saw in their mother's heart, the same want and need that Hannah had in hers. These mothers gave the Lord to their children by bringing them to the church, Sunday School, catechism, even through the Christian example of their mom's life.

The best thing a mom can do is raise her children to know Jesus. In those moments that she is frustrated and upset and snaps at the children, she can teach repentance and forgiveness by apologizing to the children and showing them that no one is too big to say they are sorry. She can show them the forgiveness of her Savior when she forgives them for a misstep. She can show a life of thanks and service as she sacrifices her own wants and needs for the wants and needs of her children. She can help to raise her child in the way they should go as they attend church together, learn in Sunday School, and have home devotions together.

Often, it our moms who sing our Jesus songs with us when we are little. It is mom who sat next to us in church, it is mom who studies our Catechism with us. It is mom who teaches us that faith in the Savior is the most important blessing that she can give to us.

This relationship of parent, especially moms, and children is so special because God says it is. No other commandment has a blessing attached to it, except the fourth commandment. **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”**

Why is it blessed, why is it special? Because in a house where the Savior is taught, where the Gospel is present, the Holy Spirit works to bring that family close together as a unit and close to one another in faith.

A mother's heart is a very special thing. Moms see their children as blessings from the Lord and praise the Lord for these blessings by using a large amount of time, money and energy, to raise, nurture and care of their children. A mother's heart is also a very special thing because they see the need for their children to have Jesus in their life.

Today as we see the special heart of mom may we also praise and thank our God that he has placed into our lives someone who has loved us, cared for us and led us to Jesus like a mom does.