

Series: Walking by Faith # 2
The Commitment of Hannah
1 Samuel 1: 1-20

More often than not, it is difficult to walk by faith. As we walk by faith, we must trust the Lord to guide our path and provide in areas of life that are beyond our control. There are times when our faith is tested. We may be aware of a need in our life, but the Lord doesn't provide an answer or solution immediately. In fact, we may have to walk by faith for an extended period of time. If our faith is not nurtured during these seasons in life, it often grows weak, and may even fade.

Our text today deals with a woman of faith. She faced a difficult season in life that lasted for an extended period. No doubt there were times when Hannah was tempted to give up, abandoning her faith, but she remained committed to the Lord, trusting Him to provide in His time, and in His way.

Walking by faith requires commitment. Hannah's life beautifully portrays genuine commitment in faith. I want to examine the [details](#) of this season in her life as we consider: [The Commitment of Hannah](#).

I. The Difficulty Hannah Faced (1-8) – The opening verses of our text reveal the extreme difficulty Hannah faced. Her ability to maintain faith against such overwhelming odds offers encouragement for us today. We discover:

A. She was Barren (2) – [And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.](#) Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was unable to have children. Verse 5 reveals the Lord had shut the womb of Hannah. She wanted to have children, but was unable. This was a situation completely out of her control.

- Unfortunately there are those who can identify with Hannah. Some women desire to have children, but for some reason, they are unable to conceive. While we all can't relate directly to Hannah's difficulty, we have all faced situations that were beyond our ability to control. Regardless of how much we desired a different outcome, we were unable to change our circumstances.

B. She was Belittled (6-7a) – [And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.](#) ^[7] [And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her.](#) The family dynamics created a difficult environment for Hannah. There

must have been jealousy among the women, with both being married to the same man, living in the same house. Peninnah used Hannah's barrenness as a means to ridicule and belittle her. This added to the misery and despair Hannah felt. Not only was she unable to bear children, she had to endure the relentless mockery and ridicule of Peninnah.

- The enemy likes to use others to add to our despair in seasons of difficulty. This is just one of the tactics he uses to challenge our faith. No doubt we have all dealt with mockery and ridicule at some time or another. These times are not enjoyable, but they are no reason to abandon our faith. Our Lord endured great mockery and ridicule by those He came to save, and yet His faith prevailed as He remained committed to the Father's will for our salvation!

C. She was Broken (7b) – *And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.* The ridicule became so intense that it began to have adverse effects on Hannah's health. In her despair and brokenness, Hannah wept and refused to eat. The burden she faced daily had gotten to the place that it dominated her life. Hannah's faith was being put to the ultimate test.

- I am sure we all can relate to Hannah in this regard. Most have dealt with stress and worry, at some point, which eventually began to affect their health. In these moments we are vulnerable to attack from the enemy. In our moments of deepest despair, he seeks to destroy our faith and cause us to question God's love and faithfulness. He wants us to believe God no longer cares about our needs and has abandoned us in the midst of our adversity.

II. The Determination Hannah Possessed (9-16) – Thankfully Hannah did not succumb to her brokenness and despair. Rather than given in to defeat, she rose above in faith. Consider:

A. Her Fervent Prayer (10) – *And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.* Hannah's situation had not changed as of yet. She remained in deep bitterness of soul, but she refused to give up. She poured her heart out unto the Lord, weeping before Him as she shared her heart's desire. Hannah knew that God alone could meet her need and resolve her desperate situation.

- While this was not an enjoyable place for Hannah to be, it was right where she needed to be at that moment in her life. Trials and adversity are never enjoyable, but they have the potential to bring us closer to the Lord. Typically we will either seek the Lord, knowing He alone can meet our need, or we will grow bitter, feeling as if He has abandoned us. I pray we will do as Hannah and make our requests known unto the Lord!

B. Her Faithful Promise (11) – *And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.* In the midst of great despair, Hannah remained committed unto the Lord. She desired a child more than anything else in life, and yet she promised, if the Lord would grant her request, she would give the child in service to the Lord. She was willing to offer the Lord the one thing she desired most in life. She would allow her son to live with Eli the priest, and serve the Lord there, instead of raising him at home.

- Although Hannah had likely dealt with bitterness and jealousy in the past, she had reached the place that she was willing to submit herself to the Lord's desire. Her jealousy and selfishness was replaced with great faith and commitment to the Lord. Are we willing to submit ourselves unto the Lord in this manner? Are we willing to offer our children in service to the Lord, regardless of where that might lead? Such endeavors require great faith. I pray the Lord will increase my faith and commitment to Him.

C. Her Focused Presence (12-16) – As Hannah prayed before the Lord, she caught the attention of Eli. As he watched her, he saw her mouth moving, but heard no words from her. Eli assumed she had been drinking and had come unto the Tabernacle drunk. As he confronted Hannah, she assured him she had not been drinking, but was pouring her heart out in desperation unto the Lord. Her faithful commitment and desire was noticed and recognized by the man of God.

- You may carry a heavy burden today that no one else knows or understands. Some may be aware of your heaviness, but are unable to relate. There may even be those who don't appreciate your burden and will even seek to hinder your pursuit before the Lord. In times of doubt and accusation, we must remain focused on our need and persistent in prayer unto the Lord. Even if no one else understands, the Lord does. He sees; He knows; and He cares!

III. The Delight Hannah Received (17-20) – We don't know exactly how long Hannah desired a child, but we do know she had dealt with this burden for several years. Her persistent faith and commitment to Lord eventually brought the result she desired. We find that:

A. Her Petition was Granted (17-18) – *Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.* ^[18] *And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.* Following her time of fervent prayer at the Tabernacle, Hannah's life began to change. As of yet she had not conceived a child, but she now enjoyed peace from the Lord. Eli had offered his blessing, and

Hannah's hope was renewed. She began to eat again, and her countenance was now filled with joy instead of sadness. She did not yet know how it would transpire, but her faith was renewed and she enjoyed a positive outlook.

- Life will have its share of difficulty and trials. We are not promised a life of ease, but the believer is promised a constant Companion in Christ. The Spirit can bring peace to our hearts, even while the storm continues to rage. If you are burdened, bring your burdens to the Lord and leave them there. You may not find the answer you desired, but I am certain you can find the peace and strength you need to continue for the Lord.

B. Her Praise was Offered (19a) – [And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah.](#) Bear in mind, at this moment Hannah has yet to conceive. She has received peace in her heart, but her prayer is not yet fully answered. That doesn't hinder Hannah from praising the Lord and worshiping Him. I am convinced she is praising the Lord for what He is going to do. She has yet to receive the blessing, but she offers praise in advance. Her faith is now strong and it has affected her worship.

- I am reminded that even in the valley, our Lord is good. He is worthy of our praise and worship, even in the midst of our trials. We don't worship Him so He will answer our prayers; we worship Him because He is Lord and sovereign of our lives. If you are determined to wait until every prayer is answered before you praise the Lord, you won't be worshiping Him much. Go ahead and praise Him in advance for the blessings He will send in the future!
- If I never received another blessing, or had another prayer answered, I would still be compelled to worship the Lord. He bore my sin and shame on the cross. He provided salvation for me, granting eternal life in heaven. That is much more than I deserve, and more than enough to offer praise!

C. Her Prayer was Answered (19b-20) – [and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.](#) ^[20] [Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.](#) In His time, according to His divine plan, God answered Hannah's prayer. Granted, she had dealt with this burden for several years, but God honored her faithfulness. Her commitment to the Lord brought blessing and favor. God gave her a son, Samuel. She chose that name because she had pleaded with the Lord, and He had been faithful unto her.

- God is faithful to hear and answer the prayers of the redeemed. He may not answer in the timeframe we desire, or even in the manner we thought He would, but He will provide in His time,

according to His will for our lives. It is easy to get discouraged and face temptation to abandon our faith. We must do as Hannah did and remain persistent in prayer. It may take years of committed prayer, but if we are faithful, God will answer.

Conclusion: Hannah's life was definitely a journey of faith. Her burden lasted for several years, but she continued to pray and seek the Lord. She was even willing to offer the very desire of heart unto the Lord when He answered her prayer. Her life was directed by faith, and faith paid dividends for her.

Are you burdened and struggling today? Have you prayed and prayed, and yet it seems there is no answer? Are you on the verge of giving up? Bring your needs before the Lord. He sees; He knows; He cares. Come before Him and leave your burden there. You may not get the answer you desire immediately, but you can receive the peace you need to press on another day.

If you are unsaved, I urge you to come to Christ by faith. Respond to the call of salvation with a repentant heart, and be saved today!