

## Third Advent Sermon on the Series, “Miraculous Children of the Old Testament”

**Text: 1 Samuel 1:1-20**

**Theme: Samuel, A Child who Was an Answer to Prayer**

Have you ever prayed to God for something from deep within your soul? It is a prayer that you have never forgotten to this day. God’s answer to that prayer was also something that you never forgot. While we pray much and should pray much about many things, there are a few prayers and the answers to those prayers which we will never forget. Samuel was an answer to such a prayer.

I. God answered Hannah’s prayer by giving her a son.

Part of this text shows us that trouble and disappointment do not mean that we don’t have God’s favor. Hannah was a faithful woman. Yet, she had both of those things. She had disappointment. She dearly desired children, but it says that the Lord had closed her womb. Her husband loved her dearly, and he provided for her generously. Yet, she desired to have children, and was not able to have any.

To make matters worse she had trouble. Her husband had two wives. His other wife, Peninnah, had a number of sons and daughters. The two women became rivals, and Peninnah would provoke Hannah. It would be especially bad when they would go to the festival of Booths at Shiloh. It was meant to be a special holiday, much like our Thanksgiving or Christmas with a lot of feasting. However, as our holidays sometimes turn out, it would turn into a time when the troubles in the family would come out. This time Peninnah provoked Hannah until she wept and wouldn’t eat.

Hannah went to the doorpost of the tabernacle. It says in verse 10, “*In the bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord.*” It was one of those prayers that came from deep within during her anguish. She made a vow to God that if He would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord for his whole life, and no razor would ever touch his head. Like Samson, he would be dedicated to God his entire life. The priest Eli thought that she was drunk, but when he found out that she was just in anguish, he said, “*Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.*” That was more prophetic than even Eli probably knew. His words lifted Hannah’s spirit. She ate and was no longer downcast.

About 3 years later Eli was probably very surprised when Hannah showed up at the tabernacle again. Her request had been granted as Eli had said. She had a son, whom she named Samuel, which means “heard of God,” because God had answered her prayer. In fulfillment of her vow, she did not cut his hair, and she brought him to the tabernacle where he would now live with Eli. Samuel would eventually become the greatest of Israel’s judges and the one who would anoint Israel’s first two kings. God had answered Hannah’s prayer. He used her and her son as important parts of Israel’s history. God would bless her even more by giving her 5 more children.

## II. God remembers us in our time of need also.

He tells us in Psalm 50:15, “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you will honor Me.*” Jesus taught us how to pray by giving us the Lord’s Prayer, and He taught us to pray with boldness and confidence. It is a blessing when we can come before our Lord in those times of trouble and disappointment and pour out our hearts before our Lord. Paul writes in our epistle lesson that at such times the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. God hears every one of our prayers. He remembers us as He remembered Hannah. His goodness and mercy are with us every step of our lives. In the end we will see how God saw us through those times of trouble and disappointment.

His mercy is especially there when our sins trouble us. There was a time when King David prayed for God’s mercy for the great sins that he had committed. He starts Psalm 51 with the words, “*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.*” He came to our Lord full of guilt, and God washed away all of his sin. When we come before God, confessing our sins, we know that they are all forgiven for the sake of Christ our Savior. He bore them all on the cross in our place, so that we can be cleansed and renewed. As it says in tonight’s psalm, “*He will redeem Israel from all their sins.*” (*Psalm 130*)

It’s also important to note that Hannah remembered God’s mercy for her. She dedicated her child to the Lord. When God has been good and merciful to you, remember to thank and praise Him for all that He has done for you. Use those gifts that He has given to you to glorify Him. Dedicate them as a sign of how good God has been to you. It is tempting receive God’s blessings like 9 of the 10 Lepers did, whom Jesus had cleansed. Too often we quickly forget how good God has been to us. It is much more blessed to remember God goodness and faithfulness as the one man who returned to give God thanks. That especially goes with regard to our forgiveness. David prays at the end of Psalm 51, “*Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.*” The forgiveness that God has given to us becomes a testimony of God grace for all who repent and seek His forgiveness.

Hannah prayed from deep within her spirit. God heard her prayer and blessed her. God hears every one of our prayers to in Christ. He remembers us, and gives us the grace and mercy that we need. Go to Him in those times of trouble, and remember to give Him thanks and to dedicate those gifts that He gives to you to His glory and the good of our neighbor. In Christ’s name. Amen.

***Pastor Don Hougard  
Benediction Lutheran Church  
Milwaukee, WI  
December 19, 2019***