

Worship on May 10, 2020

Order of worship

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Announcements:

. This recording is for the worship of Sunday, May 10, 2020.

. Thank you so much Robert for filling in. I loved the choir singing and loved the involvement of our church. Thank you all who participated in the choir singing!

. This is one of the stand-alone sermons because it's Mother's Day. Blessings to all the mothers. May God fill your hearts and lives with unending love and grace. I was too excited to share the sermon series and forgot about Mother's Day. But, thankfully, I remembered and here we are with the Mother's Day message. I will continue my series from next week.

Let us begin our worship with praise!

SONG – be still in the presence of the Lord

[Verse 1] Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.
Come, bow before Him now, with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

[Verse 2] Be still, for the glory of the Lord, is shining all around.
He burns with holy fire, with splendor He is crowned.
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of Light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord, is shining all around.

[Verse 3] Be still, for the power of the Lord, is moving in this place.
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord, is moving in this place.

Prayer for worship

You are an awesome God. Your power is moving within us and your glory is shining in our midst. Holy God, we worship you and we honour you. We just love to be in your presence. As we worship you, may your holiness, glory, and power be experienced in our hearts. Although we are scattered and staying home, may each of us become your light and salt in our life. So, as your church, we long to function your church. We seek your face and we desire to live with you. On this Mother's Day, bless all the mothers and help us express our gratefulness to our mothers. Be glorified through our worship. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1-18

1 There was a certain man of Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

2 He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord.

4 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters;

5 but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.

6 Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.

7 So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.

8 Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

9 After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.

10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.

11 She made this vow: "O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

12 As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth.

13 Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore, Eli thought she was drunk.

14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine."

15 But Hannah answered, "NO, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord.

16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."

17 Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."

18 And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband and her countenance was sad no longer.

This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Title: Hannah, the mother of prayer

Today's Title is **"Hannah, the mother of prayer"**

First of all, is there any Hannah worshipping God with us through this online worship? God bless you! I think Hannah is one of the best female names in the Bible. I love Hannah so much. She doesn't appear much in the Bible. This event, including keeping her vow to the Lord, is pretty much it. But, she kept her promise to the Lord. She offered her son to the Lord. That is why many people think of her so holy, faithful, wise, and admirable.

But, interestingly, she appears to be not so special from the story. She was one of two Elkanah's wives, but with no children. The other wife, Peninnah had some children. And Peninnah mocked Hannah for not having children. Year after year, especially, when the whole family went up to worship and sacrifice to the Lord, it was worse. After offering sacrifice to the Lord, Elkanah gave out meat to each person. So, Peninnah and her children would pile up meat and had a feast. But, Hannah would have a small bowl of meat and eat by herself although her portion is double. Peninnah would watch Hannah's lonely meal in misery, and would begin to make fun of Hannah. "Haha, we are a happy family here, but you are all lonely and miserable there, all by yourself." Peninnah knew the weakest point of Hannah.

If I were Hannah, in this situation, I would be so discouraged as well. And, just like Hannah did, I would pour out my heart to the Lord with great sorrow and anguish. Learning how Hannah reacted to Peninnah's mocking, there's nothing special about Hannah.

The great thing about Hannah was this. She remembered her prayer and she kept her promise to the Lord. But, is she really special when she kept the promise to the Lord? Let us leave a question mark here.

I will introduce one of the greatest heroes from the Bible. Prophet Elijah. He was the

prophet of God in the Old Testament. At his time, people worshiped many different gods. Especially, the king and the queen worshiped foreign gods. So, God told Elijah to gather all the prophets of foreign gods. There were 850 prophets of foreign gods. In front of the people of Israel and the prophets of foreign gods, Elijah said this. “NOW, LET US COMPETE! You, prophets of foreign gods, call out your god and ask your gods to send fire and burn this offering from the altar! Ask your gods to prove themselves! And I will ask my God to send fire and burn my offering on the altar. Then, he proves that he is the real God. So, let us find out who the true god is!”

So, the prophets of foreign gods prayed to their gods all day long, but there was no answer because they were not real gods. Elijah waited for many many hours and when the evening came, he stepped up. He lifted his hands to the heavens and called up the name of the Lord. “LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, SHOW US THAT YOU ARE GOD!”

Immediately after the prayer, fire came down from the heaven and burnt the sacrifice and proved that God is the true God. What a great hero of faith!

But, here's my point. After the great victory, Elijah heard the news that the queen was very very mad at him and she decided to kill him. Elijah was so worried and too scared and ran away. He prayed to God. “God, please take me. I don't want to live in this world any more. It's too scary. Please let me die and come to you.” The man who worked with God, overcoming all the difficulties with the power of God, is now scared of a threat. And he is asking God to end his life. I am not lowering down Elijah, but showing you his natural human side. The Bible declares that Elijah is just human as we are, but did wonderful miracle. **James 5:17-18, “Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven**

gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.”

He overwhelmed the foreign prophets and did wonderful miracles with God. Although he did all the great and mighty works with God, he is the same human being just like us. The power is from God, not from Elijah. In the same way, Hannah was great keeping her promise to the Lord, offering her son. I love and I admire what she did, but, again, she is the same human just like we are. I think this is the great encouragement for us today. The people in the Bible are not that different from us. This means that we can experience the same presence and power of God in our lives.

Look at Hannah's intention. Why did she want a son? Her husband mentioned that she had him. Meaning, Elkanah loved Hannah more than Peninnah. For a woman, I believe, being loved by her husband is more important than having children. So, Hannah was the winner, in this regard, but she envied Peninnah. Hannah's intention for prayer for son was not holy at all. It's just a mere human desire. Did God need to use her son? NO! God can use anyone. God saw Hannah's desire, willingness, and faithfulness. She knew her deepest desire and she expressed it to the Lord.

Do we know our deepest desire? Aren't we too busy to know what we really want? We are obligated too many things. Jobs, school, family, friends, church, hobbies, and all kinds of different wants and needs. Even in this Pandemic quarantine, many of us are too busy to be still in the Lord. But, thankfully, Hannah's want and need was clear enough, so she knew it and prayed for it. But, how about us? What is in the centre of our lives? What is the lens or filters interpreting all the things happening in our lives? What is the focus of our lives!

Knowing her wants and needs, she prayed faithfully. But, God didn't answer her

prayer right away. We don't know why, but we can learn Hannah's attitude. She prayed until her prayer was answered. She prayed earnestly and endlessly. She spent time before the Lord. If we realize what we want and what we need, then we should be able to pray until God answers to our prayers. That's the attitude when we think about prayer, when we pray. In prayer, as we spend time with God, God would change and prepare our hearts, so that we can discern our needs and wants. To build friendship, we need time together. Wasting time together is the best way to get close. Prayer is not merely asking God what we need or what we want. It's not submitting our requests, but it's building connections with God in relationship. It's understanding each other's heart.

If you read the next chapter, Hannah kept her promise. After that prayer, after the vow, the whole family came home and Hannah was conceived. After the birth, Hannah didn't go to Shiloh to worship God for few years. Instead, she took care of her son, Samuel. She put all her effort in nurturing Samuel. But, when Samuel was weaned, she took Samuel to the Tabernacle and left him there, in the presence of God. She let God take care of Samuel. She kept her promise.

V11, she made this vow: “O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death.”

New Living Translation writes, “O Lord of Heaven's Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son then I will give him back to you.”

The New International Version, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on 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."

Hannah used the word REMEMBER. She asked God to remember her. *V19, the Lord remembered her and made her conceived. In v26-28, Hannah said to prophet Eli, "Oh my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him. Therefore, I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is given to the Lord."*

When Hannah went up to the Tabernacle, she said to the prophet Eli, "Sir do you remember me?" This is the boy that I prayed for. He is the answer for my prayer from the Lord. And I remembered the promise and I am here now with the son. Now I am giving him to the Lord, as I promised. This boy is belong to the Lord for his whole life.

God remembers us and our prayers. What are the desires of our hearts? Ask God to pour out his wisdom upon you so that we can discern our life's deepest and the most important needs. What is the one thing we should ask God...? What is the one thing we should remember?

In my heart, there are so many wants and needs. Many times, it's almost impossible to distinguish my wants and needs. There are my wants and God's wants in my heart at the same time. What about you? Isn't it our deepest desire that we know what God wants from us? Isn't fulfilling God's desire the reason we are here?

Let us pray to God to quiet down all our surroundings and clear our minds, so that we can connect to God's heart, so that we can distinguish God's desires for our lives.

I hope and pray that we can make the time for God so we can search our hearts'

deepest desires as God's children. As his daughters and sons, may God purify our desires as we deepen our relationships with God in prayer. Also, in loving and harmonious relationship with God, the stories in the Bible may come true in our lives.

In order for all this to be happening in our lives, we are to remember God's faithfulness. God will take our hands and walk with us to be faithful like himself.

So, may God fill our hearts with energy and encouragement as we continue the journey with God.

LET US PRAY.

"God of love and faithfulness. Thank you for all the stories in the Bible and thank you that you made these people not so special. This is a great encouragement for us that we can be like them too. We can experience your presence and power like them. Thank you that you called us here to be in the relationship with you. And thank you that you desire us to be with you. Thank you.

Lord of wisdom, we live busy life even in this staying home pandemic situation. There are so many things to take care of in our lives. Help us to set a time to be with you alone, quietly, sincerely, and consistently. Give us wisdom to discern what you want from us and help us to clear our hearts and minds in our busy lives. It is our deepest desire to know you and to be with you.

Use our lives, so that we can be like Elijah or Hannah before your eyes. Help us to walk with you day by day faithfully.

Strengthen us and remind us with your words, so that we can display your power and love in our daily lives. Thank you for your presence among us here today.

Continue to pray for the Prayer of the people

Heavenly Father, remember us. We are longing for you. As the weather gets warmer, more people are outside and we feel more insecure. Staying home and going outside are both scary, somewhat. We pray for the vaccine for the coronavirus. Give wisdom to the people who are trying to find the cure of this. And help all of us to keep the safety rules.

Especially, we pray for the people who are working in the frontline. Protect them. Encourage them. Give wisdom upon them. Strengthen them. Also, protect their families. They are in exposure of constant danger. Let your hands cover them and hide them in your wings.

We pray for the people who are in the nursing homes and hospitals. Give peace in their hearts and take care of them with safety. Also, there are people who have non-coronavirus related sickness. Help them have the necessary treatments and help them to be healed.

We pray for the students who studying in the new format. Give them persistence. Fill their hearts with hopes and dreams, so they can keep up with their preparation of their lives with diligence. Let them find good teachers who can guide them in the right path. Give them your wisdom.

We pray for our congregation. There are many prayer needs. You know them already. Come into all our hearts and fill our hearts with you. Help us know the true blessing is having you. And you are enough to overcome all our difficulties and challenges. We confess that you are the Lord and you are God and you are all that we need. There are people who are praying for the recovery, praying for the peace in their grief, praying for safety, and praying for your presence. Hear our prayers and grant

our prayers, O Lord. You are the head of the church and you are the Lord of the church. You purchased us with your precious blood. We have life because of you. Help us have you in our hearts and help us remember you in our daily lives. Fill our hearts and be the centre of our hearts.

We worship you and praise you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Song – He Is Lord

He is Lord He is Lord He risen from the dead and He is Lord
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions

1. Have I experience the faithfulness of God in my life?
2. What areas of my life, do I want to experience God?
3. Believe in the power of consistency. Would you like to meet God in regular basis daily?