

DATE: 15 OCTOBER 2023 | SPEAKER: PS. ERNIE SONG
TOPIC: HANNAH | SCRIPTURE: 1 SAMUEL 1

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. To learn from Israel's example and desire to walk in God's victory
2. To desire to remain in covenantal faithfulness to God.

SERMON SUMMARY

As we begin Part 2 of the series, we will be looking at Hannah. Hannah was a barren Jewish woman who was consistently oppressed in the family as well as in society. She did not have an understanding husband and God did not answer her prayer. At the lowest point in her life, Hannah came to the place of surrender - she acknowledged God as sovereign over all things and that everything belongs to Him. In that light, she surrendered and dedicated her child to the Lord. Her son, Samuel, would go on to anoint David as King over Israel. David would lead Israel through one of the greatest revivals in Israel. Hannah's actions impacted not just her but the whole nation of Israel. Like Hannah, we all have our paths assigned by God to walk – some barren and some not barren. Regardless, we are called by God to bring glory to Him through the path assigned to us. When we walk in a way that brings glory to God, we become signposts for others to follow, and our actions/decisions can have a great impact on the subsequent generations after us.

SERMON RECAP

Introduction: Heart of the Series

We are currently starting part 2 of the series "In the Wake of Awakening." The goal of this series is to look at examples from the Old Covenant on how to sustain a work of God in our lives – how do we live in a new normal after God has touched our lives, so that we can grow from strength to strength.

In this sermon, we looked at the story of Hannah and what are some of the lessons we can learn from her life on how to live in a new normal.

#1 The Setting (v1a)

This was the 3rd generation from the Moses generation. This generation was already living in the inherited Promised Land. However, as the Israelites did not fully drive out all the inhabitants of the land, their culture, religious life and value system were greatly influenced by the nations they did not drive out.

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." – **Judges 17:6 (ESV)**

It was in this spiritual climate that the story of Hannah begins. Hannah was the first wife of Elkanah. Elkanah's second wife was Peninnah.

#2 The Situation (v1b – 8)

Hannah's main problem is that she was barren while Peninnah had sons and daughters (v 1b). Hannah's barrenness was a big problem for a women in Ancient Israel because women depended greatly on the men for provision and resources. On top of that, Hannah also had a few other challenges:

- a) She was greatly oppressed by Peninnah (v 6-7)
- b) Hannah had a faith crisis because God was the one who closed her womb and was not answering her prayer. (v 5)
- c) Her husband was insensitive towards her situation (v 8)

All of these challenges led Hannah to be in depression (v 7).

#3 The Vow (v 9-18)

In the lowest point of her life, Hannah ran to where God was – the tabernacle (v 9). There, she poured out her heart to the Lord and made a vow to God.

Hannah's prayer has a few significant points:

- a) **Hannah confessed the sovereignty of God** – the phrase, “Lord of Host”, is used for the very first time in Scripture; and it is found in Hannah's prayer. By acknowledging Yahweh as “Lord of Host”, Hannah was putting God in His rightful place as owner of everything. In doing so, she also recognise who she was in the sight of God.
- b) **Hannah vowed to return the blessing of God fully back to Him if she is blessed by Him** - In essence, she is returning everything she wanted – motherhood, to God. This is despite the fact that the corrupt Levitical priesthood in the tabernacle where Eli and his sons served.
- c) **Hannah made things right for her family**. When Hannah vowed to dedicate her son to the Lord, she was making things right between the family and the Lord. Elkanah was from the Levitical line and was required to be in service of the Lord. However, there is no evidence in Scripture that he was an active serving Levite. By dedicating her child, Hannah ensured that the Levites in her family continued to fully serve the Lord.

Because the posture of her heart changed (from one of desperation to one of surrender) while she was in God's presence, Hannah's countenance changed as well the moment she finished her conversation with Eli.

#4 The Fulfilment (v19-28)

The Lord blessed Hannah with a son. She named him, Samuel which means “the Lord has heard”. After Hannah fully dedicated Samuel to God's service, the Lord blessed her with 3 more sons and 2 more daughters.

#5 The Impact

Hannah's actions were significant not just for her and her family, but also the nation of Israel. Samuel would go on to be one of the greatest prophet and judge for Israel. And, it was he that anointed David to be the king of Israel. David led Israel towards a great revival – returning to the ways and worship of the Lord. Thus brought about the greatest period of peace and prosperity in the kingdom of Israel. Little did Hannah knew of the impact of her actions.

#6 The Conclusion

We all have our paths that God has destined us to walk through – some barren and some not barren. The point is not in the level of difficulty of the path. We are placed in these paths to bring God glory.

At times, after God has done a work of revival and awakening in our lives, we return to face the same “barren” situations in our lives. How do we walk then so that we can sustain God’s work in our lives? We must learn not to walk in defeat but to walk victoriously, and with the purpose of bringing God glory even in the midst of the challenges we face so that all can see and glorify God. We must stop comparing and envying those who are not “barren”. Rather, we should have faith within us that we are able to walk victoriously on this path for God’s glory and to be a signpost for many others who are in similar situations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any parallels between your life currently and Hannah’s life?

Leader’s Notes

This is a relate and reflect question. Invite your members to examine their lives to see if there are areas of unanswered prayers in their lives, or areas where God seems to be silent in spite of many petitions made. Encourage them to share their struggles in these areas to the degree that they are comfortable with.

Transition

We all have unanswered prayers in our lives, or petitions where God seems to be silent. In order to continue to live a thriving spiritual life in the midst of “barrenness” or unanswered prayer, the issue of posture must be dealt with in our lives.

2. Share with the cell your “go to pattern” when you encounter challenges or trials in your life. Do you listen to your flesh and indulge (eg. Binge watching TV, food, computer games, drinking, etc.)?

Leader’s Notes

This is a relate question. Many of us allow our flesh to take over in the midst of our trials and challenges. As a result, we end up doing things that do not glorify God or cause us to grow in the midst of our trials. This is human nature. The flesh will want to make its voice heard when you are at your lowest.

Transition

The devil often attacks us intensely when we are at our lowest. At these defining moments, we can either choose to grow, or to stumble. We have the choice to run to God like Hannah, or allow our flesh to govern us.

3. How does a change of heart and attitude impact the way we walk our paths ordained by God especially if it is a barren one?

Leader’s Notes

God answers us in 3 ways – “Yes”, “No”, and “Not Yet”. Regardless of God’s answer to us, the posture of our hearts is so important. We must be determined to glorify God even in the midst of unanswered prayers, because He is still good and sovereign. When we do that, we become signposts for others in similar situations to follow. Therefore, whether we are in seasons of barrenness or fruitfulness, we must walk those paths for God’s glory.

Transition

Our decisions will determine whether we grow or backslide during a trial. Therefore, we need to carry the right attitude through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit when we are hard-pressed on every side, so that we will still determine to bring God glory through our trials.

- 4. If you are struggling through a trial at this moment, share with the cell what that trial is (if you are comfortable) and process with the cell what it means for you to live victoriously through the trial or this path that God has chosen for you to walk through for His glory.**

Leader's Notes

It is God that assigns the path for us to walk through to bring Him glory. If there are members in your midst that have a difficult path assigned to them by God, encourage them to share and process together with them on how they can walk this path victoriously. The member's struggles should be owned by the community and not just the individual.

Closing

When God is glorified through our actions in the midst of our barrenness, we not only become signposts. Our actions can impact our children, our families and even our nation. Let us never grow weary of being determined to glorify God in the midst of our trials!

PRAYER

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- That there will be spiritual tenacity within us to walk the path of “barrenness” victoriously in order to glorify God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be honest with the Lord on areas of unanswered prayers, and ask Him for a renewed strength to walk this path faithfully.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that as we have concluded the 21 days of prayer and fasting, we will determine to live in a new normal – one that follows after the example of Christ.
- Pray for our upcoming mission trips, RiverLife Kindergarten Graduation Concert, as well as the Parents Gathering and Marriage Retreat that will be happening soon.

3. World

- Pray for Singapore as we experience a new wave of COVID-19 and haze.
- Pray for the conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Hamas, that a peaceful resolution can be reached soon. Pray also for the situation in various nations where the pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian groups are protesting and using violence to vent their frustrations.
- Pray for the bed bug infestations that are sweeping through France, Algeria and Africa.
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. RiverLife Community Services (RCS)

- 2023 Faith Goal: \$920,000
- Amount raised to date: \$574,046

RiverLife Community Services is the community arm of RiverLife Church. It is our hope that through RCS, we will be able to bring Kingdom transformation to local communities by reaching, nurturing and empowering individuals and families. Your contribution to RCS will help sustain the programmes and support extended to low-income beneficiaries.

How you can give:

- Indicate your donation amount on this form: bit.ly/feeddreams
- Donate digitally or in-person at the Atrium on 15, 22, 29 Oct & 5 Nov (10.45-11.45am).
- As a token of appreciation, with every donation of \$50, you will receive one complimentary meal voucher from your choice of our partner restaurants.

2. RiverLife Kindergarten Annual Concert and K2 Graduation 2023. Sat, 4 Nov, 9-12pm.

RiverLife Kindergarten will be holding their Annual Graduation Concert this year-end. They're looking for volunteers to serve as:

- Classroom Helpers: Touch up children's hair, take care of them before and after their performances
- Greeters & Ushers: Welcome guests and usher them to their seats
- Stage Helpers: Assist in moving children up and down the stairs

You will need to serve on the following dates:

- Combined Full-dress Rehearsal: Thu, 2 Nov | 8am to 12pm | Worship Centre
- Actual Concert Day: Sat, 4 Nov | 9am to 12pm | Worship Centre

Sign up to serve:

- Email Oi Leng at oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg
- Call Linda Chong at 6511 4168

3. The Parents Gathering.

The Parents Gathering is held once a quarter for parents to come together to learn, connect with and support one another through the journey of parenting. As we discover more about ourselves and our children, may we grow to become the parents that God intended us to be. This platform is suitable for parents of all ages, including grandparents. Our time together will comprise:

- A short 30-min video teaching segment
- Group connection time
- Personal / couple processing time
- Light refreshments

Our first gathering: Sat, 28 Oct. 2-6pm. Victory Chapel.

Register by Sun, 22 Oct to join us at our first meetup: rlc.sg/pg

Workbooks can be purchased at \$16 each. Details to be released at a later date.

About the Curriculum Used

'The Art of Parenting' is designed to help parents make faith the core of their parenting with intentional, Biblical teaching and Christ-centered plans. Parents will gain renewed confidence, fresh insights on raising children at different ages, and a parenting plan unique to each child's personality and gifting. Inspired by Psalm 127:4, this eight-session study is video based and covers the following topics:

The Goal of Parenting • Forming Character • Applying Discipline • Building Relationships • Understanding Identity • Nurturing Identity • Preparing for Mission • The Power of Family

Preview the Curriculum here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7ZJ31DbGag>

4. **Discipleship@Home - Our Bodies, God's Story (For Parents of Primary Children)**

- Primary Session: Sun, 5 Nov | 9am-11am | Grace Chapel
- Content: What is God's design for our bodies that are made in the image of God? How can we love God through knowing how to take care of ourselves as male and female image-bearers?

The sessions will discuss biblical sexuality with children and parents, providing age-specific handles so that we can be effective ambassadors of Christ in His grand story. *More in-depth discussion on pressing issues such as purity and the influence of media will be covered at the Primary session.* If you have children in both preschool & primary levels, we encourage you to attend both sessions as content will differ.

Speaker: **Carol Loi** is the International Director of *Generations of Virtue*, a ministry committed to teaching sexual wholeness and integrity, building family relationships & transforming culture. As a mom to two young adults, Carol is also a certified digital wellness educator and a Fellow of the Center for Media Literacy. She has served in the Singapore public service for over two decades, including EDB, MOE and IMDA.

- Sign up to attend: rlc.sg/dah

5. **Serve in SuperLife.** Serve in SuperLife as a Teacher or Tech Support Crew!

- Teacher's role:
 - Support the running of weekly SuperLife services for preschool children
 - Care for and manage the children during service
- Tech support crew role:
 - Serve at our children's services for Kindy (aged 5-6) and Nursery (aged 3-4) levels
 - Operate the Pro-Presenter software on a laptop for videos and slides support
 - Operate the sound panel and microphones for audio support No prior experience needed as training will be provided.
- Sign up to serve: rlc.sg/serve

6. **Current Pulpit Series – In the Wake of Awakening.**

- Part 2 – Revivals (15 Oct – 26 Nov). We survey seasons of awakening in Israel's history throughout the Old Covenant. From restorations of relationships to spiritual warfare, we will glean from Israel's obedience and failures following seasons of renewal.

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- Quarter 4

- Parents Gatherings – 28 Oct
- Leaders Huddle – 5 Nov
- Water Baptism Service – 12 Nov
- Equipping Series - Leviticus: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
- Marriage Retreat – 24 to 26 Nov

2. **YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).** The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are currently in a cell, register your attendance with your cell leader. If you are currently not in a cell, do register online: rlc.sg/YAgathering-apr-reg.

3. **RiverLife Prayer Meetings.**

RiverLife Prayer Room. Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel.

RiverLife Revive Nights. Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel (livestream: rlc.sg/revivenights)

CHURCH MINISTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

1. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.

- Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
- Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve

2. **Missions Microsite.** Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.

3. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcar>

4. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>

RESOURCES & CONNECTING WITH US

1. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp

- 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
- 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
- Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)

2. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search **'The RiverLife Podcast'** on Spotify.

3. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.

4. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

5. **Stay Connected with RLC.** Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.
 - **WhatsApp Broadcast:** Text 'Subscribe' to 8923 1939
 - **Telegram Channel:** t.me/RiverLifeChurch
 - **Facebook & Instagram:** [@riverlifechurchsg](https://www.facebook.com/riverlifechurchsg)

GIVING LINKS & QR CODES

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