

“The Lord Holds My Lot”

We read Hannah’s story this morning together. Then, what do you think of Hannah, who just cries and eats nothing at the joyful church feast? Her husband, Elkanah, comforted Hannah. “Hannah, even if you have had ten sons, would I do as much to you as I do now? You lack nothing!” What a sweet husband!

However, her suffering means that even if her husband gives her double the love, she has a need in her life that cannot be met by that alone. So where in the world can we find someone who can fully satisfy our needs? Even her caring husband could not truly comfort Hannah's heartache. In fact, her comforter did not exist anywhere in the world.

At first, Elkanah and Hannah herself believed that her suffering was due to infertility. Of course, it must have been a difficult problem for Hannah to deal with conventionally, socially, domestically, and personally. So, at that time, Hannah's life was blocked in all directions. But was that really the cause of her suffering? Do we know the true cause of all our problems and how to solve them?

It seems that our reality today is not much different from Hannah's. Do you think that if Hannah had a baby, she would have lived happily ever after, smiling every day? It seems our happiness depends on what we do and do not have. We live with goals and expectations to have worldly things.

Thousands of people strive to live with such will and goals and are satisfied with them. So, is it possible for all of us to have that worldly thing we strive for? For Hannah, how many children must she have to be truly satisfied? However, the content of the text given today is guiding the correct development of our thinking.

Pastor Kim and his daughter:

I would like to share the story of Pastor K with you. He spent his school days maintaining a sincere personality and was very intelligent. Naturally, he believed that he could achieve anything if he worked hard on his own. He believed so all along until that confidence was broken.

However, after his daughter was born with a disease, the side effects of her medications made her permanently disabled intellectually and physically.

He couldn't take his daughter's pain and the conflict he was experiencing on his own. But he had to admit that he lacked the ability to improve the situation he faced. In other words, he experienced the impossibility of changing his reality despite his efforts. After he became a pastor, due to the situation his daughter was in, he began to completely entrust his life to God.

How has his daughter's situation improved since then? Despite Pastor K's many tears and prayers, his daughter still lives with a disability. But he confesses, "God healed me through my daughter. I now have a wider view of the world and see the spiritual roots of those who need to be healed. It is a continuation of the same situation, but I am experiencing the happiness of walking with my Savior in it."

Elkanah's family went to the Lord's house in Shiloh once a year to worship. But for Hannah, going to Shiloh was a terrible pain. Because of Peninnah, she had to weep and mourn each time, and she felt compelled to give up worship. But one day, Hannah made up her mind.

She decided to go to the Lord with all her sighs and sorrows. Looking at verse 10 of today's text, her prayer began with sobbing and weeping with her troubled heart. "I have been praying like this because I'm so miserable" (v. 16). Even then, Hannah thought all her suffering was due to her being childless.

But she ate a meal after she finished her prayers that day, and she never had a sad look on her face again. How did she get to do this? She made the decision to entrust her problems to her God with all her spirit and sincerity, and she decided that she would deal with everything that happened after that with her faith.

This decision was a reaction to those who received the priest's blessing. Eli said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel give you what you have asked him for." We should always remember that God has promised this blessing in our worship as well. Also, this reaction was possible because the Holy Spirit moved her to make that decision and act.

What kind of remedy do you use when faced with grievous and painful things? Ordinary people usually drink alcohol or engage in other sources of entertainment during these times. This is how people try to avoid the situation. However, this option is only temporary, and the problem cannot be fundamentally solved. Rather, we must face the challenge courageously, and our faith in God makes it possible.

We must seek the faithfulness and omnipotence of God at these times. He promised, "Call to me when trouble comes; I will save you, and you will praise me" (Ps 50:15). This is the spiritual formula for solving the tribulation given to God's children.

Some criticize that praying only in emergencies is deceptive. Would God really think so? However, God can make even our prayers for escaping our crisis be transformed into a habitual prayer life when it accumulates. Do you believe that?

The psalmist also confesses, "Let those who wept as they planted their crops gather the harvest with joy! Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest" (Ps 126:5–6). Suffering and adversity are given to us as a training process that enables us to imitate the character of our Father. However, He always accompanies us during our training.

Here we see that the real cause of Hannah's suffering was not that she had no children, but that she had no God in her heart. The same spiritual principle applies to us. Our real problems are not failing health, lack of wealth, or economic crisis. Rather, it is that we do not have faith to depend on God. Then we can build up the power of our faith from that point.

In the passage that follows today's text from 1 Samuel, we find Hannah's prayer after she offered her son Samuel to God. Let's look at chapter 2, verses 1–2. "The Lord has filled my heart with joy; how happy I am because of what he has done! I laugh at my enemies; how joyful I am because God has helped me! No one is holy like the Lord; there is none like him, no protector like our God."

In the past, Hannah cried every season and couldn't eat. It was not only because of the problem of not having children but also because of a human need that her husband's love alone could not solve.

But now Hannah is different. In the same place where she cried and couldn't eat, she is now eating and laughing because she decided to become a person of God.

From then on, the path of her life began to open wide. She resolved to be content with God alone, and God gave her three more sons and two daughters in addition to Samuel (2:21). God's concern was not to give Samuel to Hannah but to transform Hannah herself into something God could use because God is free to use His people for any purpose He wants. However, we know that God's purpose is always beneficial for us.

*Peace That Comes from Relying on God Alone

What is the ultimate purpose of our lives? It is to seek God, to encounter Him, and to dwell in His presence. Since the beginning, God has revealed Himself to humanity through many means. Yet, we can only meet Him as much as we earnestly seek Him.

The world we live in, however, is ever-changing, complex, busy, and competitive. All too often, we get caught up in its distractions and lose our focus on seeking God. This danger and temptation are especially challenging for people today, who live amidst great diversity and rapid change. Our worldly interests and desires interfere with our opportunities and diminish our hope of finding God.

Hannah's life was dramatically changed when she received the blessing of Eli, the priest of the Old Testament, who had to offer the same sacrifice over and over again. Then, what changes will follow in our lives as we receive the proclamation of the blessings of Jesus Christ, who offered a single, eternally valid sacrifice? The text of the book of Hebrews testifies that by his one sacrifice we are made eternally perfect.

Therefore, we can come to God with sincere hearts and firm faith (He 10:22), because through Jesus we are connected with God in a "father-child relationship." Remember, the forgiveness of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the triumphant power of resurrection are always ready for you!

Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

1)Matthew 5:4 says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Hannah wept bitterly as she prayed to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:10). Think about who you might weep and pray for today, and lift them up in prayer.

2)After praying in the temple that day, Hannah ate and was no longer downcast (1 Samuel 1:18). Reflect on your own attitude after prayer—how does it compare to Hannah’s?

3)Hebrews 10:12 says, “Christ offered a single sacrifice for sins, an offering that is effective forever.” How was this possible? And what spiritual impact has it had on you?