

HAPPINESS IS A BELIEF

We will begin with a thesis sentence for this lesson – “We are only as happy as what we believe to be true.” Happiness is a Middle English word (1100-1500) rather than Hebrew or Greek.

You may know someone who is unhappy in some area of her life. Her unhappiness may even be associated with a belief that God is somehow at fault because He has not kept a specific promise to her.

She may even believe that she is engaged in subjective thinking about it and doesn't care anymore.

Our lesson text involves such a believer named Hanna (channah from Chen) [grace].

We will examine and study our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

- Wives (1 Sam.1:1-2) polygamy
- Wombs (1 Sam.1:3-7) promise
- Weeping bitterly (1 Sam.1:8-16) pain
- Will of God (1 Sam.1:17-20) prayer

1. Hannah was involved in a polygamous marriage (1 Sam.1:1-2).

Why would a family of spiritual maturing believers engage in polygamy?

The primary cause was barrenness of a first Jewish wife. Barrenness of a firstborn male heir meant the end of the genealogy lineage.

Polygamy under the Old Covenant was founded upon one Mosaic Law of the firstborn (Deut.25:15-17) [Rachel]. **This Law was based on a misinterpretation of patriarch history.**

It was based on the barrenness of Sarah and Abraham (Gen.16-17) [Hagar] and Rachel and Jacob (Gen.29-30) [Leah and the two servant maids] (Gen.30:1-2, 22-24).

Jesus explained that it fell under the doctrinal principle of “the hardness of men's heart” (Matt.19:3-8).

There was another Mosaic Law that involved barrenness and deceased father called the Levirate Law (Deut.25:5-10) [Ruth and Boaz / the Goel law].

2. Hanna was the barren wife in this polygamous marriage (1 Sam.1:3-7).

Hannah was the ‘loved wife’ of the marriage while the other wife was the ‘childbearing wife’. (1 Sam.1:5, 8).

The rival wife provoked Hannah unmercifully because the Lord had closed her womb (1 Sam.1:6).

All three believers understood the doctrinal principle that the Lord opens and closes wombs according to the will of God and not man's.

- It was true for Sarah (Gen.17:15-16; 21:1-2).
- It was true for Rachel (Gen.30:22-24).
- It will be true for Hannah (1 Sam.1:20).

3. Hannah allowed her trials of faith to depress and distract her spiritually from the truth of God's promise and biblical history. (1 Sam.1:8-16)

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” (Prov.13:12)

Hannah's depression:

Constant weeping, wouldn't eat, downhearted, withdrawn, bitterness of soul, making deals with Lord, deeply troubled, emotionally pouring out soul to Lord, great anguish, and great grief (1 Sam.1:8-16) (NIV).

(Prov.14:10) “The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy.”

(Prov.30:15-16) “There are three things that will not be satisfied, four that will not say, ‘Enough?’ Sheol, **and the barren womb**, earth that is never satisfied with water, and fire that never says, ‘Enough!’”

(Prov.17:22) “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.”

Eli scolded her for being drunk because of her depression. Hannah had put her light of Christ under the proverbial basket (Matt.5:14-16).

Question: Why did Hannah choose to believe a lie rather than the truth? (2 Cor. 5:7; John 20:27-29)

Now we are to our thesis sentence – “We are only as happy as what we believe to be true.”

4. Hannah was only one belief away from happiness, but had forgotten how easy it was to acquire.

Like Peter she became engaged in man's interests rather than God's (Matt.16:23; Heb.12:2-3).

Question: How important is what we believe about a specific promise or category of God's word to our happiness or unhappiness?

When Eli restated the promise to her, Hannah believed (1 Sam.1:17-18). Once she believed, she was happy and back to her cheerful self again (1 Sam.1:18-19).

(Prov.15:13) “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.”

(Ps.34:2) “My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear it and rejoice.”

(Gen.12:1-3) Sarah and Abraham and Jacob and Rachel had the promise of the Abrahamic covenant

Hannah, Peninnah, and Elkanah already had a male heir. In fact, Hannah gave her firstborn son away after weaning him (1 Sam.1:24-28). **Then what was the big issue?** (The Plan of God!)

“The Lord remembered her prayer.” (1 Sam.1:19b, 27-28).

(1 Sam.1:20) “It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, ‘because I have asked him of the Lord.’”

(1 Sam.2:21, 26) “The Lord visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord.”