

## 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.”**