

## CCH sermon 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019 1 Samuel 1:1-20

### “A(nother) Special Birth!”

V17

- Adultery/corruption/infertility issues/love triangles/domestic bullying. Could be mistaken for thinking episode Eastenders! 1 & 2 Sam!
- Look at 1 Sam 1-8 this term.
  - 3000 years ago. Yet so contemporary. OK now mob phones!
    - Humanity hasn't changed.
    - God hasn't changed.
- Wonderful part of Scrip
  - **Exciting**- not hard to read. Read ahead!
  - **Relevant**. Prepares us for the King (Saul, David, Jesus!) cos period of history where life changes Judges to Kings.
  - **Challenging** Calls us to respond approp “returning to God!”
- As look at today's story, in 3 simple parts. **1) recap story.**
  - **Situation**
  - **Supplication** (old fashioned = prayer) shameless alliteration!
  - **Situation**
- With each **2) lesson about the God** we meet here who is our God if we trust in Jesus Christ.

### 1) Situation.

We've got a real situation here.

- Some family background in v1-3
  - V1 Not unimportant. 4 generations may show pedigree.
  - But then all of Israel could trace back Everyman.
  - God's story begins in unremarkable place.
- Tragedy begins in v2.
  - Now childlessness hard in any age (I don't know everyone's situation today). Cd be you or friend suffering silence at mo.
    - We will see real comfort & help, while I don't want to promise you are Hannah! Automatically have baby.
  - But Particular sadness (even potentially shame) about not being able to continue promised family tree- route of prom blessing

- Don't know how long trying for before Elkanah gave up and decided to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Peninah.
  - Can you imagine the tension. Must have felt so second rate.
  - 2 wives in home fighting.
    - H who has grt sadness of infertility
    - P who also feels inferior only there make babies.
    - Hardly romantic. Can't have been easy situation.
    - (just polygamy happens bible not recommended!)
- But he's a godly man who seeks to take worship seriously V3 (contrast Eli and his sons who we will come onto again).
  - off for annual trip to Tabernacle
    - (portable tent where people met w God)
    - Now parked semi permanently in Shiloh since time of Judges
  - They're sharing the Fellowship offerings of Lev 7 perhaps due to a vow or just thanksgiving.
    - Whole clan gathers- think Cmas meal (relig. & family).
    - But not easy time: stresses rise to surface as they often do at family gatherings.
    - E tries to reassure H w extra portion juicy steak v4,5 but she can't eat it with all P's jibes. V6,7
      - ▲ lady finds hard come church M Sunday.
      - Oh did you know I'm pregnant again H
    - And did you notice clearly spelled out twice v5,6.
      - P Added extra insult to injury
      - P says “Must be a punishment from God”.
        - (pls don't ever think that!)
    - In a sense H has 3 problems...
      - **Peninah**.
      - **God** who's closed her womb
      - **Husband** trying to be sensitive, but his questioning must have been pretty hard.
        - Particularly last one. Better to say...
        - “Don't **you** mean more to me than 10 wives”, but comes out bit self centred, bit proud.
  - So we've got a situation. Really bitter and painful situation.

Now the lesson from this.

Particularly for any who themselves are in a situation at the moment.

**We have a God who specialises in surprising beginnings.**

God loves to work with the most unpromising of material. It's when life is at rock bottom that God's about to work!

▲ All heard story of holiday maker lost in Ireland, "how do you get to Tipperary". Answer "I wouldn't start from here"!

God is going to bring turnaround for H, but also for the Nation!

- We can fast forward a little bit and a big bit.
  - See that going to be wonderful pitter patter tiny feet soon.
  - That encourages us that beyond prayer there's a pregnancy.
  - Beginning of H's personal story.
  - But it's a bigger story when we know who Samuel is.
- [But here's where can make a big mistake in 1 Sam. Fast forward further!
  - Yes story about people like us
  - But not exactly like us.
  - Unique situation in Bible History.
  - Mustn't miss wider context.
- People are facing unprecedented crisis since Exodus
  - Time of Judges & Ruth (books just before)
  - Leadership crisis. Everyone does as they see fit because they don't have a King (where book of Judges ends).
- But There's going to be a massive turnaround.
  - God is going to provide leadership for the nation that will bring stability and blessing
    - So it's not just H who's in crisis. Micro scale.
    - It's people of Israel in crisis. Macro scale.
- And the infertility of this woman, and the turnaround that comes is going to be the answer to HER prayers, but in a sense, NATION's prayers.
- Samuel is going to take a leading role in the turnaround in the nation from guys before called Judges with all their weaknesses to Monarchy.

- Now Kings bit ambivalent as we will see later on, but concept of the King has great power (potentially) to bring blessing to people.

If we chose to bring a massive turnaround in the fortunes of the people of God we wouldn't choose to start with a barren woman.

- But actually childless woman is almost signal in the Bible for God about to do a great work.
  - Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Samson's mum in Judges13
  - We could say it's trademark God in the OT.
- Even the birth of Jesus in NT starts with difficulty.
  - Slightly different- not difficult because couple who are trying aren't having a baby can't
- But difficult because an unmarried virgin a baby on her own without even trying can!!
- He loves to use surprising circumstances.
  - Difficult, impossible circumstances.
  - ▲ Faithchild. Multi award rapper. Mother in tough circumstances already had 4 children. on way to abortion clinic, felt God compelling her to go through with it, and had plan for child. From those difficult beginnings. Name.
- Sometimes it doesn't rain it pours.
  - Life is falling apart
  - All hope is lost
  - You're at the end of your rope
  - You have no resources left.
- Well if that's you, you are in the perfect situation to see God at work.

**We have a God who specialises in surprising beginnings.**

*But as Hannah's will sing about in ch2. God brings great reversals from the most difficult of circumstances.*

## 2) Supplication. Let's look at Hannah at prayer.

V9.

- I wonder if anyone went after Hannah, as she got up.
  - No give her some space
  - Maybe they thought she just needed some air.
  - But she was off to the house of God.
  - Maybe Eli's sleeping. Already could be old and fat.
- Look at language V10.
  - Wonderful thing about prayer. Be absolutely yourself.
    - Can be honest before God & let it all out.
- V11. Lord Almighty. Good theology. Not a bad thing to remember in those impossible situations.
  - Now bargain? (▲ Martin Luther- storm- I'll become monk)
    - I don't think so... so heartfelt and devoted to Lord, she would be so happy to have a son, she would gladly devote his life to God's service.
    - Razor- sign he'd be specially devoted to the Lord's service. Nazirite vow.
- Then this tragic episode with the drunkenness question v12-14
  - Which just adds insult to injury...
  - Thinks one too many at the fellowship meal
  - Shows just how pastorally insensensitive Eli was as well.
  - Continue to get contrasts between Samuel's family and his.
    - In 1 Sam got godly people doing right thing
    - And ungodly people doing the wrong thing
    - But God knows and sorts it all out.
- H replies v15, 16.
  - Her language is very moving.
    - V10 prayed weeping bitterly
    - V15 pouring out soul
    - V16 praying out of great anguish
- Eli changes his tune and adds his prayer to hers. V17.
- And she responds humbly. V18.
- And already there's a small change, and a sense of peace in her, because she's able to eat again.

The lesson?

## **We have a God who loves to hear our heartfelt Cries.**

Spoke at Men's breakfast about privilege of prayer.

We have direct access right into the throne room of God that she didn't have, yet she models crying out in desperation in real relationship to God.

Supplication definition Cambridge Dictionary "To ask for something in a humble way".

- She's honest
  - Unashamed what others think
  - Conscious of who God is
- She's humble
  - Lord Almighty if you will only look on your servants misery
  - Psalms model how we can pour out our complaints and laments to God
- Mens Brek I spoke about 4 prayers.
  - A – arrow!
  - B- breakfast prayers!
  - C- corporate prayers (good time last Wed)
  - D- devotional prayers.

Perhaps we should add

- E- Extended prayer. Special time of coming before the Lord and opening our heart to him about a situation. Not needs to be extra long as if that would bend his ear more. But extended perhaps in openness and honesty before the Lord than we sometimes are. **He loves to hear!**

▲ I have a 88 year old prayer partner prays every day for me and many others. Spoke on phone- conversation with "my father! Gets carried away- loves it! *He loves to hear.* But more... as we see now... *loves to answer.*

Samuel's name sounds like "Heard by God" reminding everyone by his name that he was an answer to prayer (prayer does make a difference), so let's move to final part story and to his arrival...

### 3) Solution

Here comes the answer.

- V19a. Continued worship of the Lord.
- V19b. Heb lit “knew her” but more subtle NIV! All get the biology!
- THE LORD REMEMBERED HER!
  - It’s the same verb used of Noah in the ark
  - It’s the same as the Israelites in oppression in Exodus 2.
- It’s the moment of turnaround
  - It means that God is acting decisively
- It’s not that he forgets us rest of time, but when in Scripture he remembers, he’s going to act decisively.
- Perhaps that link with Exodus reminds us it’s bigger than just Hannah
  - Again it’s a reminder that God is acting on behalf of the whole nation.

It’s worth repeating.

God isn’t just answering a young woman’s prayer. Something much bigger going on.

[Like in Ruth where an old woman becomes a granny and everyone’s happy.

The baby in Ruth is the granddad of David, and the GRgrgrgrgr Granddad of Jesus!

Small scale and Large scale.]

Small scale- Hannah

Large scale- the arrival of Samuel. The most important baby for years.

A godly leader against a backdrop of ungodly leaders who will to navigate the people out of a national crisis and one day appoint the King after God’s own heart who rule the people for God.

A king who will pave the way for THE king who perfectly brings God’s rule.

Small scale big scale.

God to let God be God and trust him to answer as he sees best.

### *We have a God who remembers his people in their suffering.*

Who knows what God might be bringing out of your difficult situations.

In small scale, in large scale.

We are not Hannah.

Don’t take this as a blanket promise that with enough faith

- Your cancer will be healed
- Your mum will get better
- Your friend who’s been trying for years will have a baby

But do take this as a promise that when we pour out our hearts to God he will act as he sees fit. He will remember! Maybe in far bigger ways see someday.

*And as we approach **the Lord’s supper...*** What greater **remembering** is there, than when God heard the crying out of his people in their sin and in his mercy remembered & sent his Son.

I called this sermon another special birth because we are not long after Christmas we remembered a very special birth.

And this one in Samuel prefigures a much more important baby who will save his people from their sins. Who came and took our sins on his back and came to sort out (not a national crisis) but an international crisis of Sin, by dying and rising victoriously.

- I don’t know how sin is causing you suffering at the moment,
- But if you trust him he will take your sin away And He’s taking us to a new heaven and a new earth where there is no more sin, sickness, cancer, barrenness, pain.
  - And he does it in surprising beginnings.
    - An unknown woman in hill country 3000 years ago.
    - An angel to an unknown mother to be from the hill country!

If God hadn’t closed her womb. No P. No fighting. No desperation, no dependence, no vow, no Samuel, no preparation for the King. Trust God.

▲ Tapestry- looks a mess on one side, but turn over God is weaving.