

V28

- Something in the local press caught my eye
  - Poundland are doing £1 engagement rings for Valentines!
  - how would you feel if loved one proposed w “bling ring”?
  - Admittedly, supposed to be a “placeholder” until real thing
  - And I’m not saying you have to give a \$5m diamond (JayZ to Beyonce) to ask for her hand in marriage.
  - But if this was all you got, might be bit disappointed.
  - But surely there’s a principle that **a wonderful relationship** should be reflected in a **wonderful gift** (often 1month £).
- This passage is about a wonderful gift given to a wonderful God
  - Gift = Son. Relationship = between Hannah and her God.
  - Not that he needs a gift
  - Anything we give is given back to him who gave us all

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- Today we carry on looking 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of 1 Sam. Started last week.
  - If you weren’t here last week do download podcast.
- We saw an amazing tale about a woman
  - Afflicted with terrible suffering- barren, picked on
  - Who poured out her soul to God
  - And in answer to prayer was given a child- Samuel.
  - But the extraordinary thing about Hannah, is that rather than hanging onto this precious child for herself she promised him to God right from start. V11.
- So wonderful gift= giving her son.
- which comes out of a wonderful relationship: a reln with God
  - Something you may have, or something you may be intrigued about as you see it in others.
  - Really relevant to Xns and nonXns, though 3000 years old.
    - I want us to explore together how extraordinary this gift was. 1 **gift**
    - And then figure out what she understood about her **relationship** with God to bring this about 2
    - And then ask a question for us.

- Let’s look at a few aspects of her dedication.
- **1<sup>st</sup>) DEEP.**
  - Now we saw last week that she had promised her son to be given as a servant of God
  - And for that to happen we need to get this child to tabernacle- the place where God’s feet touched the earth.
  - So v21 is a problem of geography. V21-22. did not go.
  - Is she really going? On the surface it looks like she’s delaying.
  - But like so many times in this book there’s a difference between what it looks like on the surface (eg a drunk woman) & what’s really going on (a praying woman)
- That’s why I’ve called this a deep dedication, because it’s a bit buried. It’s not obvious straight away.
- So often we worry what people think. Hannah was more concerned time and again with what God thought.
  - And she knew that while if she was going to deliver a boy ready to be useful in God’s house, she would need him to be on solid foods
  - because she wasn’t going to be around.
  - So she is devoted to God even if looks just for a moment like she’s not. It’s a deep devotion, not a surface devotion.
- But look what she’s planning to do v22.
  - *Live there always.*
  - *This gift is no short term loan.*
- **2<sup>nd</sup>) LASTING**
  - It’s a bit strange, but we need to get our heads around this vow that Samuel would be under.
  - system in OT where someone could be totally devoted to God, and it was all symbolised in their hair (v11)
  - This was called a Nazirite vow.
    - No alcohol.
    - No haircuts
    - And no getting near corpses

- Someone would devote themselves to God in a special way, and not have their hair cut, like Samson.
- Normally it lasted a short while (actually Paul in NT)
- But Hannah wants her boy to be in the Temple for ever!
- That's very surprising.
- (that means Hannah isn't even expecting Samuel at her or funeral)
- Do you see how big this gift is?
- **3<sup>rd</sup>) COSTLY**
- This is no bling ring.
  - She's giving up her Son forever.
- **Few more hints in v24.**
  - Bull, flour, wine.
  - That all would have added up, and come up on H and E's credit card bill.
  - The scholars say it may be 3 times what she was required to give for a sacrifice of this kind.
- **Another little phrase in there as reminder. "Young as he was"**
  - This little guy is just a toddler.
  - For us moving a baby from solids to milk quick (NCT-6months, normally done by around age 2)
  - We have friends in Camb, still having mum's milk around 4& 5 (bit weird)
  - Could have been something around that time, so not dropped off at the Temple a few months old.
- But he is Young. Here he is v 28 dropped off
  - **boarding sch, church youth camp, apprentice** rolled into 1
  - ▲ twins started preschool whole family crying. Just 1 day.
  - Costly. Hard for Hannah to say goodbye.
  - Particularly leaving him with a priest who already has a track record of being pastorally insensitive.
    - She really must have trusted God.

- Now gift unique. And mustn't put ourselves too quickly into story
  - Otherwise might think if we pray hard enough we'll have a baby in infertility or a reln in singleness, or healing in cancer.
  - Don't think that is point of Story
  - Can trust God's bigger picture but we are not Samuel.
  - Samuel going to have a unique role in ppl of God.
- But many Christian parents in past have "given" children back to God in prayer, asking that God do with them.
- ▲ John Paton.
- I'd really recommend listening to talk about him by John Piper- on yellow sheet on way out and for life groups.
- His life was given to God's service
- *"When you were given to them, your father and mother laid you upon the altar, their first-born, to be consecrated, if God saw fit, as a Missionary of the Cross; and it has been their constant prayer that you might be prepared, qualified, and led to this very decision; and we pray with all our heart that the Lord may accept your offering, long spare you, and give you many souls from the Heathen World for your hire".*
- In prayer given to the Lord in prayer as missionary.
- 19 C Missionary to New Hebrides- island archipelago now Vanuatu pacific. Didn't tell him. Sure enough time came. Stopped being church minister.
- Many parents have had the bittersweet experience of a child.
- Who knows, Jon & Alice, maybe you will have.
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- What did she understand. 2 things...

## EXTRAORDINARY DEVOTION COMES FROM DEEP RECOGNITION

- For Hannah it was a natural and reasonable thing to give her son's life back to God so that he might serve him full time in the Temple.
- Why was that so attractive to her when it meant ?
- Imagine Alice & Jon that Joshua was your only child and he came after a lot of heartache, waiting, and perhaps expensive treatment.
- And then Age 3-5 you take him to boarding school at the Temple, and you only see him once a year.
- WHY?
  
- Well part of the answer I think is in v22.
  - It wasn't such a terrible thing
  - He wasn't going off to boot camp
  - He was going to be with God.
- You see Hannah had spent time in God's presence, pouring out her soul to him in prayer, and she knew what a wonderful place it was to be near him.
- In v28 he's happily worshipping the Lord. Kids can understand from a young age how great God is.
- In fact Jesus taught us that we have a lot to learn from them. We need to come humbly to God like they do.

So I wonder if one of the reasons for her sacrifice was

### **Extraordinary dedication comes from deep recognition**

#### **The wonder of God's presence.**

- You might think that if someone
  - moves their whole family to another town
  - they are a bit mad
  - I bet if you asked them they wouldn't say it was a sacrifice. A joy. Because of
- But there's another thing Hannah knew too.

Paton's father

*How much my father's prayers at this time impressed me I can never explain, nor could any stranger understand. When, on his knees and all*

*of us kneeling around him in Family Worship, he poured out his whole soul .... we all felt as if in the presence of the living Savior, and learned to know and love him as our Divine friend.*

*Like Hannah, John Paton's dad loved to pray, loved to be in God's presence, and knew God. Knew wonder.*

*Not only did this rub off on son.*

*But explains link. If you find God wonderful*

*You won't find any gift too costly.*

- **The wonder of God's plans**
- God's plans for Hannah are truly wonderful in this chapter.
- If we **zoom in** on her, She goes from being barren to having the pitter patter of tiny feet
- And so even in anticipation of that answer to prayer, she promises
- No wonder she's so devoted to God, she recognises the goodness of his plans (and Elkanah seems to get that too backing her up in this story).
- But we have the privilege of being able to **zoom out** to see so many more of God's plans.

But it's important to zoom out: National plans.

Said last week, answer to her prayers,

Answer to the nation's prayers.

- If you feel Brexit is bad, and we need good leadership.
  - Time of judges far worse.
- Leadership was sporadic, eccentric and going down hill.
  - People like Samson, not exactly best example.
  - At the mercy of people like Philistines.
- So they needed good leadership.
  - And this woman's prayers mark a turnaround.
    - Yes for her.
    - But also for the nation

- Because her son would guide nation through crisis to the establishment of a new and good leadership.

Mind blowing- **we can see** God's big plans leading to a King, so greater.

And then in turn this whole episode leads us to THE KING.

The king that we all need, God's King who rules perfectly

In fact this passage points us to a far greater gift of a Son.

Jesus Christ, given for us! To rescue us from Sin.

- Far greater than Abraham who was willing to sacrifice his son.
- Far greater than Hannah who was willing to sacrifice her son.
- God DID sacrifice his Son.
- That's how GOOD he is.

He loves you so much he sent his only son not to Temple, but to the Cross so you might be friends with him.

One generation.

Invites a question.

### **Have we seen how wonderful the God of the Bible is?**

- **Guest here this morning.**

- Hope found story woman 3000 years ago strangely moving
- Hope challenged your view of God.
  - Maybe stay away from Xty harsh or
- But hope bit of an explanation for friends.
  - Reason do strange things. Extravagant gifts.
    - Give up holidays
    - Give up comfort
    - Give up home in Cambridge!
  - Cos relationship with Jesus Christ so good.
  - Maybe you need to look into it.
  - Grab a Luke's gospel to cut to chase.

- **Those who are Christians.**

- Don't we need to pray to grasp wonder of reln w C more.
- Greater devotion to the Lord will not come from trying harder but from a deep recognition of who God is.
  - From meditating on the God of Hannah
  - The God of John Patons parents
  - The God who sacrifices his Son for us.
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- When we grasp that,
  - like the woman in Jesus day in the Temple who gave her last coin she had to live on,
  - Like woman who anointed J feet with family heirloom perfume of pure nard
  - **nothing will be too much for Him**

Let's pray.