

THE GIFT OF GRACE

Scripture: 1 Samuel 2:1-10

December 23, 2020

Message: Before reading Hannah's Prayer, imagine Hannah's life. She was one of Elkanah's two wives; his other wife, Penninah, had children, but Hannah did not. Penninah bullied Hannah, and though Hannah's husband loved her, he did not protect her from this ridicule.

Hannah prayed that God would give her a son. Why was this so important to her? As a childless woman (in her time), she feels unworthy and useless. These feelings are only amplified by Penninah and by the society in which Hannah lives. She is asking for a son, but she is also asking God for restoration.

In chapter 2, Hannah prays about the difference God has made in her life. God has turned her life upside-down. God has changed everything. In her prayer, she says, "The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength." And "He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor."

Hannah cannot do this on her own. The gift of restoration that God has given her was grace. Unearned, and truly a gift. Who or what in your life needs to be restored? Where do you need God's grace? How can you follow in Hannah's footsteps and release to God what is broken? The result of God's grace may not be what we expect, what we ask for, or even what we can imagine, but God is worthy of our trust.

Have you noticed? Do you remember? God turns water into wine, sinners into saints. God uses tax collectors to spread the word of Life throughout the world, and God turns our own hands into God's own. God brings life from death.

Prayer: Creating and sustaining God, in my hands is what I cannot release. Open my heart so that I can release to you what I cannot restore myself. Open my hands with your grace and change my world. In the name of your redeeming son. Amen.

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