

REACHING BEYOND IN PRAYER

1 Samuel 1: 1-20

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Introduction

“Prayer is something which is talked about more than anything else and practised less than anything else. For believers, prayer remains one of the greatest gifts our Lord has given outside of salvation.”

F.B.Meyer, in his book ‘The Secret of Guidance said, “The great tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but an un-offered prayer”

Prayer is an act of asking God to do what he has already promised to do.

Hannah's story is about a movement from barrenness to life, from death to resurrection.

Need of the Nation

Judges 21:25 – “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

There was deterioration in politics, moral life and spiritual life. They failed to conform to the ways of God. The leaders of Israel failed, they openly rebelled against God and His Word. The moral chaos prompted fighting among the people and rebellion against the judges. There was no leader who could unite the people. There was apostasy. The book of Judges ends with utter confusion religiously and politically because every man was doing what was right in his own eyes. It was a time when there was no sense of authority and responsibility to God or to men. There was a cry in the heart of those who had faith in God for His intervention. The nation of Israel was in need of a Godly ruler who could restore the ways of God and turn people back to God.

The story of Hannah

Need of Hannah

1 Samuel 1:2 – “Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none”.

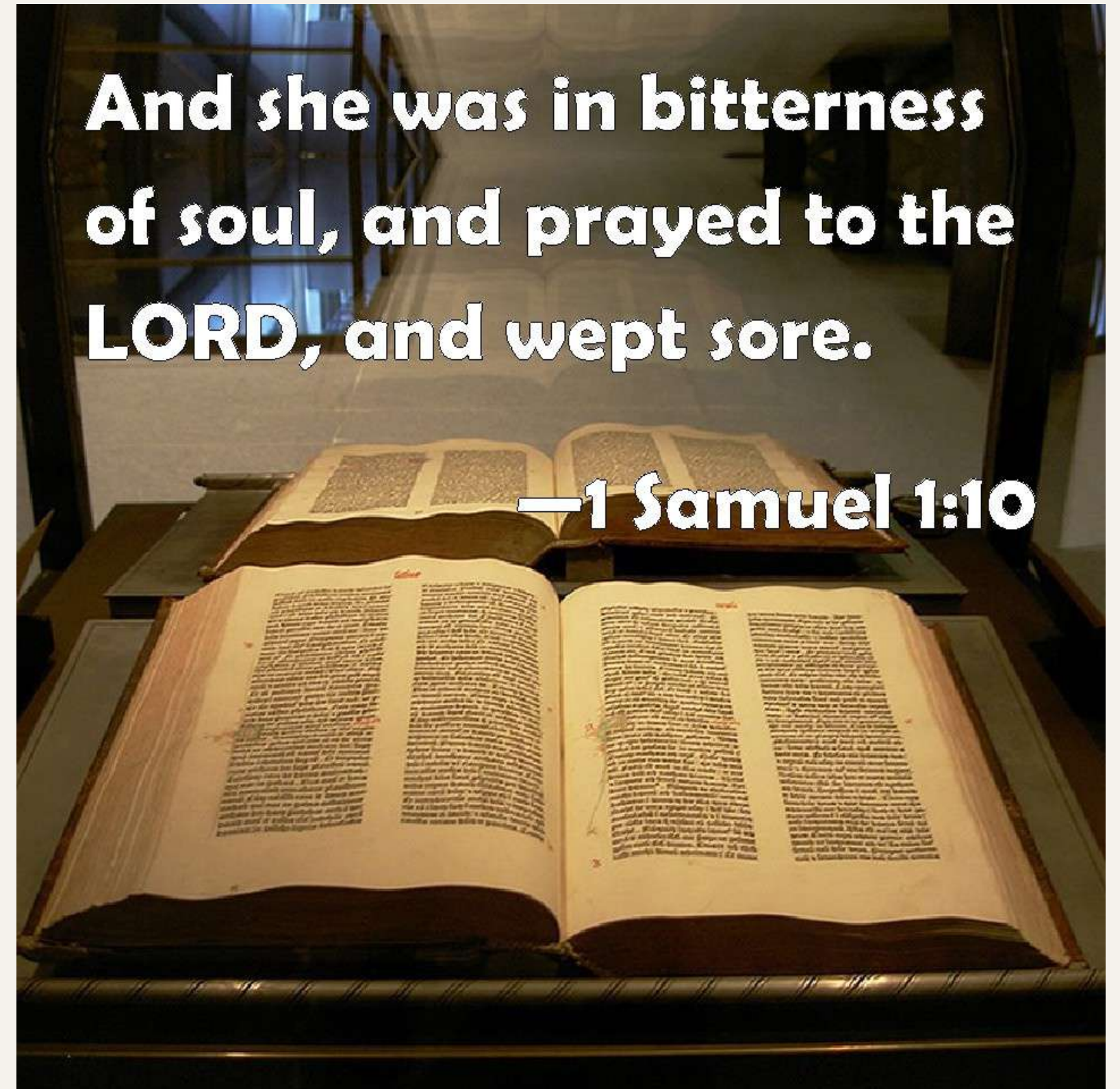
Barrenness in the Bible was a huge problem for a woman in ancient Israel’s society. Having children was good for society, family, economically, politically, militarily, culturally. The society in which they lived was agrarian, which meant the more sons you had, the more workers you had to work the land, and so the more income you could generate for your family. So, more sons meant a higher status in society and more security. Bearing children was a life-or-death issue for families and for nations.

Hannah felt that she had no real identity and no real purpose in life.

1 Samuel 1: 5-6 - Hannah’s barrenness was not through her fault, but the Lord had closed her womb.

Hannah's Prayer – *1 Samuel 1:10*

She arose and went to the Lord in her need and despair. She had deep anguish in her soul and wept bitterly. She was pouring out her soul to the Lord from this great anguish and grief. She was a woman at her wit's end, and she turned to the Lord for rescue from her situation.



Hannah's Vow – *1 Samuel 1: 11*

Prayer that reaches beyond will have the need of God at the center

It appears that Hannah looked beyond her own longings for a child because she saw how desperately the nation needed those men, in this time of religious decline, who would be separated wholly to God.

A Nazirite in the Bible was a person who dedicated themselves to the Lord for a period of separation. So, Hannah's son would be forever in God's service rather than in the service of the family.

“Hannah's suffering allowed God to place His concerns on her heart.”

The prayer of Hannah reached beyond her needs and desires to fulfil the purpose of God.

When it seemed that there was no hope for the nation, God intervened in grace, but He did so in response to the prayers of a godly woman Hannah, whose name means "grace."

Prayer that reaches beyond will never give up

1 Samuel 1:3 – ‘Year after year’

No bitterness or rebellion must be permitted to cloud your vision of God even when He seems not to answer. Because God will answer your prayer in an unexpected time.

“Prayer is a gracious provision of God for life in a fallen world.”

Conclusion

Hannah's story is a powerful one of strength, courage, persistent prayer, and unwavering commitment to seeking God's face. She faced challenging circumstances, felt discouraged and angry with God. Despite her challenges, feelings of rejection and abandonment, she did not stop praying. She prayed when she was unsure if she would ever have children, and she prayed when God blessed her with a son.

If you are in a season of ongoing adversity, challenges, or opposition, be encouraged by Hannah's story and her resilience in seeking God. Continue to be persistent in prayer, surrender all your emotions to God, remember God's faithfulness, and speak victory despite opposition.

Prayer is a powerful tool that God wants us to use to stay connected with Him, strengthen our spiritual maturity, and use as a weapon to overcome the tactics of the enemy. When adversity comes, the good news is that God desires for us to draw closer to Him and we are victorious through Christ Jesus. Reach beyond in prayer!