**Hannah: A Godly Mother**

For me, Mother’s Day is a very emotional day. It reminds me of what is really important.

What do our moms do? They hug us, the comfort us. They pray for us. They care for us as only a mother can.

Dads are great, but moms are… Well what can I say.

Hannah was one such mother with a special story.

Intro:

1 Sam 1:1-8

v. 1 Elkanah was a Zuphite (a Levite) He was a very devout Jew.

In the ancient Near East a woman’s value was based very much on her being able to bear children. When she could not, “blame” tended to fall on the woman. We hear such and such was barren, but we never hear that of a man—not in ancient times.

v. 6 But in this case, it was in fact, Hannah (not Elkanah) who was barren.

Imagine her unrelenting grief at being mocked by Peninnah.

“You are nothing. Your are worthless. God is against you.”

Probably Peninnah was both proud of her motherhood and jealous at the same time, because clearly Elkanah favored Hannah. (he gave her a double portion of the meat)

[Another good reason to not have a polygamous marriage. There are no examples of polygamous marriages going well in the Bible]

Elkanah was a typical male/husband pretty clueless: v. 8 “Why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you down hearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”

Hint to husbands, when your wife is struggling, don’t let it be about you!!!! Support her.

For Elkanah: it was all about him.

Hanna’s Answer: Actually, NO!!!

Motherhood is such an essential way for most women to express their God-given ability to show unconditional love.

Mothers want to give love to a child!!!

This is part of their being made in the image of God.

Imagine voluntarily going through the sickness and pain of being pregnant, then all that pain at birth, then the breastfeeding, weight gained, lost sleep, terrible twos. Then doing it a second and third time!! On purpose!!!! You had better appreciate your mom.

Last week I joked: Why do husbands have to do something for their wives on Mother’s Day? (Probably should not have done that…)

God completely understands how Rachel felt.

Look at the number of women in the Bible in a similar situation:

Sarah (who gave birth to Abraham at about 90 yrs)

Rebekah (was childless Gen 25:21)

Rachel (Gen 30:22-24 God has taken away my disgrace)

Samson’s mom Judges 13:1-5

Hannah

Elizabeth Luke 1

What do I learn from this?

God knows us and he knows exactly what we need. Mothers need to love their children as much as children need to love their mothers.

There is something mystical about the love of a mother for her child.

Psalm 113:4-9 (esp v. 9) He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. The Bible never says this about fathers.

Isaiah 49:15-16 Can a mother forget the baby at her breast? And have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will never forget you.

God feels for us as a mother feels for her child.

Q: Want to understand how God feels about you? Look at a mother with her young child.

1 Sam 1:9-20

v. 10-11 God hears our prayers, and he especially hears the prayers of mothers.

v. 11 No razor will be used on his head. A nazirite? Samuel was a priest.

v. 12-14 Eli: not very sensitive. Maybe he could have asked her!

v. 20 Great news. Samuel means “heard by God.”

God hears the fervent prayers of mothers for their children.

1 Sam 1:21-28

Hannah loves Samuel so much, but she loves God even more.

Mothers: Can you give you sons and daughters over to the service of God? Can you let them go? Wow!

I remember when Joelle Douge’s parents brought their young daughter to live with us and serve with us in Bakersfield.

Is 54:1 Sing barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.

Here he is talking about the kingdom of God and of the church.

As Christians, we are that desolate woman, spiritually. All of us can have spiritual children.

Like Hannah, we need to yearn to bring forth children in the faith. We need to beg God for this opportunity. Like Hannah, we need to care for the babes in Christ, to treasure them, to protect them, to feed them.

Younger Christian: Do you long to bring spiritual children into the kingdom?

More mature Christian: Are you taking care of the young God has already given us?

But then, like Hannah, we need to let them go.

BTW, this is quoted in Gal 4:27 Again, Paul is talking about the church and spiritual children.

v. 28 You, my brothers and sisters like Isaac, are children of promise.

As Christians we can experience what a mother experiences.

I feel this about Josh Brummett and Garek Nandino. Jan feels this about Tianni and Brianna?

But… Can we give them over to the service of the Lord, as Hannah did?

Let’s read Hannah’s prayer

1 Sam 2:1-11.

Hannah, the mother, boasts in the Lord.

v. 8 God lifts up the lowly, giving them seats with princes.

v. 9 He helps his faithful servants.

If we prevail, it is by his strength.

v. 10 He will give strength to his king

 and exalt the horn of his Messiah/anointed. A messianic prophecy.

By the way, the story has a happy ending for Hannah

1 Sam 2:18-21 Hannah was blessed with other children.

Like Solomon with riches and like Jesus said, in Mark 10:29-31 we will receive in turn 100-fold.

1 Sam 2:34-35 Samuel will be a faithful preist. He is a prefigure of the Messiah.

1 Sam 3:19-21 Samuel has an amazing career as a priest, a the first appointed prophet and a judge.

He is the only one in Israel’s history who took the role of prophet, priest and king.

All because of a mother’s love for him and for God.

Moms: your sacrifice has not been in vain.

We are not all Samuels, but we are what we are because of you.

For us: Isaiah 54:1-5 God wants to make us all into spiritual moms or dads. He will enlarge your tent (the MCC). He will lengthen the cords, spread out to the right (Madera) and to the left (Turlock) and your descendants—those you baptize into Christ in the next few years—will dispossess the world of many people who will enter into the kingdom!

So, let’s learn from our mothers and let us apply this in our evangelism.

Thank-you moms!

There are two qualities I think of when I think of my mother. The first is that she is a bit of a rebel and a person who is fiercely independent-minded--she thinks for herself. She is intellectually and politically independent. Second, she is the kind of mother who unconditionally supports her children, but wants them to make their own decisions and to create their own space. She makes her children feel like she truly believes in them—sufficient that she trusts she did a good enough job to let us make our own choices.

One of my first memories of my mom is her writing on the family calendar “start pills.” She was one of the very first women in the United States to take the birth control pill. My mother was a liberated woman. She was on an FBI watch list as a possible trouble-maker. They were probably right. She was a bit of a trouble-maker. I was young, but I knew what my mom was doing. I was and am proud of her. My mom hates every form of racism and she does not tolerate fools easily. She has very high moral and ethical expectations of herself and of those she loves.

A second little story that illustrates my mom is that, after raising six children and seeing the youngest off to kindergarten, she went back to school. Possessing a journalism degree from the University of Colorado, she went back to school and earned a Masters Degree in education. She did this while working full time as a teacher and while being a mother of six. I was her partner in this in some ways. She had a “kiddie lit” class, and I read many of the books, offering her summaries and my review of the books. We both love to read.

My mom became my example of how to approach life in so many ways. In high school, I was, at the same time, a foolish partier, but also an intellectual, who always sought to expand my mind. I have always been a self-starter and a fiercely independent thinker. I get this from my mom (my dad gets some cred here as well, by the way, but…). I always thought I was kind of her favorite because my mom saw herself in me.

What my mom did, is she raised us to do for ourselves, to think for ourselves and to make our own way. I always knew she would support me, even if she did not agree with me. A big moment in my life was after achieving my doctorate in chemical physics. I became a professor and had “arrived,” career-wise. Yet, I left my career as a chemistry professor to go into the ministry. I can only imagine the conversation my parents must have had. Seriously? Because of mom’s influence, my parents totally supported my spiritual journey, no matter how radical it was for them. They did not criticize or even question my decision at all. I felt totally supported. The great thing is that I knew I would be supported, despite the fact that they paid cash for my undergrad degree by their hard work and discipline (in fact they put six children through university). I also knew that not many had a mom like mine. Thanks, mom.

When I was young we went to church every week. My mom was born an Episcopalian. Her great, great…great grandfather was Bishop Robert Seabury, the first and founding bishop of the Episcopalian Church. When I and my siblings went in different directions, my mom supported us 100 percent. My sister is an Orthodox nun—very traditional Christianity, three of my siblings are Unitarians—a more liberal form of Christianity and then there is me—the opposite of all that. A fairly conservative, Bible-only non-denominational Christian. My mom would defend my journey and my independent track to the nth degree. Why? Because it is not about her. It is about us. That reminds me of God. For God, it is not about him. It is about us.

You see, I am my mom’s son. Despite being a pot-smoking, LSD-taking radical in high school and college, I always knew that I was going to do something great. I always excelled in school. My personal motto my entire life has been, “Do the hard thing.” Why? Well, in part, because my mom always did the hard thing for herself, for her family, and to help other people. She taught eighth grade English, she ran the school paper, she crossed picket lines, with people screaming at her. She has been devoted to all kinds of volunteer service all her life. My mom is neither a progressive not a conservative. She is her own person.

Another key decision in my life was made when I moved 2000 miles, packing up my Volkswagen Rabbit, moving to Boulder to start a new life. When I arrived, I found out that they had an almost insanely difficult major called chemical physics—a dual PhD in chemistry and physics. Well, I am my mom’s son. I went for it. It almost killed me, as I only had freshman physics behind me, but I made it.

It was that first year in grad school that I came across biblical Christianity. I was already devoted fully to a earning an extremely difficult degree and had been on a personal journey pursuing spirituality at the same time. Now I was being called to be a disciple of Jesus, going to church four or five times per week, praying and reading daily, sharing my faith. How could I make such simultaneous commitments? My mom took on raising six children, working full time as a teacher and also simultaneously full time in graduate school. I did not feel the least hesitation. Ultimately, I led two and even three Bible study groups, created and ran a Big Brother program, taught Sunday school, became president of the student group and completed my PhD. I have never lacked for self-confidence, and I owe much of that to my mom—for better or for worse.

I have published 16 books. I am a writer. Where do you think I got that from? From my journalism major, English teacher mother, of course. Those who know me know that I am a fearless person—I am not afraid to take risks. Perhaps I should be more afraid of taking risks some times. Where did I get that from? From my mom, of course. Dad was careful, mom was not. At 97 years old, she walks four miles on the streets per day! Don’t let them stop you, mom!

She raised six well-educated, mentally and emotionally solid and stable, happy spiritual children. We owe her a lot more than our lives.

I love you, mom. Happy Mother’s Day

And happy Mother’s Day to all the moms out there hearing this message.