

Hannah's Prayer – 1 Samuel 2: 1-10

Sermon 13-2-22 (SC)

GOD IS FAIR

INTRODUCTION

Here's a question for you to think about. I'm going to let you think about this one for a bit, and we'll come back to it later. So no shouting out. Here's the question: What is heavier: a tonne of feathers or a tonne of bricks?

BACKGROUND

Now while you are thinking of that, I am going to tell you about our bible story today. The Bible is full of stories, with heroes, and great adventures. But not all the stories in the Bible are given to us as examples to follow. Some of them serve as warnings. And the story of Hannah begins with both; it starts with a warning and a good example.

You see, it begins with two characters, Hannah and Peninnah. And both of them had a deep longing in their heart. Both desired something good. Peninnah wished to be loved, and Hannah wished to have a child. While both desired good things, but they expressed these deep longings very differently. Peninnah, I'm afraid to say, teased Hannah, and became a bit of a bully which isn't nice at all. But Hannah responded very differently, Hannah shared her hope with God and prayed, and prayed, and prayed. Hannah turned to God in prayer.

Now sometimes, it seems like our prayers are not answered, or at least not in the way we expect. I'm afraid I don't have a simple answer for why this is the case. But Hannah's prayer was, and today's Bible reading, is Hannah's Song of thanks, where she prays aloud a big "thank you" to God.

And in her prayer, she says:

There is no one holy like the LORD. There is no one beside you. There is no Rock like our God. So don't talk boastfully, or be arrogant in the way you speak, for the LORD is a God of knowledge, who weighs up all our actions.

Now, let's go back to our question: what's heavier, a tonne of feathers or a tonne of bricks?

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Of course, they weigh the same. And one of the things that Hannah says, is that God deals with everyone justly. No matter how things appear to us, God weighs us all fairly. God is just.

ILLUSTRATION

You see we might go through life, thinking we have very few gifts, or accomplish very little in our lifetime. (Orange) Other people we feel, seem to have more, or do more. (Limes) (Mandarin) (Rice) and the problem is, we always compare ourselves to others, sometimes it makes us feel good, sometimes it makes us feel guilty, or jealous. But Hannah's prayer tells us that God weighs us all fairly and equally.

POINT: No matter how things appear to us, God is fair.

YOU ARE VALUED

INTRODUCTION

Now a moment ago, we thought about Hannah's prayer. How she says her big "thank you" to God. And she tells us that we can always trust that *God is just. God is fair. God is just.*

And now I want to think about another part of Hannah's "thank you" prayer.

The Lord raises up and the poor from the dust, he lifts up the needy from the ash heap, and gives them the place of honour at a great feast. For the foundations of the earth belong to God, and he has set the world upon them.

BACKGROUND

So Hannah has already told us in her thank you prayer that God is fair, that God is just, but now she has another important message to tell us. God sees and loves the people who often get missed out. God remember those who are often overlooked.

Did you know, where Hannah lived all those years ago, there was a giant ash heap outside of the city gates. It was where all the rubbish was taken and burned. And nobody wanted that job. Nobody wanted the job of burning the rubbish outside of the city; it was smelly and it was lonely. But Hannah says that everyone has value in God's eyes; God remembers everyone.

ILLUSTRATION

£10 – screw it up, throw it on the floor and stamp on it, put it in water.

POINT

So no matter how battered or tatty we feel, no matter what we have done, or what has been done to us, we all have value before God, who raises us from the ash heap, and sets us a place of honour at a great banquet. You have Value.

SUMMARY

Children, I know that the grown-ups will need a bit of help remembering all that we've said about Hannah's thank you prayer. So when you all go home and they ask you what we were talking about in church, remember these two points. God is Fair. And. You have value.