

The message today, which has also been given at WAVC, is slightly different in that it consists of;

- A long (ish) bible story,
- 3 songs and
- some challenges / encouragements towards the end .

Please read the story slowly and as a story. If the Spirit brings parts of it to your attention stop and pray or share at that point...

The songs that form part of the message are:

1. I will trust in you,

2. Pour out my heart ,

3. Here I am Lord

These first 4 verses of Psalm 91 speak of Intimacy, Trust, Confidence and Hope in our Father God—no matter what.

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from hidden traps and from deadly hazards. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Psalm 91:1-4

Worship: [10,000 Reasons](#)

[Your Words \(Third Day\)](#)

Personal or family prayer time:

Worship: [I will trust in You](#)

Reading & message

There once was a man from Ephraim whose name was Elkanah. He had two wives. The first was Hannah; the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children; Hannah did not.

Every year Elkanah went from his hometown up to Shiloh to worship and offer a sacrifice to God. Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as the priests of God there. When Elkanah shared the sacrificial meal he always gave generous portions to Hannah because he loved her so much, and God had not given her children. Her rival, Peninnah, taunted her cruelly never letting her forget that God had not given her children. This went on year after year. And Hannah was always reduced to tears and had no appetite.

Elkanah, her husband said, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why aren't you eating? Why are you so upset? Am I not of more worth to you than ten sons?"

So Hannah ate, pulled herself together, and slipped away to the sanctuary to pray quietly. The priest Eli was on duty at the entrance to God's Temple. Crushed in soul, Hannah prayed to God and cried inconsolably. Then she made a vow:

Oh, God-of-the-Angel-Armies,
If you'll take a good, hard look at my pain,
If you'll stop neglecting me
and go into action for me
By giving me a son,
I'll give him completely, unreservedly to you.
I'll set him apart for a life of holy service.

As she continued in prayer Eli was watching her closely. Hannah was praying in her heart, silently. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. Eli jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. He approached her and said, "You're drunk! How long do you plan to keep this up? Sober up, woman!"

Hannah said, "Oh no, I'm a woman hard used. I haven't been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. **The only thing I've been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God.** Don't for a minute think I'm a bad woman. It's because I'm so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I've stayed here so long."

Worship: [Pour out my Heart](#)

Eli answered her, "Go in peace. And may the God of Israel give you what you have asked of him."

"Think well of me—and pray for me!" she said, and went her way. Up before dawn, they worshiped God and returned home to Ramah. Elkanah slept with Hannah his wife, and God began making the necessary arrangements in response to what she had asked.

Before the year was out, Hannah had conceived and given birth to a son. She named him Samuel, explaining, "I asked God for him."

When Elkanah next took his family on their annual trip to Shiloh to Hannah didn't go. She told her husband, "After the child is weaned, I'll bring him myself and present him before God—and that's where he'll stay, for good."

Elkanah said to his wife, "Do what you think is best. Let God complete what he has begun!"

So she stayed home and nursed her son then she took him up to Shiloh, The child was so young to be sent off!

Hannah and Elkanah took the child to Eli. Hannah said, "Excuse me, would you believe that I'm the woman who was standing before you, praying to God? I prayed for this child, and God gave me what I asked for. And now I have dedicated him to God. He's dedicated to God for life."

After this Hannah prayed a great song of praise to God then she and Elkanah went home. The boy stayed and served God in the company of Eli the priest.

Eli's own sons were a bad lot. They didn't really know God and could not have cared less about the customs of priests among the people. When someone brought meat to offer to God, they took the meat before it had been offered, roasted it and ate it themselves. If anyone objected, they said "If you won't give it, we'll take it by force." These sons of Eli knew what they were doing—and right in the presence and sight of God, but they simply didn't care!

In the midst of all this, Samuel, a boy dressed in a priestly linen tunic, served God.

Eli did take his sons to task but it was too little, too late.

They were too far gone in disobedience and refused to listen to a thing their father said. So God, who was fed up with them, decreed their death. But the boy Samuel was very much alive, growing up, blessed by God and popular with the people.

A holy man came to Eli and said: "This is God's message: I revealed myself openly to your ancestors and I chose your family to be my priests: so now, why do you treat your sons better than me, why do you give them more honour than you give to Me? there is no way this can continue.

The boy Samuel was serving God under Eli's direction. This was at a time when the revelation of God was rarely heard or seen. One night Eli was asleep and it was well before dawn. Samuel was still in bed.

Then God called out, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel answered, "Yes? I'm here." Then he ran to Eli saying, "I heard you call. Here I am."

Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed." And so he did.

God called again, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel got up and went to Eli, "I heard you call. Here I am."

Again Eli said, "Son, I didn't call you. Go back to bed." (This all happened before Samuel knew God for himself. It was before the revelation of God had been given to him personally.)

God called again, "Samuel!"—the third time! Yet again Samuel got up and went to Eli, "Yes? I heard you call me. Here I am."

That's when it finally dawned on Eli that it was God calling the boy. So Eli directed Samuel, "Go back and lie down. If the voice calls again, say, 'Speak, God. I'm your servant, ready to listen.'" Samuel returned to his bed.

From: 1 Samuel 1,2,3

WORSHIP: [Here I am Lord](#)

The Cast:

- Eli the priest (who should have known better)
- Hannah ('only' a women)
- Elkanah (a canny husband)
- Samuel (the leader in waiting)
- Hophni and Phineas (Eli's son's proper pieces of work...)

That's quite a cast, a real mixed bag and between them they represent pretty much all the the places we could or may be in our relationship with Jesus...

I doubt any of us will just be entirely one of them but we may well recognise things in more than one of them that know we should drop and move on from or pick up and run with.

Remember in every element of this story the Spirit was at work giving each participant the opportunity to move closer in step with Him and further away from self.

Let's start at the bottom of the cast list

The sons who were faithless and rebellious

They knew what they were doing, they knew that they were just sticking two fingers up at God - but they didn't care!

Are there things going on in our lives - actions, thoughts, words, attitudes, that we KNOW are not from our Father nor do they honour Him - but we continue in them, acting as though we simply don't care. Where our words may say we do care but our actions shout that we don't.

The priest for whom God was growing dim

This is an interesting one - Eli knew what his sons were doing and he did have a sort of talk with them But things had progressed beyond talking and Eli ought to have removed them from service.... And have them punished BUT we are told that Eli 'did not restrain them' he chose to give his sons more leeway and God less honour. He was to 'soft' to exercise discipline and this put distance between him and God - distance that meant he did not recognize earnest prayer when he saw it in the temple - he thought Hannah was drunk, distance that meant when God spoke to Samuel he almost did not recognize the voice of his God.... More was expected of the priest... indeed as we are told that his eyes were growing dim it was a sort of sign of what was happening between Eli and God - God was growing dim because of Eli's refusal to deal with the behaviour of his sons....

Are there any decisions we are not making or words that we are not speaking and that by not doing so we dishonour God and put distance between us?

The husband who trusted his wife's faithfulness

Elkanah with a miracle baby - a precious baby - the direct result of prayer, as far as he was concerned and impossible baby! However, now the baby was here, part of the family they would be able to enjoy time together, watch him grow- all the natural reactions when a long awaited child was born... - however, when his wife, Hannah, said the child had to be dedicated to God, taken to the priest, to live and grow and serve God (quite some distance from Him and his wife... he said 'Are you mad women' - OK I made that up, but it would have been entirely understandable if he had. What's more it was the priest whose relationship with God, because of disobedience was growing dim? What on earth is God thinking!

But Elkanah trusted that God was speaking through his wife and he agreed.

Is there anything that God may be asking of you that you don't understand the reasons for or that seem not to make sense, but you have this nagging feeling that it's Him - Is he asking you to step out in faith, despite your feelings and fears?

The persistent women of faith...

Hannah, who would not be put off, who persisted, who chose to go and pray rather than stoop to the level of her taunter, who sought Gods presence rather than planning revenge, who remembered Gods word and who dedicated her son into His service. *Sought Gods presence, heard Gods word, fulfilled her vow - no matter the cost.*

Is there anything that we have been asking God about, and we think He has answered, but we are very unsure about following through on His answer, very nervous about doing the very thing we said we wanted to do now that He has said 'OK'?

The boy who desired intimacy with God

Samuel, which means God heard, named because his mother knew he was a direct answer to prayer. A boy who *grew in intimacy with God, who desired to be 'God's servant'* whatever, who heard, learned to listen to and then obeyed Gods voice.

Is there something that the Holy Spirit may be saying to us but we are not quite hearing - do we need clearer revelation so that our desire and zeal have Gods direction and purpose? Are there plans for our future that Jesus wants to put us in training for now?

Worship: [I Will Trust In You](#)

Reflection / Sharing / Prayer

Worship: [I Will Trust My Saviour Jesus](#)

"The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord turn His face towards you
And give you His SHALOM"