

Hannah

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 4th Oct 2009

Intro

- There are few things in life which compare to becoming a Christian, but leading someone to Christ must come in the same league- there is the feeling of 'this is what I was meant for'. It is indeed what we were meant for- in homegroups we saw from Ephesians 2 that we are God's masterpiece saved for good works which God prepared for us beforehand. A key thing God has prepared for us is to reproduce ourselves -to make other Christians and to teach and train them and to see what has been imparted to us also imparted to others. Are we doing it? Have we done it yet? Can we do it again? In our quest to raise 'spiritual' children we will learn some key lessons from the life of a godly woman of God who could not rest until she had achieved her purpose in life- to raise a son dedicated to God's service.

Read 1Sam 1:1-28

Hannah had a great desire for physical children- do we have the same desire for spiritual children? 3 areas we are to raise spiritual children:

1. Multiplying our faith- bringing others to Jesus

- Immediately done by woman of Samaria & Andrew to Peter (John 1:42). William Temple (a former Archbishop of Canterbury) said in his commentary on John 1:42 'the greatest service that one man can render another'
- Hannah wept and fasted before the Lord and prayed her heart out- for Eli to think she was drunk meant she must have been earnestly praying even though she did it quietly. Jesus says 'from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks' (Lk 6:45)- what we are asking God for reveals what is in our hearts. James says we don't have because we don't ask God (Jam 4:2). Are we asking for spiritual sons & daughters?
- The Reformer John Knox prayed: "Give me Scotland or I die!" Mary Queen of Scots said that she was more afraid of the prayers of John Knox than of an army of ten thousand. Knox led Scotland to spiritual reformation.
- Just before the Welsh revival of 1904 Seth Joshua was concerned with the over-emphasis on academic qualifications rather than spirituality within the church that he worked for as an evangelist. So he asked God to raise up a lad from the mines, rather than Oxford or Cambridge, to revive his people. God would later use his own ministry to anoint the very person! Years later, his son, Dr. Peter Joshua tells a story about missing ("mitching") school one day and going to a local park to play. Suddenly he spotted his father Seth walking in the park. Hiding in some bushes he watched as his father walked by:
"As he came near I was frightened as I heard that he was crying (something I thought never my Dad would ever do) and as he went by he was saying, 'Please God, give me Wales', and kept saying this as long as I could hear him. After a while I ran back home, and while I had to explain to mother that I had mitched school, I asked her what was wrong with Dad, and told her that I had heard him crying and saying 'Give me Wales.' She ruffled her hair and said, 'You'll understand one day.' God never gave Wales to my Dad, although he gave him many souls, but one day when he was preaching when he made an appeal Evan Roberts was the only one who stood to his feet and trusted the Saviour. God never gave Wales to my Dad, but he gave Wales to Evan Roberts."
- What is on your heart before God today? All these people gave birth to what God had placed within them- they left spiritual children behind when they died.

2. Multiplying our gifts

- It is not only our faith that God wants to multiply to others but also our gifts. What gifts do you have? Have you reproduced those gifts in others & trained others in what you have? You may not feel like it, but God has made you a spiritual coach of others. Paul longed to be with the Roman Christians to impart some spiritual gift to them (Rom 1:11). We also have a deposit to impart to others. Network course in homegroups soon to help us clarify our gifts. Gen 1:28- 'be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it'. The refrain 'each according to it's kind' shows how reproduction works- we all have something we can bring to others- that's why team is so important- brings out different emphases. Are you an evangelist? Have you raised up another evangelist? Are you prophetic? Have you raised others up like you? The using of our measure of faith (Rom 12:3) in a particular ministry releases faith for the same in others. Jesus' disciples saw Jesus working wonders and faith was released in them to do the same (Peter on water-Matt 14:29).
- All to teach according to Matt 28, great commission, Titus 2:3-5 Older women teach younger women. Teaching by lifestyle is a huge element- a huge percentage of Jesus' teaching was outside of the synagogue.

3. Raising up the next generation

- Our job is not done if we simply move in the realm of our own age groups- scripture places a great responsibility on us to reach the next generation:
Ps 71:18- Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.
The psalmist knew the responsibility to pass on the baton and prayed for the ability to do this before death, even if old!
Ps 44:1- For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.
Who have you raised up to follow after you? There is a baton to pass on to someone else who will run further than you and me. Churches that do not sow into the next generation will die.
- Often in Churches children are 'tolerated' but not sown into, or counted as vital members of the family- as a result, as soon as they are old enough, they leave.
Lk 18:16- But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.
- The law was to be taught to the kids- how much more the gospel?
Deut 6:7 and 11:19- Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
Children were ordained by God to be an integral part of the passover supper and to have the meaning explained to them- how much more the cross of Christ?
Ex 13:8- On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'
(same commands repeated in Ex 10:2, 12:26, 13:14)
- In what ways have you sown/can you sow into the next generation? What is it like to be a child in our Church?
- APPLICATION- Could you raise just one other Christian like yourself? Teach just one other Christian your gifts? Once you have done one, could you do another?

It is the Lord that enables us to be fruitful

- The name Samuel means 'Heard by God'. It was God alone who could answer Hannah's prayer and make her fruitful. Hannah not only had a great desire to have a child, she also had faith- that's why she approached God boldly about the situation. We often get what we expect- you expect to be ill, or late, or busy, or hard up and you are. God delights in taking people who think they are failures and

making them fruitful- Moses, Gideon. God wants to break the expectation of barrenness and replace it with an expectation of fruitfulness. When Hannah left Eli she was at peace that God was going to do something.

- Part of the process God used in Hannah's life was to bring to light what was in her heart. Hannah shared her heart with Eli and he agreed with her prayer saying 'may God grant you your request' and God answered. Eli, although not the best priest in the world, agreed with her request and something shifted in the heavenly realms. What is in your heart share at the appropriate time- the act of speaking it out is part of the process of seeing it fulfilled- sometimes pastoral ministry picks up on gifts and passion, sometimes they lie hidden- sometimes people have passion without gifting and need guidance to see who and what God has made them to be. Others in the body are our sounding board.
- With gifting comes responsibility and the need for accountability. This vulnerability keeps us on track when we mess up and gives us the support we need to grow in our gifts.
- APPLICATION- Do you actually believe God is going to use you to raise even just one other Christian like yourself? Teach just one other Christian your gifts? Choose to leave today believing it and asking in faith for it.

Hannah was able to release God's gift when the child was old enough

- How do you feel about those you teach running further than you? That is the aim of passing on the baton- Steve & Sarah taking on youth in Abergavenny from us- pass on baton.
- Me teaching Reuben how to play computer games and now he thrashes me at Star Wars.
- How did Hannah feel when she had weaned Samuel and gave him to Eli? It might not have felt like success, but it was. Samuel was so used by the Lord that 'not one of his words fell to the ground' -1Sam 3:19 in a time when there was very little revelation from God (1Sam 3:1).
- If we are willing to be instruments and diminish in importance once our role is completed (just as John the Baptist said- 'He must increase and I must decrease'- John 3:30) then God will do great things through us just as He did through Hannah.
- Hannah was selfless- Carl Brett in an impact the nation email said 'I'm dedicating my life to giving myself away to help other people reach their destiny, want to join in ? This sums up the spirit of Hannah, and our call, perfectly.
- Who are the people you need to release and the people you need to feed at this present time?

Conclusion

- God has put us here to reproduce ourselves in others that they may run faster and further and longer than us. Let's actively choose, like Hannah, to be God's instrument to raise up the Samuel's around us.

Song: