

Keynotes from Steven Driver's am Sermon on 28/11/2021

Text: 1 Samuel verses 10-20

Sermon Series: "The real King - Part 1"

Sermon Title: "When God is your King"

Scripture references from the ESV and NIV

1 Samuel 1:10-20 (see p4 for whole chapter) After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."¹² As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴ And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." ¹⁸ And she said, "Let your servant find favour in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. ¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."

Most of us have found that our lives don't go according to plan. We focus on our success in a career, our family life or just following a life path that matches our peers. When those situations don't work out as we expect, there is a real sense of hopelessness and helplessness. We can all find ourselves in places where all hope seems lost and no glimmer of help appears to be coming our way. However comfortable we are right now, we need to be reminded that this can change in a moment. The question we need to answer is:

What should we do or who should we turn to when life doesn't seem to go to plan?

The book of 1 Samuel will show us how to answer that question. Before we get to 1 Samuel, we read this at the end of the book of **Judges (21:25 NIV)**: 'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit'.

Israel was in a mess. They were hopeless and helpless. Nothing was going according to plan. The implication of that last verse is that the reason that was happening was because they had no king. Yet Israel did have a King. God was supposed to be their king. Their problem is not that they don't have a king.

Their problem is that they are rejecting the King they already have.

Israel is not putting their trust in their sovereign King, or finding their identity as a nation from their true King.

God's people are looking at other nations and desiring what they apparently have, thus becoming defined by worldly things, which have become the gods in their lives. They are rejecting the Sovereign God who lovingly brought them out of Egypt and formed them as a nation in the first place. This is true of humanity in general and lies at the heart of sin. We see first the rejection of God by Israel then we see:

- How the people rejected Jesus as King, nailing him to the cross
- How the world continues to reject Jesus as God and King today
- How we are all guilty of rejecting Jesus as God and King every day.

We all fall short when we look hard at who or what truly rules in our life. The things that we make number one are not necessarily bad in themselves. It might be:

- **Your family** – having a family or looking after one can become King in your life ahead of Jesus
- **Friends** – trying to live as your friends live can make you a people-pleaser rather than a God-pleaser.
- **Financial or other worldly success** – it's not bad to be successful but it can easily be the thing that replaces Jesus as King. It shows in what you prioritise
- **Your position in church life** – it is easy for this to take the place of God. Anyone in church leadership is likely to struggle with this.

If our very identity is wrapped up in the wrong king, then we quickly unravel when that king fails or doesn't live up to our expectations.

When we make a king out of anyone or anything that isn't God, we are doomed to unravel

What is the alternative? From the opening chapter of 1 Samuel, we can see

what happens when we have God as King and sovereign in our lives in the every day.

Here we see a family in turmoil and at the centre is a woman (Hannah) in pain. Hannah is barren, and in those days, not only was it painful on a personal level, but she would also be considered unable to take part in the purposes of God. The people of Israel are looking out for a Saviour and any new born child could potentially be that Saviour, but Hannah was excluded from this purpose, in stark contrast to Elkanah's second wife Peninnah who had children.

Every year, when they went to the house of the Lord, she is painfully reminded both by the food and by Peninnah of her barrenness and exclusion from the purposes of God. Materially, she would have been reasonably comfortable, but in every other way she had nothing and no doubt felt useless.

When we have God as sovereign in our lives, we need to realise first of all that **we come to our King with nothing.**

No matter how comfortable we are on the outside, inside we are all a mess and unfruitful. Without Jesus as our King to take our place for the punishment of our sin, we are alienated from God and separated from his holiness. We are no different from Hannah or the nation of Israel at that point in their history. We are not fit to take part in his purposes for the salvation of humanity.

We need God to be our sovereign King

We need Jesus - the anointed King, the Messiah who came to the needy and downtrodden, who came for sinners like us and brought us into citizenship in his kingdom, to be raised and exalted with him in glory.

We need Jesus to be our King

Hannah's situation brought her to her knees as she recognised the need for the sovereignty of God in her life and we need to recognise that too. When God is

sovereign in our life, we are freed from trying to find our identity and righteousness elsewhere. We are all the same – sinners saved by grace. From that place of recognition, three outcomes naturally happen when you have the true King truly reigning in your life:

1. A life full of prayer (vv10-16) Hannah prays an earnest and frank prayer that is raw with emotion – a prayer that can only be prayed by someone who has confidence in the sovereignty of God. She understood that it is God who has closed her womb and therefore only him who can open it. She has recognised that she can come to him with her every need. Hannah is no one special yet she feels qualified to speak to the God who is sovereign of the universe. God cares about us and allows us to do that – to come to him and pour out our grief and pain, bringing everything to him and casting every anxiety upon him. We see in the Psalms that we can bring every emotion to him, in every type of situation, and know that he is listening.

Our problem is not that we can't bring everything to God – it is that we rarely try to. When we do pray according to the sovereignty of God, knowing that the God who created the universe hears and understands our every word, our life will reflect that and we will be changed so that we have:

2. A life full of peace (vv17-18) – what Hannah does next is striking. She is not still praying, nor do we jump to the arrival of a baby. We read that Eli says to her 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him'. (v17 NIV).

Hannah's response (v18) shows that she doesn't have any answers at this point. She does not know what God will do with her prayer, yet in a few moments she is no longer the weeping woman unable to eat because of her affliction (v7).

Instead, we read of her: **'the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad'**(v18). She is going in peace. She has brought her petition to the feet of the Lord and left it completely with him, putting her trust in the sovereignty of God. Any of us can come with all the troubles of the world on our shoulders and pass them on to Almighty God, knowing that he is the one dealing with them.

This is part of the peace that our King gives his people

We are promised a future hope in glory when there will be everlasting peace, but for now we can experience some of that peace when we lay our troubles at the feet of our King and trust him to deal with them. The challenge for us is to do that as we pray. It is what will transform our prayers from dutiful to earnest as we discover the peace we can know when we present our anxieties to Jesus. (**Phil 4:6-7** see p4). The situation may not have changed on the surface but our life will be changed as we now live a life of peace trusting in the sovereign God.

When you pray, do you leave your anxieties completely with the King, trusting that he has it in hand?

3. You have a life full of purpose – Hannah's prayer is answered with the birth of Samuel, and she follows through on what she promised God. Samuel will grow up dwelling in the house of the Lord. In this, she is giving back to the Lord what she has been given. Samuel's birth reveals Hannah's role in God's great plan of salvation, and her delight in that role. Her desire for a child was never just about her having children, but rather was about her having a specific purpose in God's plan.

When we trust in our King Jesus, we receive that same assurance

Whether or not God gives us what we ask for, or just tells us to wait, we are assured that we are chosen before time began to be called children of the living God and as we live now, we have a very clear purpose. It is a simple one:

To delight in God, to the glory of God, for the good of all people

It is the vision of the church because it is the purpose God has given to his people.

- When we find delight in our King, basking in what he has done for us, he is glorified
- As God is glorified, more people come to know him and find delight in him, joining with us to glorify him

We are part of God's mission for him to be glorified for all eternity, and when Jesus returns that is exactly what will happen. It means that our whole life, indeed our whole identity, can be wrapped up in that purpose.

God's great purpose can never fail and therefore our purpose in life cannot unravel or our identity be undone, because we have found our purpose and identity wholly and truly in the King we are delighting in, the King who has chosen and saved us. When we put our trust fully in Jesus, we are not defined by anything the world has to offer.

- Where we have other kings reigning in our lives, we need to repent, and pull these down from their pedestal.
- We need to daily fix our eyes on our King – remembering what he has won for us.
- We need to seek God's help first each day before we get distracted by what the world offers.

We are children of God. No matter what happens to our human plans, we are still a part of the greatest plan of all, led by the greatest King of all – Jesus.

1 Samuel 1:1-28 There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. ² He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.³ Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. ⁴ On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷ So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸ And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"⁹ After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no

razor shall touch his head.”¹² As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴ And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” ¹⁸ And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. ¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.” ²¹ The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. ²⁴ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,^[c] an ephah^[d] of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God,

which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.