

THE GOD WHO FRAMES THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES

Small Group Study 1: Hannah — When Our Story Hurts

1 Samuel 1:1–20

Big Idea

Our lives are made up of ordinary circumstances, relationships, choices, disappointments and hopes. Yet these ordinary stories are lived inside a much larger story—the story of what God is doing in the world.

Hannah could not possibly have known where her story would lead. She was simply a woman carrying a very personal sorrow. Yet her prayer would become part of the story of Samuel, then David, and ultimately the story that leads us to Jesus.

The invitation of this passage is not simply to ask, “What lesson can I learn from Hannah?” It is to ask: “Where am I in this story? What might God be showing me about myself? And what might God be doing in my life that I cannot yet see?”

Read 1 Samuel 1:1–8

The book of Samuel does not begin with a king, a battlefield or a national crisis. It begins with a family.

Elkanah has two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah is loved by her husband but cannot have children. In the culture in which she lived, this was not simply a private disappointment. Children provided identity, security and continuity for a family. Hannah therefore carried both personal grief and social shame. Peninnah makes matters worse by repeatedly provoking her.

Hannah's inability to have children does not make her less valuable to God. Her culture may have measured her worth by motherhood, but the story does not require us to do the same.

Her sorrow is real, but her sorrow does not define her worth.

Discuss

1. What details in verses 1–8 help you understand the depth of Hannah's pain? Which part of her situation strikes you most strongly?
2. Elkanah clearly loves Hannah, yet his words—“Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?”—do not solve her grief. What does this teach us about trying to help someone who is suffering?

3. Why do you think people sometimes find it difficult to admit disappointment or sorrow—even within a Christian community?

4. Without sharing anything you would rather keep private, is there an area of life where you have had to accept that things did not turn out as you expected? What has that experience taught you?

Read 1 Samuel 1:9–18

Eventually Hannah gets up and goes to pray. Her prayer is unusual enough that Eli the priest misunderstands her. Her lips are moving but her voice cannot be heard, and Eli assumes she is drunk.

Hannah responds: “I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.

That may be one of the finest descriptions of prayer in Scripture. Hannah does not give God the edited version of her life. She does not make herself sound more spiritual than she feels. She brings her grief, disappointment, longing and hope into God's presence. Even the priest misunderstands her, but God does not.

There is something deeply comforting here: People may misunderstand the way our pain comes out. God does not.

Prayer is not pretending everything is well. Prayer is bringing what is actually happening in our lives into the presence of God.

Discuss

What do you think is the difference between “saying prayers” and Hannah's description of “pouring out my soul before the LORD”?

6. What makes this kind of honesty with God difficult? Are there things we sometimes believe we should not say to God?

Verse 18 tells us that she went away, ate something, and “her face was no longer downcast.”

7. What do you think has taken place in Hannah's life? Why might this verse be important in our own spiritual life? Have you ever experienced prayer changing the way you carried a problem even though the problem itself had not changed? What was different?

Read 1 Samuel 1:19–20

Eventually Hannah conceives and gives birth to Samuel.

8. Where in your life might you be tempted to think, “This is too ordinary, too small or too insignificant to matter”? How might Hannah's story change the way you look at that part of your life?

Prayer Exercise

Rather than immediately going around the group with prayer requests, spend a minute or two in silence.

Ask each person privately to complete this sentence before God: - “Lord, this is what I am carrying right now...”

There is no need for everyone to share what they wrote or thought.

After the silence, invite those who wish to pray aloud. Encourage simple, honest prayers rather than trying to solve one another's problems.

Close by thanking God that our individual stories—including the painful and unfinished parts—are held within His larger story.

For the Week

Return once to 1 Samuel 1:9–18 during the week.

Ask yourself:

What would it mean for me to “pour out my soul before the LORD” rather than simply ask God to fix the situation?

Then pay attention not only to whether the circumstances change, but also to what God may be changing in you.

塑造我们人生故事的上帝

小组查经 第一课

哈拿 当人生故事充满伤痛

撒母耳记上 1 章 1 至 20 节

核心信息

我们的生命，是由许多平凡的处境、人际关系、选择、失望和盼望组成的。然而，这些平凡的故事，都发生在一个更宏大的故事之中——那就是上帝正在世上成就的故事。

哈拿根本不可能知道，她的故事最终会走向哪里。她只是一个承受着切身痛苦的女人。然而，她的祷告后来成为撒母耳故事的一部分；撒母耳的故事又进入大卫的故事；最终，这一切都汇入那引领我们归向耶稣的故事。

这段经文邀请我们，不只是问：“我可以从哈拿身上学到什么功课？”更要问：“我在这个故事中的什么位置？上帝可能要我看见自己的什么？祂又可能正在我生命中做什么，是我现在还看不见的？”

请读 撒母耳记上 1 章 1 至 8 节

撒母耳记并不是从君王、战场或国家危机开始，而是从一个家庭开始。

以利加拿有两个妻子：哈拿和毗尼拿。哈拿虽然深受丈夫疼爱，却不能生育。在她所处的文化中，这不只是一种个人的失望。儿女关系到一个家庭的身份、保障和延续。因此，哈拿所承受的，既有个人的悲伤，也有社会带来的羞耻感。毗尼拿一次又一次地刺激她，使她的痛苦更加深重。

哈拿不能生育，并不表示她在上帝眼中的价值有所减少。她的文化也许以能否成为母亲来衡量一个女人的价值，但这段故事并没有要求我们也这样看她。

她的悲伤是真实的，但她的悲伤并不能决定她的价值。

讨论

1. 第 1 至 8 节中的哪些细节，帮助你体会哈拿的痛苦有多深？她处境中的哪一点最触动你？
2. 以利加拿显然很爱哈拿，可是他说：“有我不比十个儿子还好吗？”这句话并没有解除她的悲伤。这件事怎样帮助我们明白，应当如何陪伴正在受苦的人？
3. 为什么人有时很难承认自己的失望或悲伤，甚至在基督徒群体中也是如此？
4. 在不需要分享任何你想保留为私事的前提下，你是否曾经不得不接受某方面的人生，并没有照你的期望发展？那段经历教会了你什么？

哈拿说 我在耶和华面前倾心吐意

请读撒母耳记上 1 章 9 至 18 节

后来，哈拿站起来去祷告。她祷告的方式很不寻常，以至于祭司以利误会了她。她的嘴唇在动，却听不见声音，以利便以为她喝醉了。

哈拿回答说：“我在耶和华面前倾心吐意。”

这也许是圣经中对祷告最贴切的描述之一。哈拿没有把自己的人生修饰整理之后，才带到上帝面前；她也没有故意让自己听起来比实际感受更属灵。她把自己的悲伤、失望、渴望和盼望，全都带到上帝面前。就连祭司也误会了她，但上帝没有误会她。

这里有一个令人深感安慰的真理：别人也许会误解我们表达痛苦的方式，上帝却不会误解。

祷告不是假装一切安好。祷告是把我们生命中真实发生的事，带到上帝面前。

讨论

5. 你认为只是“说一些祷告的话”，与哈拿所说“在耶和华面前倾心吐意”，两者有什么不同？

6. 为什么人很难如此坦诚地面对上帝？我们是否有时会认为，有些话是不应该对上帝说的？

第 18 节告诉我们，哈拿“走去吃饭，面上再不带愁容了”。

7. 你认为哈拿的生命里发生了什么？为什么这一节经文对我们的属灵生命十分重要？你是否经历过这样的祷告：问题本身还没有改变，但你背负问题的方式却改变了？有什么变得不一样？

请读撒母耳记上 1 章 19 至 20 节

后来，哈拿怀孕，生下了撒母耳。

8. 在你生命中的什么地方，你可能会认为：“这太平凡、太微小，或太不重要了，不会有什么意义”？哈拿的故事可以怎样改变你看待这一部分人生的方式？

祷告操练

不要立刻请组员逐一分享代祷事项，先一起安静一两分钟。

请每个人在心里单独来到上帝面前，完成这句话：

主啊，我现在心里所背负的是……

每个人不一定都要分享自己所写或所想的内容。

安静之后，邀请愿意的人开声祷告。鼓励大家作简单、诚实的祷告，不要急着替彼此解决问题。

最后，为此感谢上帝：我们每个人的故事——包括那些痛苦而尚未完结的部分——都被祂承托在更宏大的故事之中。

本周操练

本周找一个时间，再读一次撒母耳记上 1 章 9 至 18 节。

问问自己：

对我来说，“在耶和华面前倾心吐意”意味着什么？它与只是求上帝把处境修好，有什么不同？

然后，不要只留意外在处境有没有改变，也要留意上帝可能正在你里面改变什么。