

ANNOUNCE: WOMEN'S STUDY, MEN'S STUDY, MEN'S COHORT

SLIDE Women's Study – 1 & 2 Kings

SLIDE Men's Study - Proverbs

SLIDE Men's Cohort – MAN UP

BLANK SLIDE

PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 1. 1 Samuel 1. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 1.

INTRODUCTION: MENTAL HEALTH

During this pandemic you've heard about it, and I've heard about it,

- but there has been a huge rise in anxiety and depression...
 - in suicide and suicide attempts...
 - in substance abuse with alcohol use and drug use...
- I think it's safe to say we are in a crisis not only physically...
- but mentally as well.

Now, we were already in this crisis, but COVID just exacerbated it.

- 1 in 8 Americans is on some sort of prescribed anti-depressant.
- Depression medications are rising at a rate of 300%.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.
- In 2019, more than 48,000 people died of suicide
- and 1.4 million people attempted suicide.

And yet

- anxiety,
- and depression,
- and mental health,
- in many Christian circles...
- it is treated as something of a taboo.

Like, we don't talk about it a whole lot,

- and so, many of us just kinda sit in the chairs and go,
 - *“well, I guess this isn't relevant to anybody else,*
 - *cause the pastor never talks about it,*
 - *and everyone's just kinda smiling*
 - *and blessed and highly favored...”*

And so, you tell yourself you're the only one...

but you're probably not even the only one in your row.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BIBLE

But all throughout the Bible we find people struggling with what, I think, are mental and emotional health issues.

- Elijah, the great prophet, was discouraged, weary, afraid, and wanted to die.
- Jonah was angry and wanted God to take his life.
- Job suffered unbelievable loss, devastation, and physical illness.
- Jeremiah wrestled with deep loneliness and insecurity.
- And even King David, a man after God's own heart, battled deep despair.

So, if we are people of the Bible, it would seem that mental and emotional struggles

- are not out of the ordinary...
- they aren't taboo...
- they're actually a part of many of our lives!

So, we shouldn't tell people that they shouldn't struggle...

And we shouldn't believe that we shouldn't struggle.

- Life is hard.

But in the midst of despair, depression, or disappointment there is a promise...and that promise is peace.

PEACE

Biblical peace can be defined as

- confidence,
- righteousness,
- relief,
- trust.

It means all is right.

- It means security,
- welfare,
- calm,
- prosperity,
- and completeness.

Basically, all the words that wouldn't describe last year. Right?

You're like, "I haven't felt one of those words since last March!"

But you see, we needed that peace before COVID...

- and one of the things that COVID has done
- is it has made us all the more aware
- of our deep need for peace...
- and that so much of our peace
- has been built on things other than God...
 - Jesus calls it *shifting sand*.

TRANSITION

So, today we're going to start our study in the book of 1 Samuel. And the book of 1 Samuel comes right on the heels of the book of Judges, and the world is a mess.

- You think 2020 was bad...
- At this point of history...
- there is NO peace for God's people.

What's historically happening is the rag-tag bunch of wandering Israelites are moving from being led by random and often sketchy Judges...

- to becoming a monarchy,
- and establishing a king,
- and entering into the golden age of Israel.

In 1 Samuel we find the history of the prophets, priests, and the culmination with the great King David.

But in order to get to King David, we need to first look at a woman named Hannah, who found peace in light of great despair.

So here we go, 1 Samuel 1:1

1 SAMUEL 1:1-5

[1] 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. [uh oh...trouble...] 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.

EXPLAIN: INFERTILITY

So, the story opens up with a man, Elkanah, and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.

- Peninnah had multiple children.
- But Hannah had no children.
 - She was barren.
 - She struggled with infertility.
- And as we'll see,
 - this is the cause of her deep distress,
 - depression,
 - and despair.

Now, infertility was culturally much different than it would be today. Ok? Kids weren't just a means of personal fulfillment, or familial joy, but there were other forces at work.

- First, the more children you had, the more economic stability you had.
 - You literally had more people to work and earn for your family.

- Second, the more children you had, the more likely you would be taken care of in your old age.
 - Children were essentially the ancient version of social security.
- And third, the more children you had, the more security your nation had.
 - In these days, national might was solely measured by militaristic strength. And the more sons...the larger the army.

Considering all this, having as many children as possible

- was the very best thing a woman could do.
- It was the most admirable thing a woman could do.
- And the most culturally acceptable role for a woman.

TRANSITION

And so, Hannah didn't fit in. She didn't fit the expectations of what a woman was supposed to be and do in her culture. Verse 6.

1 SAMUEL 1:6-7

[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.

FALSE PEACE 1: CULTURAL IDEALS

Now, as bad as it was that she was barren, there was the added complication that Peninnah would provoke and goad her.

- Maybe because she was jealous of her?
- I mean, it's obvious that Elkanah loved Hannah more.
- Or maybe she was just a jerk.

But she applied this pressure every year when they went to Shiloh.

And this is the first “shifting sand” that Hannah could try to find false peace in: in conforming to the **SLIDE CULTURAL IDEALS**.

Every culture provokes women and pressures women to live up to some cultural ideal.

- It may not be childbearing, like it was for Hannah.
- But our culture puts enormous pressure on women
 - to look a certain way,
 - to be successful inside AND outside the home,
 - to have credentials in whatever field they choose,
 - to accomplish in many ways.

There are always cultural ideals, and Peninnah is beckoning Hannah to conform to her cultural ideal.

- And if you don't conform,
- you are stigmatized!
 - And at best you're irrelevant,
 - or at worst, like Hannah, you're persecuted.

The culture wants you to fit...and Hannah didn't fit...verse 8.

BLANK SLIDE

1 SAMUEL 1:8

[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?”

EXPLAIN: BONEHEAD

So, in walks Elkanah. And what he does is often misconstrued as a boneheaded husband move.

Elkanah says, “*Why do you weep?*” And Hannah could’ve responded,

- *“Well, the list is long, bro.*
- *First of all, I appreciate being your favorite wife, and all...*
- *but essentially, I couldn’t give you what you wanted...*
- *a son...*
- *so, you got you someone who could...*
- *and she’s the worst.”*

But in actually, Elkanah is actually a pretty good dude.

- He did love Hannah.
- He did love her.
- He gave her a double portion.
- He wanted, very much, to comfort her
- and seems to be doing all he can to assure her
- that she is his true love,
- no matter if she lives up to the cultural norms around them.

But this is the second offer of false peace that’s a “shifting sand” for Hannah. She can try to find peace in a **SLIDE SUBSTITUTE LOVE**.

- *“No, you can’t meet the CULTURAL IDEAL...*
- *but at least you found love.*
- *The love of your husband.*
- *And isn’t that a good enough substitute?*
- *Isn’t that sufficient to bring you peace?”*

BLANK SLIDE

EXPLAIN: NO RESPONSE

And what Tim Keller points out is that Hannah does not respond to either offer for peace.

- To the voice of the culture,
 - saying her worth is based
 - on whether or not she can bear children...
 - she doesn’t fight back, or lash out.
 - But she remains silent.
- And to the voice of her husband,
 - saying peace is found in her relationship with him...
 - she doesn’t give in to that either.
 - She remains silent.

She’s not seeking to find peace from conforming to the cultural ideal NOR from her husband’s affections.

APPLICATION: FALSE PEACE

You see, if you want peace...

- and you seek to find it in anything except God...
- man, it looks good from the outside...
- but it will let you down.
- They all bring **SLIDE FALSE PEACE**

Any cultural ideal:

- Raising your kids...until they grow up.
- Pursuing that career...until it's over.
- Refining your hobby...
- Perfecting your appearance...
- They all bring a FALSE PEACE.
 - A temporary peace.

And any substitute relationship:

- Even a great relationship with your kids...
- Even a wonderful marriage...
- Cannot be where you find your peace...
- because they are all temporary.

BLANK SLIDE

TRANSITION

And in Hannah NOT responding to these offers of false peace, the writer is offering us insight into where she is finding her peace.

So, let's move to where Hannah does turn for peace.

Look at verse 9:

1 SAMUEL 1:9-10

[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.

APPLICATION: SOUL PAIN

Verse 10 says she was **deeply distressed**,

- but in the Hebrew...
- and it's hard to translate...
- it literally says she was in *soul pain*.

And she weeps bitterly. This is where Hannah is at.

- She doesn't bite on the false peace offered to her,
- but instead, she brings her distress,
- and depression,
- and despair to the Lord.

And this is where we've got to stop pretending that we're ok, especially when we aren't.

- This is where mental and emotional health
- must not be a stigma in the church any longer.
- **Because the fake you is doing just fine.**

And if church isn't the place where you can come as you are, then man, where can you go?

Cause listen, some of you, your marriages are jacked up.

- You haven't touched each other in God knows how long,
- and the thought of doing so in light of what she's said,
- or he's done...that ain't happening.

For some, your finances are so screwed up

- that you don't know how you'll ever
- get out from under that debt.

For some of you, you've got that addiction,

- and you just can't figure out why you can't seem to kick it,
- because you do love Jesus,
- and yet the thing you've been struggling with
- since you were a teenager,
- is still haunting you...

Or maybe you've got a child

- And you **trained up your child in the way he should go...**
- But he didn't.
- And you have no idea how to get him back.

And for some of you it's a literal depression,

- and honestly, before you started struggling with it,
- you didn't even have a theology for Christian depression.

- And you tried to bring it up to a Christian friend,
- and they said, “*You’re depressed?*”
 - *Well, the Bible says rejoice in the Lord always,*
 - *and again I say rejoice.”*
- And you’re like, “*Ok, I hate you.*”
- And you never brought it up again.

Maybe it’s one of those things...maybe it’s something else...but you know what it means to have soul pain.

And I want to tell you that it’s ok not to be ok, here.

But you have to bring it...just like Hannah brought her deep distress. You have to stop pretending you’re ok, when you’re not.

TRANSITION

And I just love that Hannah doesn’t bite on the offers of false peace.

But instead

- she rises up,
- heads to the temple of the Lord,
- and she pours out her heart...
 - her distress, depression, and despair...
- and she prays.
- She prays her distress.
- She prays her bitterness.
- She prays her tears.

Let’s look at her prayer. Verse 11:

1 SAMUEL 1:11

[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."

EXPLAIN: BARGAINING

Now, at first glance, it looks like she's trying to make a bargain with God. Right?

- It seems, on the surface,
- that Hannah still thinks that having a son will bring her peace,
- and so, if she promises God
- that she'll direct her son into the ministry...boom...peace.

But that's not what she's doing. In this prayer, she isn't bargaining...she's surrendering.

She's making what's called a Nazarite Vow for this son. And all the benefits the cultural ideal of a son would have given her are forfeited if she keeps this vow.

- Financial stability? Not if he works in the temple all his life.
- Security in old age? Nope.
- Not even the joy of watching her son grow up,
 - Because she'll bring him to the temple at about age three,
 - and he'll be raised there,
 - and she'll only get to see him once a year or so.

You see, this is no bargain to find peace in a son. But it's a surrender.

APPLICATION: PRAYER

So many of us, in our distress, depression, and despair move away from God and seek peace elsewhere, but Hannah moves towards God and surrenders her very heart.

So, what do you do when your life is defined by distress, or depression, or despair? You pray.

- And I am not diminishing the need for counseling
- or even for medication, ok?
- God can heal through people, pills, and prayer.
- Alright? I'm not anti any of those things.
- But as Christians, we've gotta start with prayer.

Do you see prayer as your first line of defense, or your last resort?

Like, you ever hear people say, *"Well, all that's left to do is pray."*

No! That's the first thing to do!

Look at how Hannah does this...verse 12:

1 SAMUEL 1:12-16

[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.”

PRAYER

In response to her great anxiety and vexation...Hannah pours out her soul before the Lord.

- When was the last time you took
- your distress or depression or despair
- and you poured it out before the Lord?

Yo, Eli thought she was drunk she was praying so hard.

- That’s either an inditement on Eli’s priestliness,
 - Bro doesn’t know the difference between prayer and drunkenness...
- or it’s a sign of Hannah’s fervor.

When was the last time you prayed like this?

Question: if God answered yes to every prayer you’ve prayed in the last week, how different would things be in this world?

I mean, really, have you been praying your soul before the Lord? Or has it been more,

- *“Lord, bless this food to nourish our bodies.”*
 - That’s what food does, y’all!
- *“Lord, bless this food.*
- *Lord, bless this day.*
- *Lord, get rid of Elway.”*
 - Well, some prayers have been answered.

TRANSITION

Hannah prays her distress and her depression and her despair to God!

And look at what she finds. Verse 17.

1 SAMUEL 1:17-20

[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.

Man, this is so very important.

- Before God ever changes her situation...
 - he changes her. Her face was no longer sad.
- God used prayer to change Hannah.

Keller says it this way:

- it doesn't go prayer, pregnant, peace.
 - Which is what we think.
 - "Just give me what I'm praying for,
 - and then I'll have peace."
 - No!
- It goes prayer, peace, and then pregnancy.

Hannah finds the peace of God before she ever gets pregnant.

Her peace wasn't tied to her situation...it was tied to her savior.

You see, here's what Paul says in Philippians 4:6-7, which Jackie read over us this morning:

SLIDE PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

[6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

There it is. What do you do with your distress, and your depression, and your despair? Your pray. And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

BLANK SLIDE

TRANSITION

Here's how Hannah's story culminates. Verse 19:

1 SAMUEL 1:19-20

[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."

EXPLAIN: IN DUE TIME

Man, this is so very important...it says: **in due time** Hannah **conceived**. I don't know if you've noticed this, but our time and God's time aren't the same time. And **in due time**, God provides Hannah with a son.

- Not overnight...but overtime...

- after she has received peace...
- God gives her the desire of her heart.

CONCLUSION

Now, a couple years ago I found myself in a place like Hannah was.

- I haven't experienced long term anxiety or depression,
- but I have been in seasons of darkness.

And in one of my worst, I felt exactly like Hannah is described.

- I found myself weeping uncontrollably at the drop of a hat.
- I hardly ate.
- And the nights we're the worst
 - because every emotion and stress I felt during the day
 - just spun circles in my mind at night
 - and felt ten times heavier.

And my mom had called my wife and told her to keep a close eye on me because my family has historically dealt with chronic anxiety and clinical depression.

So, I started meeting with a Christian counselor weekly, and honestly, sometimes a couple times on a bad week. But I just couldn't pull myself out of the darkness.

And my counselor asked me after a few weeks of meeting about my prayer life...

- And honestly, I really felt like I couldn't pray.
- I was just too distressed.

And he told me to start praying my distress.

- And he reminded me of 1 Peter 5:7

SLIDE [7] cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

And he said, *"Chris, don't forget that last bit. God cares for you."*

BLANK SLIDE

And so, I started praying my tears.

- And every day I started writing out my prayers in a journal.
- And man, some days a line or two were all I could muster...
- and other days the pages just flowed from me.
- And some of those pages are wrinkled and wavy
- because I literally wet them with my tears.

And back to our text, it says that **the LORD remembered her.**

- Well, it was like the LORD remembered me...
- or rather...I remembered the Lord.

And over the course of about 6 months...

- over time, not overnight...
- Ok? **In due time**...
- I came out of that depression and found peace.

And yes,

- it was counsel,
- and it was love from family and friends...
- but prayer was the turning point to find peace.

APPLICATION

Now, today, some of you walk in here today, and your soul is in pain.

- Distress, depression, despair...
- those are your words.

And whatever is causing it. I want to invite you to do what Hannah did.

- I want you to **pour out your soul in prayer.**
- I want you to **by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**
- I want you to **cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**
- Send us a prayer card and let us join you in prayer.

Listen to me:

- God cares for you.
- He loves you.
- Peace is on the table for you.
- Real peace, not false peace.
- Peace that **surpasses your understanding.**

But it starts with prayer. Let's lean into that this year.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. *Cradle and Communion*.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Greear, J.D. *In Search of a King*.
- Keller, Tim. *Hannah's Prayer*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The First Book of Samuel.