

The Prayer of Her Heart

In the beginning of Chapter 2 of 1st Samuel Hannah the wife of Elkanah and the mother of Samuel express such beautiful words. Hannah's words express the holiness, the power, and from her standpoint the ability to honor a heart felt request from a desperate woman. In her final words Hannah states "He will give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed." The next verse states that Elkanah went to his house at Ramah, but the child (Samuel) ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

In contrast the sons of Eli Hophni and Phinneas are displaying their lack of respect for law of the sacrifice to the LORD. These boys would literally send assistants to remove portions of the sacrifice for themselves before the appointed time. In the worship of the LORD there are no shortcuts or allowances for persons (especially those called into the leadership roles) to take the things that are not ready or take shortcuts for personal fulfillment. The sons of Eli are sowing seeds that will bring about a harvest in later chapters.

How can the boys not realize the need to follow the required steps in the process of worship? It is something that can gain a foothold in the hustle and bustle of our society today. We can become involved in the fulfillment of our wants and desires that the things we know are wrong become simply part of our everyday life. These things result in the separation of our will and heart from the true purpose of our life.

So let us continue to move forward with an example of Samuel who through the desire of his mother Hannah to have a child laid a foundation for true worship and fulfillment. During the visits for the sacrifices Hannah would bring Samuel a robe that she would make for him. Samuel ministered before the LORD in a linen ephod as was required by the Mosaic Law. Hannah continued to visit and trust in the vow she had made. During the visits Eli the priest would bless Elkanah and Hannah with these words "The LORD gives you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the LORD." It is said that they returned home and the LORD visited Hannah and she conceived three sons and two daughters.

Samuel grew before the LORD and performed the requirements of his office as it was required.

The priest Eli was an elderly man who knew that his sons were not completing their duties with reverence or thought to the consequences of their actions. Eli declared to his sons that was just wrong and could result in harsh judgment. It safe to assume that Eli's sons will not listen to their father's request at this time of their lives. Most young people will follow if their elders will lead. The main question in this case concerns the path that the children are lead down. How can there be such a difference between a small child Samuel and these grown men in their willingness to do the right thing?

How can we as everyday people know the right thing to do in any given situation? What is it that makes us all do what we do?

These questions have been asked over and over by parents and friends for centuries. The young man Samuel grew in stature before the LORD is how it is stated in the scriptures.

In any situation where there is deliberate rebellion to known law or required behavior the consequences can be severe. There was a message delivered to Eli concerning the judgment concerning his sons by a man of GOD. The judgment stated had wide ranging implications to the family of Eli in the present as the future. The disobedience that was exhibited by Hophni and Phineas would bring the removal of the promise that had been given to Aaron the brother of Moses of which Eli and his sons were direct descendants. The consequences would be severe and long lasting. In order to present the need to serve the LORD with a whole heart and desire that is based in obedience there must be a commitment that is foundationally secure.

Do we count the cost of our service and the proper completion of this service? In the Old Testament times that are presented in this book of the Bible the need of obedience is significant. How can we do the things we should do? I think we can learn from the example set forth in the sons of Eli and the young man Samuel. We know right from wrong I think instinctively. We must choose to follow the rules. Consequences of breaking the rules or following them can be swift or slow.

Samuel is in service of Eli and is sleeping and hears a voice calling his name. Instinctively Samuel believes it to be the voice of Eli and goes to Eli to ask what he desires for him to do. It is stated that in this period of time the revelation or the voice of GOD was rare. Eli informs Samuel that he has not called him. Samuel returns to his bed and the LORD calls to Eli again. The process is completed several times until Eli realizes that the voice that is calling to Samuel is the LORD himself. Eli instructs Samuel to answer the LORD "Speak for your servant hears." When the voice speaks again Samuel answers as instructed. Here is the basis for the difference between the sons of Eli and Samuel. Samuel is obedient to the authority of his office. This is a significant basis for every person no matter the age or profession to follow to achieve success in their lives.

The LORD relays the message that the Eli and his sons will be judged for their failure to complete the office with which they were assigned as required. Samuel could hear these words and be full of himself because of his obedience was resulting in his success. Here was the GOD of Israel giving the words concerning his immediate supervisor and his family, but Samuel listens. When the message is complete Samuel goes back to bed, in the morning comes Samuel simply rises and goes about his duties. How many of us would be able accept the message and go back to sleep? What would you do?

Samuel goes into the tabernacle and there is Eli waiting for him. Eli asked Samuel to let him know what the words of the LORD that were spoken to him. Eli even states that if he does not tell him the truth may there be severe consequences for him. As will be the custom of Samuel for his whole life he simply speaks the truth.

Samuel grew in stature and all the land of Israel knew he was a prophet. The word of the LORD came to Samuel is a statement that best describes his willingness to trust and obey.

How can we be what GOD wants us to be?

First we must accept the fact that there is a GOD. A creator who has his love for us in every thing we do. The very fact that we want to be successful in our endeavors is a need to be complete in the fulfillment of our purpose in life.

Do we know what is right or wrong?

In this society there continues to be a significant lapse in the right thing to do. We have forgotten basic respect for one another. Wrong is right in so many ways nowadays that our youth are desperately looking for basic truth.

To look at Samuel and his relationship with Eli is to see an example of a young person who follows basic rules of respect. The real truth in life is the ability to follow basic fundamental truths to the proper outcomes in our life.

Our journey continues with the presentation of the Ark of Lord and the lack of real relationship with their GOD.

See you then.