

Talks – This Girl Can – Hannah – myfishbites.com

This Girl Can – Hannah

If you missed it... 2015 saw a campaign called 'This Girl Can' – encouraging girls and women in sport and achievement – you can find the website

at: <http://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk> (checked in 2015 and again in May 2019).

This session is about a Girl Who Could – and Did...

Hannah, the mother of Samuel and all-round awesome woman of God!

Bible verses

Read through 1 Samuel 1.

The overview is that Hannah couldn't have children. She prayed to God and gave birth to Samuel, who she gave to God to live his life for God. Through all this we see Hannah is a dedicated wife who goes to the house of the Lord with her husband. She goes to God for his help and then she does what she says she will do.

Hannah Who?

Hannah was one of many incredible women of God in the Bible. The life of Hannah is one of faithfulness, keeping on going, prayer and going to God for his help. Hannah was a wife of a guy called Elkannah but sadly she couldn't have children.

The Bible says that God had 'closed Hannah's womb' but we're not quite sure what the reason was – they didn't have the technical, medical and scientific understanding we have today so we don't know why. In the original language (Hebrew) another word for 'closed' is 'quarantined' which is what happens when people have diseases, to protect them and others. So maybe God was protecting her. Whatever, we know the true nature of God because as we'll find out, when she cried out to God in prayer, God heard her and gave her a son called Samuel. She had more children later. So we know God healed her and we know that God still hears our prayers and heals people today!

We don't know why not everyone is healed but we must never lower God to the standard of our experience. We need to know God by his Word and pursue a life that brings us up to his standard and the standard of what God says in the Bible.

Prayer

We read that when she was in the house of the Lord, Hannah cried out to the Lord in her pain. She probably had many times of crying out to God with deep hurt. Sometimes we have to keep on praying, as we never know when the answer will come. Hannah didn't know when the answer would come and when she could have children. Sometimes we need to hold on and keep praying, just as Jesus taught in Luke 18.1-8. God will bring good out of everything we give him, even in our pain and often he will turn things around to be even better than before. The Bible says that God remembered Hannah and her prayer. Had he forgotten her? No!! It was just that God's time for Hannah had arrived – so hold on in prayer!

God hears your prayer... The man who started the ministry 'Healing On The Streets' (Mark Marx) tells how there was a strong atheist (someone who doesn't believe in God) who watched on while someone's leg was prayed for, so confident was she that God wasn't real and wouldn't heal. But God healed the lady being prayed for and the atheist watched as the lady's leg grew out in front of her! The atheist believed in God and gave her life to Jesus.

Hannah prayed with real passion in the face of mockery, set back and disappointment and even in spite of the priest called Eli, who thought she was drunk! Hannah said:

"I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.... I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

Have we ever prayed with such passion that people around us think we're drunk?! Do we think we need to be respectable?! I think of how Jesus spent time with the Father and out of that, people were saved, healed, delivered, transformed, set free, given hope and joy. The Bible tells us this in Acts 10.38 and Jesus has handed us this purpose today! So here's a challenge for you – do people know us for these same things? In Coleraine in Northern Ireland where God has been doing some incredible things, a football team had some of their players injured and couldn't play. One of the team had been prayed for and healed some months before so he brought his mates along to the Healing ON The Streets team and they were all healed. So off they went to play football ! Do people know you, your youth group and church as a place where they can come to be given God's life, love and life-changing power?

Through history, we have seen great revivals and moves of God, often birthed in fervent prayer.

One such example was the New York revival where a man called Jeremiah Lanphier started praying – he was soon joined by 5 others and so it spread. Within 3 months there were more than 50,000 people in New York people paused on Weds at noon to pray. These were called the Fulton Street Revival. The prayer movement spread across many cities – at one stage at least 10,000 a week were coming to faith in New York alone. On one ship docking at the harbour, the power of God's presence was such that 30 men were converted even before the ship docked.

Today, God is moving in power in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. The stories coming out of Coleraine are extraordinary – including one whole school coming to faith in Jesus. Maybe your church, your town, you and your mates can see a move of God where God changes things round for good! Ask God to do it !

Prayer, action and faith

Hannah prayed to God, dedicated her baby that was yet to be – she spoke out her prayer and acted in faith – without faith it's impossible to please God. She prayed to God and then slept with her husband. She could have just said, 'I'll never have children, stuff it..'. But she continued to love God and love her husband and have faith and one day her prayer was answered! We can pray with confidence if God has given us a promise, if we're praying according to the truth of the Bible and for God's goodness to turn things the right way round!

When we pray, there's often a step we have to take. So just ask God if there's something he wants you to do. Make sure it lines up with the Bible, maybe check it out with a youth leader or a Christian who you respect. The test is that God won't ask you to do anything that would cause grief for his name or that's against the Bible!

Spiritual Warfare – the battle between good and evil

Interesting that every time Hannah went to the house of the Lord, her rival Peninnah would provoke her until she wept and wouldn't eat. I think the Godliness of Hannah inflamed Peninnah and this was motivated by spiritual attack. We have to push through these times when the enemy wants to come and rob, steal, kill and destroy. Hannah did this and went to God.

If we go back to the incredible things God is doing in Coleraine in Northern Ireland, it's interesting that the visible move of God stirs up both good and hatred. When truth goes out, it stirs things up, people get angry because it reveals what they're really like inside (and God often uses that to change people). When someone was healed from cancer and was out climbing within 2 days, there was both amazement and offence. God's truth always reveals what's in people's hearts! So don't be put off if you see God do great things but also get some grief! Just keep on praying, doing what God says, get good people around you and keep trusting in God.

Hannah gave her son up

It's significant that Hannah gave Samuel to God as she promised. When the answer to prayer comes, the least we can do is give thanks to God – a sacrifice of praise. Hannah gave a literal sacrifice – her only son. In this we see something of what would happen when Jesus came to the earth – a miraculous pregnancy and an only son given by God and for God – and for the word of God to be brought. Samuel brought the word of God in his day. Jesus is the living Word of God (see John 1).

Hannah made good on her promise. But God didn't answer Hannah's prayer because of this offer. We don't give to God to get. We give to God because he gave to us. Worship is our response to God, not a begging letter to God. Having said that, you can never lose when you give to God!! Hannah was faithful to her promise to God and came back to the temple and gave him to Samuel to be dedicated to the Lord. The Bible tells us that Samuel "worshipped the Lord there."

If you look at the life of Samuel, he was one of Israel's greatest prophets and one of the most amazing prophets in the Bible. He had an influence over King David, Solomon etc. The difference that Samuel made for good and for God was absolutely incredible. But it all started with Hannah, her prayers and her care for her son. Although she 'lent' Samuel to God, Hannah didn't forget her son – she visited him regularly and every year bought him a robe like Eli's robe (1 Samuel 2.19). It says she made him a little robe, but this robe probably grew each year!

What a woman!

No matter whether you are female or male, if you choose to live God's way and follow in the example of Hannah you too can be someone who says:

This Girl Can

Or...

This Boy Can