

**Thanking God for Answers to Prayer
Kowloon International Baptist Church
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**1 Samuel 2:1, 2
Kowloon Tong
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Life is not fair. Thus bitterness is no stranger to many.

1 Samuel 1 introduces us to Elkanah who lived in a time when people did what was right in their own eyes. His wife Hannah was barren so he added a second wife, Peninnah. She had no difficulty having children. Peninnah taunted Hannah. Particularly difficult was the annual journey to offer sacrifices in Shiloh. As the greater family gathered, Hannah felt she had failed her husband and been abandoned by God. Tears poured.

One day she made a vow. She prayed, *O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life...*

1 Samuel 1:11, 12

We should not see in her prayer a “magic formula” for getting what we want from God. We begin to sense the answers to our prayers are not about our status but about the will of God.

As Hannah prayed, the priest Eli was nearby by. He thought she was drunk because he saw her lips moving but heard nothing. She said, *I have been praying here out of my great anguish.*

1 Samuel 1:16

Eli asked God to grant her request. Her attitude changed immediately.

C.S. Lewis: I pray because I cannot help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me.

In time, Hannah had a boy she named Samuel. When she weaned him she took him to Shiloh to fulfill her vow. There she left him with Eli so he could learn to serve God.

1 Samuel 2 begins with Hannah's prayer of praise for prayers answered.

Hannah's praise lays the *pattern* for praise used by Jesus' mother, Mary (*Luke 1:46-55*). Her prayer of praise lifts up the person of God and what He has done for her. Hannah's whole personality is used in praising God.

¹ *My heart rejoices in the Lord.*

Hannah's heart no longer stewed over her rival. We would do well to address any bitterness or grudges we are bringing into our prayer closets.

Hannah's attention turned from her gift to the Lord, the giver of the gift.

¹ *In the Lord my horn is lifted high.*

As horned beasts lift their heads to show their strength and power, Hannah finds her strength in the Lord.

The Lord is my strength.

Psalm 28:7

¹ *In the Lord my mouth boasts.* She opened her mouth with smiles and praise. She turned to praising God rather than cursing her rival.

¹ *for I delight in your deliverance.*

She had no need to pray any more “How Bad It Is” prayers. Nor did she need to put down her rival.

Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.

Proverbs 24:17

Hannah wrapped her praises *in the Lord*.

² *There is no one holy like the Lord;*

Difficulty with others often makes us feel the need to compare our goodness with the other's evil. As she drew close to God, Hannah realized only God is *holy*.

² *there is no one besides you;*

Drunk with sorrow, Hannah cried before God answered her prayer. When the answers to her prayers came forth, she realized God really did care and only God can answer some prayers.

² *No rock like our God*

The ground of God's self-revelation is fixed, unchangeable and immovable. God stands with us in reliability, stability and eternity.

Great is God's faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:23

Hannah realized that her security was not in her husband, not in her marriage, not in her child and not in her status as a mother. Her security was in God.

We often seek to find security in people or places, money or assets. The only security that matters is the security we find in God.

Holy God, thank you for being my security.