



***SPRING 2018  
DEVOTIONAL***

***“Diligent Prayer  
Women”***

***WEEK 2: May 14<sup>th</sup> – May 18<sup>th</sup>***



**PUTTING PRAYER  
IN PRACTICE**

**THE SERIES**

**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church  
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**Monday, May 14, 2018**

## **Anna**

*<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,<sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day.<sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.*

**Luke 2:36-38 (NIV)**

Anna is only mentioned briefly in the scriptures. However, her encounter with the baby Jesus yields so many treasures. For one, it shows us God's strategic planning. Anna's father was a man by the name of Phanuel. The Hebrew translation of his name (פְּנֻאֵל Phənu'el) is "the face of God." In our modern culture a title defines the position, or character of an individual, while a name is nothing but an identifier with no meaning. In Hebrew, all names are words with meaning and represent the character of the individual. So, every time Anna looked at her father's face, God was preparing her to recognize the advent of His Son. She walked into the temple as Simeon held Jesus in his arms and blessed Him, and immediately knew who He was.

Anna also recognized Jesus as the answer to her prayers. She spent most of her time, day and night, at the temple in prayer. Perhaps it was because of the economic and political climate of the day. The Israelites were under the oppressive hand of the expanding Roman Empire, because

of their disobedience to God. Surely Anna prayed for the repentance and deliverance of her people, that God would forgive, and restore them. She prayed for the Messiah, the one God would send to deliver them.

The Scripture reveals to us two components that increase the effectiveness of diligent prayer.

1. Fasting - As we humbly deprive our bodies physical nourishment for the purpose of drawing near to God, He promises to draw near to us. Our spiritual man is made stronger, and our senses more acute.
2. Worship - Worship is our service to God, ascribing worthiness to Him for who He is and what He's done, and communion or intimacy with Him. When we pray, we petition God for what we need. When we worship, we acknowledge that He is who/what we need.

Anna prayed diligently for years before she began to see the answer. As you pray, don't be discouraged, if God doesn't answer instantly. Worship and fasting helps us to hear Him clearly, and trust that though He doesn't adhere to our agenda, He works all things together for our good and for His glory.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him." 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)*

**Don't stop praying!**

- Min. Mark Taylor

**Tuesday, May 15, 2018**

## **Pain Prompting Prayer**

<sup>9</sup> Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. <sup>10</sup> Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> And she made this vow: “O Lord of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut. <sup>12</sup> As she was praying to the Lord, Eli watched her. <sup>13</sup> Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. <sup>14</sup> “Must you come here drunk?” he demanded. “Throw away your wine!” <sup>15</sup> “Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven’t been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord. <sup>16</sup> Don’t think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.” <sup>17</sup> “In that case,” Eli said, “go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him. <sup>18</sup> “Oh, thank you, sir!” she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.”

### **1 Samuel 1:9-18 (NLT)**

Some experiences in life come at us like a curve ball or a change up. They catch us off guard and cause wounds that are so painful they feel unbearable. Whether it’s physical or psychological, the anguish of the hurt becomes all-consuming.

It’s like a punch in the gut that leaves you struggling to breath. These experiences can leave you bent over, tormented by the pain. That’s what we see happening in the life of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1. Her inability to bear children becomes the focus of her pain as her rival uses her misfortune to attack her person.

It’s bad enough as a married woman to want children, but to have someone humiliate you over being barren is inhumane and personal. It is clearly an attempt to hurt her deeply. Yet, it isn’t her situation that’s notable in our passage. As difficult as it is, it’s her response to her pain that’s insightful.

Here we see **pain prompting prayer**. In vs. 10, her *deep anguish* and *bitter crying* moved her to take her situation to God. After years of hardship and personal humiliation, Hannah ran to God. Instead of looking for ways to retaliate on her rival, she practiced “*Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all*” (Romans 12:17-18, NLT).

Hannah let her pain push her towards God, instead of away from Him. Vs. 12-14 let us know that even when we let our **pain prompt prayer**, we may still be misunderstood. Responding biblically doesn’t mean you will always gain approval, even from godly people. But it does insure that you will be heard and understood by the One that matters most—Almighty God.

Hannah teaches us some valuable lessons about **pain** and **prayer**. That God can comfort and keep you when life’s circumstances seem unbearable. That taking my problems

to God might not produce immediate change, but I can immediately enjoy the peace of God. That giving to God that which I cannot change, positions me to see God's hand in my *pain*.

Your Pain prompted prayer can lead you to peace.

**Take everything to God in prayer.**

– Min. Dana Thomas

**Wednesday, May 16, 2018**

## **Mary Magnify**

*<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>47</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*

**Luke 1:46-55 (ESV)**

The Hubble Space Telescope is a telescope in space. It was launched into orbit by space shuttle Discovery in 1990. Hubble travels about 5 miles per second: that is like traveling from the eastern coast of the United States to the western coast in 10 minutes. The main function of the telescope is to observe and to magnify large things that are so far away that they seem small. From the surface of the earth's vantage point, the atmosphere gets in the way of seeing the universe clearly.

Have you ever felt like God was far away? What happen? Did God disappear? Well, the answer is no. You know why God might seem far to you? It is because of the way you pray.

We have been talking about putting your prayers into practice and in our focal passage today, we read Mary, the Mother of Jesus, magnifying God in her prayer. Magnifying not in a way where something is small and you need to enlarge it. The way the Hubble telescope works, is that it magnifies large galaxies that seem small and far away, to be seen in their true glory. Mary is magnifying God for who He is and what He has done. Mary tells about the great things He has done for her and all people. Mary realizes that she is not worthy of what God is doing for her. She is giving birth to Jesus. Can you imagine that? Giving birth to God? No single pregnancy has ever been so important. She diligently prays to God for the great things He has done and continues to do.

God is big. In fact He invented big, so He is bigger than big. If God seems far away you are not magnifying Him the way you should in your prays. Mary magnifies God, and for that sees all the things He has done. Your prayers are not just so

you can ask God for health, wealth, and strength. They are to magnify God, to make Him seem bigger to you. To reflect on who and what God is. You cannot put prayer into practice if you do not magnify the Lord.

Think about how much bigger and how much closer you could be to God if you magnify Him, like Mary did.

*I will praise the name of God with a song? I will magnify Him with thanksgiving. – David, Psalm 69:30*

***Instead of squinting to see God, take out your magnifier (prayer) and bring Him close to you and behold His beauty.***

– Min. Dennis Campbell, Jr.

***Thursday, May 17, 2018***

## **For Such A Time as This!**

*<sup>14</sup> "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this? <sup>15</sup> Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, <sup>16</sup> "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in*

*the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."*

**Esther 4:14-16 (NASB)**

Esther was a beautiful Jewish girl who was plucked from obscurity, won a beauty contest, and became the queen of the kingdom. Then there was a wicked man named Haman, who hatched a plot to have all of the Jews put to death. Esther used her influence with the king, the plot was averted, and the people were saved. Then, in perfect poetic justice, Haman, the guy who hatched the plot, ended up hanging on the very gallows he had erected for others. She was there behind the scenes. Esther could have said, "I don't want to jeopardize my position. No one will ever find out I am a Jew. I am going to be careful and play it safe." But instead, she put everything on the line.

Who knows that God has not put you where you are right now for such a time as this? You may be the only Christian in your family or the only believer in your neighborhood. You may be the only follower of Jesus Christ in your workplace or in your classroom.

Esther shows us that our greatest influence in accomplishing anything worthwhile is prayer. What is more worthwhile than the salvation of your people? Although God is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, Esther demonstrates her faith in God, through praying and fasting for His divine intervention. Not only this, she called on all of God's people to join in with her in praying for this desperate situation.

As a result of Esther's diligence in prayer, the Jews won a great victory over their enemies, and the people of God were saved. God came through!

Like Esther, will you stand up for such a time as this? Look around you and see the real need of the people around you. They need God! We must remember that God is always with us in our world too, preparing places, opportunities, choices and options ahead of us. We have a God who cares. We can rejoice that nothing happens by chance and that even the sad and hurting things of life are under His control. God's power is activated through your prayers.

Will you use your influence (prayer) where you are for such a time as this?

### **Prayer Changes Things!**

– Min. Mark Slone

**Friday, May 18, 2018**

### **Climbing Fool's Hill**

*<sup>23</sup> When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground. <sup>24</sup> She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. <sup>25</sup> Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did*

*not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. <sup>26</sup> "Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. <sup>27</sup> Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord.*

### **1 Samuel 25:23-27 (NASB)**

"It takes a village to raise a child" is believed to have originated in an ancient African proverb. This proverb carries the idea of a communal effort to intercede on the behalf of children. But every now and then, adults need intercession as they make their own foolish mistakes in life. Physical intercession is good, when you need to stop someone from hurting themselves or someone else. I would argue that spiritual intercession through prayer is a greater calling for all believers. Our text is a narrative about the diligence of a wife, Abigail, interceding for husband Nabal.

Abigail does not have a high opinion of husband, because he is wicked and acts like a fool, just as his Hebrew name indicates. A fool is defined as someone who has a senseless and rash behavior. Nabal had foolishly rejected a request from David for food and peace, since he had shown Nabal and his men favor while they worked in the field. Nabal's foolish response was the beginning of his journey climbing fool's hill, as my late mother-in-law would say. Nabal's harsh, wicked and arrogantly negative response to David was a death wish for him and his household. When David received word of his response, he charged his army to go take Nabal's life. When Abigail was told of what happened,

this intelligent and beautiful woman prepared to physically and prayerfully intercede for her family.

Abigail diligently worked out a plan to meet the David and his men. She came with food and supplies and prayed that David would not exercise evil for evil. She acknowledged Nabal's senseless and rash response, but she was fervent in her plea to David. She used her negotiating skills to convince him to change his mind.

As the nation pauses to recognize our mothers and their love for us, I realize that only God knows how many times Big Momma, Ma' Dear, Granny, MiMi, MeMaw, Nannie, Momma interceded for their young children and grown children. Only God knows the neighbor and the teacher they told to watch over their children. Only God knows the tearful prayers they prayed and the heavy hearts that they prayed with for God to keep His hedge of protection around their babies. I know momma was praying when I spent my journey climbing fool's hill.

Only God knows and I'm so glad momma prayed for me. I'm so glad she had me on her mind.

***"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16 (NKJV)***

– Min. Ronald Bell