

# The Story of a Girl

(1 Samuel 1:1-8)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Does...”*

Series Title: *Hopeful in the Meantime*

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

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## Something to think about:

This month we will be focusing on the fact that, *“love hopes all things”* (1 Cor. 13:7). As we begin this new series today, we come to an old story in the book of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament that unfolds into one of the greatest stories of hope in the Bible. It’s the story of a woman named, *Hannah*.

Hannah was one of two wives of a man by the name of Elkanah. Elkanah and Hannah lived in a time of Israel’s history when the nation was ruled by Priests and Judges; a time before there were kings in the land of Israel.

Elkanah was a righteous man; a good man by all accounts. He worshiped God and sacrificed to Him regularly for the forgiveness of sins for he and his family. He was a benevolent man to both of his wives, especially Hannah who was barren (unable to have children). However, Hannah struggled with her situation; she wanted to have a child, but she was beginning to lose all hope.

Let’s pick up her story...

## **1 Samuel 1:1-8 (NRSV)**

***<sup>1</sup> There was a certain man of Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. <sup>2</sup> He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.***

***<sup>3</sup> Now this man used to go up year by year from his town 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. <sup>4</sup> On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; <sup>5</sup> but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. <sup>6</sup> Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”***

How was Hannah to maintain hope and keep her head up? Well, let’s look at our key point this morning:

**Key Point:** *“In times of distress it’s important to look at who is for us rather than who is against us.”*

For Hannah, to look at her situation was a terrible thing. Peninnah relentlessly taunted her because she had no children yet. What was she to do? Who was she to turn to in her time of distress? Eventually, she would turn to God (as we’ll see next week), but for now, her husband, Elkanah, works to reassure her, and remind her that he is “for” her.

Let’s take a closer look at Hannah’s story today:

## **1. The fact that Hannah was barren overrode the fact that Elkanah loved her.**

*1 Samuel 1:6-7 (NLT), <sup>6</sup> So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the LORD had kept her from having children. <sup>7</sup> Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat.*

## **2. The fact that Elkanah loved Hannah provided an opportunity, and space, for Hannah to work through her distress.**

*1 Samuel 1:8 (NLT), “Why are you crying, Hannah?” Elkanah would ask. “Why aren’t you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn’t that better than having ten sons?”*

## Something to take home:

Who are you helping/encouraging these days? Is there someone you know of that could use some encouragement? Is someone you know going through a difficult and distressing situation that could use your kind words of hope? Sometimes it just takes a word, and sometimes it just takes your presence.

If “love hopes all things,” why don’t you help someone to see the hope of Christ in their difficult circumstances?

And, finally, it’s important to remind yourself and others that,

**Key Point:** *“In times of distress it’s important to look at who is for us rather than who is against us.”*

And those of us who believe in Christ, the Lord our God, are able to embrace the promise of hope that Paul reminds us of in his letter to the Romans in the New Testament...

**Romans 8:31b (NLT), If God is for us, who can ever be against us?**



This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

# Lesson 1:

## “The Story of a Girl”



# The Big Reveal

(Genesis 45:1-15; 50:14-21)

Series Title: “*Hard Knock Life*”

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What is “hope?”
- ⇒ Describe “hopelessness;” give real-life examples.

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

1 Samuel 1:1-8 (NRSV)

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GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. In a couple sentences, describe what’s going on in this passage of Scripture:  

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2. Was Elkanah a good man, or a wicked man? Explain...  

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3. Describe Elkanah’s wife Peninnah. What was she like based on this passage of Scripture?  

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4. Hannah, the main character of our story, is completely dejected and distressed. Explain why she is so distressed (give all the reasons)...  

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5. When she feels the most hopeless, what does Elkanah do for Hannah to try and give her hope (vv. 5, 8)?  

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6. There are people who feel hopeless just like Hannah; they don’t believe there is any end in sight for the trials and hardships they’re going through. Like Elkanah, how can we share hope?  

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7. When a person feels hopeless, their tendency is to withdrawal from others; in some ways this can be good, but in many ways this can be detrimental. Who should people who are struggling to find hope withdrawal from and who should they surround themselves with?  

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8. The greatest hope comes from what Christ did for us on the Cross and the Empty Tomb. How does following Christ give a person hope?  

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9. How can you be a hope-bearer for someone else this coming week?  

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SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHO ARE YOU HELPING**/encouraging these days? Is there someone you know of that could use some encouragement? Is someone you know going through a difficult and distressing situation that could use your kind words of hope? Sometimes it just takes a word, and sometimes it just takes your presence.
- ⇒ **LIKE HANNAH**, in times of distress it’s important to look at who is for us rather than who is against us.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** 1 Samuel 1:4-5 and Romans 8:31b