

We all have things that we want very badly. Sometimes when we don't get them we become very discouraged. Many times this has to do with a relationship. We may have a very deep sense of loss that we want filled. There was a yearning for a relationship; a desperate feeling. In thinking of this, I found an interesting story in the first chapter of first Samuel.

This is a story about a man named Elkanah who had two wives. One of them, Peninnah, had borne him children, but the other, Hannah, was barren. Let's read in vss 3-7:

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.

We see the depth of her anguish a little later in vss 15-16, when Eli finds her near the tabernacle:

"I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

Many times we feel like pouring out our souls to the Lord. But let's back up a moment and see what Elkanah said to her in verse 8:

"Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

We don't find a record here of Hannah's answer. What could she have said? Her actions show that she wasn't changed much. I think that the question Elkanah asked is extremely powerful if asked from God's point of view. No matter what our troubles are, no matter what we yearn for, isn't God worth more than that? If we want a child, or friend, or other relationship, isn't God worth more than ten of them? We read in Matthew 10:37-38, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

In other words, if we do not get what we want, is God sufficient to make us happy? He is, but this is a hard lesson to learn. Can we live with Him if He is all we had? In Habakkuk 3:17-18 we read, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior." Many of our problems stem from our inability to really understand this. There is a critical point in our lives when we realize that if we have to live alone with nothing, we can still have a great life as one of God's children.

God certainly thinks that we are worth a great deal. In Matthew 10:31 he tells us that we are worth more than many sparrows. Well, maybe that is not much of a recommendation. But the rest of the gospel tells the story that we were worth more than His only Son. God offered him as a sacrifice so that we could become worthy to live with Him forever. Surely we need nothing more than that.