

“Holy Chaos”
By Rev. Lucas Bruder de Oliveira
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Readings:

1 Samuel 1:1-2, 6-7, 9-18

Introduction

- Families are wonderful gifts from God.
 - They are also one of the clearest reminders that humanity has fallen.
 - Because every family has chaos.
- Sometimes it is small chaos:
 - someone finishes the milk and puts the empty carton back in the fridge as an act of pure theological rebellion.
 - Sometimes it is deeper:
 - old wounds,
 - constant tension,
 - words that still echo years later.
- We often think that faith grows best in peaceful places.
- But in Scripture, faith frequently grows in the middle of
 - messy homes,
 - awkward dinners,
 - difficult relationships,
 - and unanswered prayers.
- That is exactly where we meet Hannah in 1 Samuel.

- Not in a calm and spiritual environment,
- but in the middle of emotional chaos.

1. THE CHAOS THAT TRIES TO DESTROY US

- Hannah's world was complicated long before Samuel was born.
- Elkanah, her husband, was actually a faithful man.
 - Even when the sanctuary in Shiloh had a terrible reputation because of Eli's corrupt sons,
 - Elkanah still brought his family every year to worship the Lord. (1 Samuel 1:3)
- This reminds us that faithful people still live in broken religious environments.
 - Sometimes even church can become complicated.
 - Sometimes the very place that should bring healing also carries disappointment.
- And for Hannah, the sanctuary became connected with pain.
 - Every year she traveled there with Peninnah, the other wife, who constantly provoked her because Hannah had no children.
 - The text doesn't say much about Peninnah, but simply that she used Hannah's suffering as a weapon.

- And slowly, worship became emotionally exhausting.
- What should have been a joyful pilgrimage to the sanctuary became a yearly trauma.
 - Imagine arriving at the place where you are supposed to encounter God and already feeling anxious before you walk through the door.
- Honestly, many people know that feeling in our days.
 - Not just about the sanctuary, but also about their own houses.
- Some families live under constant comparison.
 - One child is always measured against another.
 - One sibling always seems more successful.
 - Sometimes there is that relative who can transform a peaceful dinner into a competitive Olympic event within five minutes.
- And then there are deeper tensions:
 - the marriage that survives mostly through silence,
 - the parent-child relationship filled with distance,
 - the family gathering where everybody smiles politely while avoiding certain subjects like trained diplomats.

- Chaos has many forms.
- But Hannah's pain does not push God away from her story.
 - In fact, God enters the story right there, in the middle of the mess.
- Because God has never required perfect circumstances in order to begin His work..

2. HANNAH BEFORE THE CHAOS

- What makes Hannah remarkable is not that she had an easy life.
 - It is that she refused to let chaos consume her.
- Year after year, she still went to the sanctuary.
 - That alone is extraordinary.
- In that time, people believed the temple was the place where God especially dwelled.
 - For Hannah, going there meant revisiting her pain,
 - but it also meant placing herself near the presence of God.
 - And instead of becoming bitter, she prayed more intensely.
- She prays. She weeps. Her lips move silently.
 - No polished religious performance.
 - No dramatic speech meant to impress people nearby.
 - She is not trying to sound spiritual.

- She simply wants God to hear her. (1 Samuel 1:10–13)
- She never prays for revenge.
 - She does not ask God to punish Peninnah.
 - She does not curse Elkanah.
 - She does not collapse into despair.
- Instead, she humbly asks God to change her situation
 - because she still believes God can act.
- True faith leads us to present our pain honestly to God, while trusting in His goodness.
- Even Eli the priest misunderstands her and assumes she is drunk.
 - He sees trembling lips and assumes sin instead of sorrow.
- Sometimes the people carrying the deepest pain are also the easiest to misjudge.
- Faced with the chaos in her home, faced with the chaos of the pilgrimage to the sanctuary, and now faced with the chaos within the sanctuary, Ana keepspraying.
 - Hannah teaches us that deep faith and deep pain can exist in the same heart at the same time.
- And then something changes before the miracle even arrives.

- Scripture says her face was no longer downcast. (1 Samuel 1:18)
- Nothing external had changed yet.
 - Peninnah was still there.
 - The circumstances were still complicated.
 - But Hannah leaves differently because she trusted that God had heard her.
- Sometimes prayer changes our hearts before it changes our situation.

3. A GENEROUS MIRACLE

- Eventually, God answers Hannah's prayer, and Samuel is born.
- Now honestly, after years of suffering, this would be the moment to become extremely protective.
 - Most parents already act like their child is the center of the universe after two weeks.
 - Hannah waited years.
- But here is the surprising part:
 - she asks for a son only to give him back to the Lord. (1 Samuel 1:11, 27–28).
- She does not ask for a child merely to
 - secure her future,
 - help with work,
 - or restore her social status.
- She receives the blessing as a gift that ultimately belongs to God.

- Hannah understood something some might forget sometimes:
 - God's blessings are never meant to replace God Himself.
- We easily turn good things into ultimate things.
 - Children become achievements.
 - Careers become identities.
 - Homes become status symbols.
 - Even family itself can quietly become an idol.
- But Hannah teaches us another way.
 - Faith trusts God not only in suffering, but also in blessing.
- She understood that Samuel was not her possession.
 - He was God's gift entrusted to her care.
- And perhaps that is one of the holiest things we can learn:
 - Our homes and our families belong to God.
 - They are the place and space with which we have been blessed
 - and which we are called to return to God.

Conclusion

- Hannah's story reminds us that God is present both in chaos and in calm.
- Faith does not require a perfect family.

- It requires a heart willing to keep turning toward God.
- And maybe that is where some of us are today:
 - tired of repeated conflicts,
 - carrying quiet grief,
 - trying to worship while life feels emotionally messy.
- If so, Hannah's story offers hope.
 - Bring your pain honestly before God.
 - Trust Him even before the answer comes.
 - And remember that the Lord still works in complicated homes
 - and imperfect people.
- Because sometimes the holiest faith is not found in a peaceful life,
 - but in the decision to keep trusting God in the middle of holy chaos.