

May 15, 2016

Have you ever been subjected to ridicule for the work that you do for the the Kingdom of God? People may rebuke and ridicule you for various reasons even though your desire is to honor him from a thankful heart. Your Christian journey will have some rocky places in the path if you are truly committed to serving God in spirit and in truth.

Today I want to share some passages of Scriptures with you concerning this topic and perhaps you can relate with these Bible characters.

In 1 Samuel chapter 1, we find a man named Elkanah who had two wives, Peninnah who bore children to him and Hannah who was childless. Elkanah took all of his family each year to Shiloh where he went to worship and offer sacrifices to the LORD. He gave portions to his wife Peninnah and his children, but he loved Hannah so he tried to make her happy by giving her a goodly portion seeing that God had caused her to be barren.

Peninnah, her adversary, provoked Hannah relentlessly causing her to be very upset and troubled. Every year the same scenario took place with Peninnah tormenting Hannah because she had no children. Finally it got to the point that Hannah just cried and refused to eat. Her husband, trying to console her, asked her what was bothering her. He asked, "Are not I better to you than 10 sons?" (It appears that she didn't answer that question)

Verse 9 says that Hannah rose up after the sacrifices had been offered and they had eaten their meal in Shiloh, and entered the temple where Eli, the priest, sat upon a seat by a post in the temple of the LORD. She was so brokenhearted that she cried bitterly to the LORD. Her lips moved but she was silent as she made a vow to the LORD. She said, "LORD All-Powerful, I am your servant, but I am miserable! Please let me have a son. I will give him to you for as long as he lives and his hair will never be cut."

Eli watched her as she silently prayed from her heart before the LORD. Because of what he observed, Eli misjudged her for being in a drunken state. He approached her and asked her, "How long will you be intoxicated? Sober up!" Hannah explained that she was sorrowful and had not drunk neither wine nor strong drink but had poured out her soul before the LORD. "Don't put me in the category of a wicked woman for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I been speaking," she said.

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant you your petition that you have asked of him." Hannah replied, "Sir thank you for being so kind to me." She left and returned to her husband and after she had eaten, she was no longer sad.

In verse 18, they rose up early, worshiped before the LORD and returned to their house and later the LORD blessed Elkanah and Hannah with a son and she called his name Samuel because she had asked the LORD for him. After Samuel was weaned, Hannah took Samuel and left him at the temple to be brought up in the house of the LORD to be taught the ways of God by Eli the priest. Eli told her that he prayed that the LORD would bless

her with more children for she had given Samuel back to Him. She brought clothing for Samuel every year when she came to worship and sacrifice to the LORD. The LORD blessed Hannah with three more sons and two daughters. God chose Samuel to be a prophet over his people of Israel.

There is nothing quite like being criticized by your spouse even if you are a king. King David went to Gath to return the ark of God to Jerusalem. Everyone was celebrating and the king offered a sacrifice of an ox and a cow to the LORD. David danced with all his might covered with an ephod. (This was a piece of clothing like a skirt that went from the waist to the knee or a garment like the priests wore that was like a vest or jacket.) David and a multitude of people were celebrating by shouting and blowing horns while the ark was being carried along. David danced as they were returning to Jerusalem and Michal, his wife who was Saul's daughter, looked out her window and watched the ark being brought into David's City. When she saw David dancing and jumping for the LORD, she was disgusted. After the ark was set inside the tent that David had prepared for it, he worshipped the LORD by sacrificing animals and burning them on an altar. Then he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful and gave the men and women a small loaf of bread, some meat and a handful of raisins and everyone went home. David went home so he could ask God's blessing on his family. He didn't get the reception from Michal that he expected for she was upset with his public display before the people. She started yelling at him, "You were really great today!" she said. "You acted like a dirty old man, dancing around half naked in front of your servants slave girls." David responded by telling Michal that he was honoring the LORD for placing him in leadership of God's people rather than Saul's family and he was willing to be abased to show his loyalty to God. He would play before the LORD. He told her that the slave girls would honor him. Because of Michal harsh judgment towards David, she was childless. See 2 Samuel 6.

In the book of Job, Satan asked permission to put his hand against God's special servant, Job to prove that he would curse God. ~~God allowed Job to be tested and Satan caused Job~~ to lose everything he had, his children, his livestock, his servants, his wealth, and even the position of importance that he had with the community and finally his health. His friends that came to him misjudged him by trying to convince him that he had sinned against God and prodding him to confess his wrongdoing. Job insisted he was innocent, but the pressure was almost unbearable and when it seemed like it couldn't get any worse his wife asked him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die." He answered, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. What, shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job didn't sin with his lips. See Job 2:9. If you read the book you will learn that at the end of the testing, in Job 42:5, Job said this: I have heard of you from others, but now my eyes see you. That's why I hate myself and sit here in dust and ashes to show my sorrow." God told Job he was angry at his friends because they

had not told the truth. They had to offer sacrifices and have Job pray for them so God wouldn't punish them for their foolishness. After Job prayed for his friends, God made him twice as rich as he had been before the testing and blessed him more than ever. Everything was restored to Job and he lived for another 140 years so he saw his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and even great-great grandchildren and he was very old when he died. God allows his people to go through trials and tribulations and by his wisdom and mind He brings things to pass for our good. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

The Book of Job has brought insight into the character of God's love and contrasts Satan's hatred for God's people. His schemes and destructive plots against innocent people are portrayed in detail and we get the inside scoop of his animosity towards God's creation from reading this book. We gain courage and insight by understating Job's reasoning that life has struggles and setbacks but also God's blessings. He is able to keep that which we commit unto him against that day. See 2 Timothy 1:12. Paul was persuaded and committed to stay true regardless of the price until the end. People turned against Paul, forsook him, tried to destroy him but not until his work was finished would God allow him to be put to death and then for God's glory.

In Luke 10:38, Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is sitting listening to Him rather than helping her in the kitchen. She thought Mary should be doing something other than relaxing and leaving her to do all the work. Jesus saw it differently.

In John 12:7, there is a story that brings out both the good and the evil within the hearts of people. Six days before the Passover Jesus went to Bethany where he had raised Lazarus from the dead. Martha served supper and Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus. Then Mary took a bottle of very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus feet. She wiped them with her hair and the sweet smell of the perfume filled the house. Judas Iscariot, who would later betray Jesus asked, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?" Judas asked this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was the holder of the money bag and he stole money from it.

Jesus told him to leave Mary alone for she was doing this to prepare him for burial. He told them that they would always have the poor with them, but they would not always have Him. In the account of Matthew chapter 26:10, Jesus told them also that "wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial to her."

When mothers brought their children to Jesus to receive a blessing, the disciples tried to send them away rebuking them for bothering the master. See Mark 10:14. When Jesus saw it, he was much displeased and He told them to bring the children to Him and forbid them not for such is the kingdom of heaven. He went on to say that those who don't receive the

kingdom of God as a little child will not enter into the kingdom of God. And He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them. God looks on the hearts of men He alone knows the motives by which we approach his throne and perform good works. We are not saved by works, but we are called to do good works when we are filled with his spirit. See Ephesians 2: 9, 10. Those who do their works to be seen of men get their reward on this earth. Matthew 6:1. We must be careful how we judge others.