

But have poured out my soul before the Lord (Quality: Good)

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Date: 13 September 1989

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[0 : 00] I venture to draw your prayerful attention to the first book of Samuel, chapter 1, verse 15, last clause. First book of Samuel, chapter 1, verse 15, and the last clause. But have put out my soul before the Lord. But have put out my soul before the Lord.

The times in which Hannah prayed and Samuel in due time was born were exceedingly sad and solemn. Much departure from God. Much formal religion and spiritual wickedness in high places.

As it was then, so indeed it is now. But as then, and we believe as now, or even in the dark hours of times of spiritual declension, God has his people. A people that know the way to the throne of grace by the sweet work, power, and influence of the Holy Spirit of God in their souls. And so, in the background of the subject, we have this dear handmaid, this dear Hannah, who was sorely provoked. The Lord had shut up her womb. And yet, if we may speak with reverence and with becoming words from a pulpit, I was going to say that Peninnah was not shut up in her provocation and kindness and pride. And let us not pass Peninnah over. Let us look at ourselves. How that we too can look down upon others, a scorn others, a provoked, provoke others, especially if they're not so favoured as we, especially if their life is sad. What great care and much grace we do need. And how soon our heart can be lifted up lifted up with pride, how soon our tongue can be given to speak words of unkindness and how soon we may provoke another we may provoke another unkindly. But Hannah, and in the depth of her sorrow, we may have been given to speak, how soon our heart can be lifted up with us. And in the depth of her that it wasn't just a passing word or two, but it went on from year to year. And in reading this chapter, in your hearing this afternoon, I observed as not really I had noticed in full before twice, we read those words, the Lord had shut up her home. And yet, Peninnah provoked her, but Hannah took it to the Lord. And we read, and trying to speak this afternoon, from these words, that poured out my soul before the Lord, in the depth of her sorrow, under this long provocation, in the loneliness of her path, seeing another favoured and herself apparently left. But yet, she had a God to go.

And none other. And we read this, that she was in bitterness of soul. Her cup was a very bitter one. Her path was a very lonely one. Her way, and I feel to her, a godly woman, was a very mysterious one. Why should this woman, in all her provocation and unkindness, be so favoured, with a multiplied number of children? And Hannah, so tender, so God-fearing, and yet, no child? She had a bitter cup, in that the Lord had shut up her womb, that she had no children. And that bitterness surely was intensified and increased by the provocation of Peninnah.

Bitterness of soul. It went right into her, didn't it? It went right into her, didn't it? There are times, in our path, where we come into some similar experience, a mara experience, a mara experience, the cup, so bitter, the way, so rough. And yet, we've just been singing, my times, my times, are in thy hand. And that cup that is in thy hand, was put there by his hand.

[8 : 08] The God of love, the God that makes no mistake, I do not wish, God forbid, to sing a song to a heavy heart, but would seek to speak a word of encouragement.

Oh, friend, this cup that may be yours, this bitterness of soul, this experience, says, we turn to another handmaid, Naomi, as she confessed in her return to Bethlehem, the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. Call me no more Naomi, which is pleasantness, but mara, that is bitterness. There, of course, we make a distinction.

Naomi and her husband, who, of course, died in Moab, that seemed to take a step without God's blessing. We mustn't divert in consideration of that.

But, nevertheless, there was a bitterness of her soul. And sometimes, as we look at the cup, we see perhaps a purpose in it. Perhaps we've taken a step without God's blessing.

We've been in a wrong spirit. We're under the chastening of the Lord. But let me just name this in passing, though I do not wish to digress from the subject. Even then, with dear Naomi, in time, she was to see that God is still full of love, ever was full of love toward her. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

[10 : 09] And so, friend, when there is this bitter cup, there will be with God's dear children pouring out of the soul unto God.

How sweet it is when submission is given. We do not find that there was rebellion in the heart of Hannah.

Inquiry, yes, perhaps perplexity. But she took it to the Lord in prayer. Take, if I may so say, your cup, that may be very bitter.

Take it in prayer to the Lord. And ask him to help you to think of Jesus. And think of the cup that he drank.

The cup that my Father giveth me. Shall I not drink it? And yet, for our encouragement, observe the sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground in Gethsemane's garden.

[11 : 25] As there the dear Saviour prayed, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

What comfort there is. What fellowship there is with Christ in his suffering. But what a contrast there is in one way to his cup and our cup.

His cup was filled with the wrath of God. His cup was that he was to be made sin who knew no sin. His cup was that the sword of divine justice should smite him.

What a cup it was. And yet, our cup. Why? My Father's hand prepares the cup. And what he wills is best.

And there's something secret that sweetens all. Friend, as the tree was cast down into the waters at Mara, and the bitter was made sweet.

[12 : 27] As a poor sinner is led to the cross, is led to view the sufferings of Christ, is led with a sweet token of the love of Christ to the soul.

And to see in that cup, it's all in the Father's love. And though it may be as the case of Naomi, in measure of a chastening, yet to see it's all in love.

And something secret sweetens all. How many a time there's been when we've been brought into a path such as I name.

A cup so bitter, and we felt that it was all bitterness, no blessing in it, no good, and everything was against us, as dear Jacob said at all. And we proved in the drinking of that cup, yet there was something secret, something sweet, something precious, so much so, that now it remains sweet in its memory, in our soul, as a marked token of God's blessing, the answer to our prayers for confirming our faith, and causing us to prove that God is our Father.

So, here was a bitterness of spirit, but a pouring out of her soul unto the Lord.

[14 : 04] We read then that she prayed unto the Lord. Oh, what a privilege it is to take everything to God in prayer.

at all times, in all places, matters great, matters small, providential, and spiritual, and for God's children, the two will be closely interwoven, spiritual, teaching, that will observe the providential blessings.

things. So, poor soul, perhaps, I may speak to one that's struggling, and perhaps, as we do, we've not, at first, taken it to the Lord in prayer.

We thought that we could handle the matter, that we were strong enough to bear the burden, but soon prove that we're overwhelmed and need one above, and it is only that one above, none other, can help.

When we are beginning to sink, but when there is none to help, but when we stagger to and fro like a drunken man are at wit's end, to pray unto the Lord, take, beloved, those arrows of provocation, those harsh words, those unkind words, those temptations of the devil, those darts of the wicked one, that are thrust at you, and sometimes seem to enter into your very soul, as Joseph, iron, entered into his soul.

[16 : 04] I think that's a marginal rendering. My friend, take it, take your poor, wounded spirit to God and ask him to help you, to support you, to strengthen you, to bear you up under that burden that you carry, that sorrow that fills your heart, and sometimes you feel, ah, I shall never know what joy is again, that there's such a sorrow, such a cup, such a path, there's such a way, such steps, that I'm treading in, I feel, my heart is broken, it will never be comforted.

Take it, all to the, Lord, in prayer. I have of late, I hope I may say with, in tender fear, being comforted by, well-known words, a promise, that curse thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.

and the centre word there, and the centre word there, is he. We look at the burden, then we look at self, then as we've sung in our opening hymn, say, none are so tried as we, can get so filled with self-pity, so self-centred, so selfish about self, until, my friend, that we're enabled, to turn to the Lord.

And then we start to lose sight of the burden, and we start to lose sight of our sinful, and unworthy self, and there we start to look up, and we see our God, and we see that, that this God, that speaks, and doesn't say, I'll take that burden off you.

Sometimes he does, but not always. He may lay another burden on you, may add a burden to you, but what does he say? I will sustain thee.

[18 : 05] Now that's grace all sufficient. That's strength, that is for every day. That's out of weakness, made strong. So, as you pour out your soul before God, then, beloved, the Lord help you, and cause you to look up in faith, and look for that sustaining.

Wasn't it, dear Mr. Frank Gostin, that once in his business days, he came, was such in depths of trouble, he said, Lord, if there's anything else, I shall sink and rise no more.

And when he got back from his business that day, there was even a greater trouble awaiting him when he got home. And the dear man, in his way, said, sink I did, but into the everlasting arms.

friend, what a mercy it is to have a God to go to, and a God that doesn't bar our way to go to him. Haven't you been amazed at that?

When you think, when I think, then, of my sinfulness, my rebellion, my worldliness, my forgetfulness of God, my so-called self-sufficiency, and then at the last moment sometimes, I think, oh, I haven't prayed about it.

[19 : 26] I turn to God. Oh, friend, and yet, there is still the open way to the throne of grace. And, that, have you not been amazed sometimes, and humbled, that the smallest worries, and, we read here that, poor Hannah, she fretted.

And, sometimes we get very fretful, irritated. Why is that thorn in the flesh that can make you very irritable, and get under your skin, as we may say, and you find it ever so hard to bear?

But, I say, the Lord, we can take it, big matters, and little matters, to God, take everything to him. But now, our text then, it says this, that, poured out, my soul, before, the Lord.

Next observation is this, that, bitterness of soul, and, praying to God, that, we read that, she wept, sore.

It wasn't just, a passing tear. It might be said, it was a tears, not just of, shall I say, pure, flowing of literal tears, tears, but of tears, that had bitterness in it, tears, that expressed, the deep sorrow, of her heart.

[21 : 02] She wept. There's room, for weeping souls, at the throne of grace. Blessed be God. And my friend, I just anticipate, here for a moment, but, poured out, the soul, before God, perhaps, you know what it is, to weep, so, not only of your providential, path, but, oh, the burden of your sin.

Blessed are they, that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Oh, I wish I could weep more. I do not mean, literally so much. It's a great mercy, to feel your heart, heart broken, and even, just a tear, to well up in the eye, sometimes.

But, I mean this, inward sorrow. I mean this, true spiritual, weeping, before God. This, godly sorrow, for, our sin.

And these, tears, that, ah, don't we read in the psalm, that, put them in, thy bottle. An, Eastern custom, that when a person died, the mourners would weep, and the tears would be, stored in bottles, to show, manifest the grief, and sorrow, that they, passed through.

But my friend, what a comfort it is, that, God sees your tears. Oh, when, Ezra were in, Egypt, I know their sorrows.

[22 : 29] And, oh, and I think of, another dear woman, that had some tears too. And what were her tears about? Oh, she was weeping at the sepulcher, because she, felt her Lord, the body had been taken away.

And, her heart was filled with, indescribable sorrow, to think without, living without her Lord. Woman, why, weepest thou?

Whom, seekest thou? So, beloved, there are some, precious tears, and the Lord sees them, he knows them. But what I long for, and I hope I'm not reaching beyond, the point here, in our subject, but thinking of this, spiritually, oh, that, I could mourn more, over my sin.

Oh, that, to look on him, whom, we have pierced, and, that we might have, our hearts, pierced. I should never forget, dear friends, some few years ago, giving her testimony, before us, and, she said that, under the ministry, of another beloved servant, of God, the Lord favoured her, with, the pardon of her sin.

And, she said her heart, it was filled, with indescribable joy. And, then she said, almost to this effect, indescribable sorrow.

[24 : 03] And, one might say, wow, how does sorrow come in, with a sense of pardon? I think it was this, with, love, and grief, my heart, dividing, with my tears, his feet, obey.

One's heart, filled with love, and yet, indescribable sorrow. as you see a little, of what it cost, the dear Jesus, to put away, thy sin.

Wet, so, and God, shall wipe away, all tears, from their eyes.

There'll be no weeping, in glory. But, there'll be some tears, to be wiped away, when the saints, reach, heaven at last.

that she, vowed, a vow, solemn, a vow, that was made, in the fear of God, a vow, that she honoured, and, that, she, kept.

[25 : 29] I have not felt, to be, led, at large, into this subject, of vows, I've not made one, as I can remember, in, my life, but some have.

And my friend, when, that, the Lord, appears, then, God, give you, the grace, to honour, that vow, in his sight, as Jacob, bowed, and then, went back, and owned, what God, had done, for him, over those, many, years.

I feel, I must leave, this course, at that, at the moment. Others, could speak more, ably, on it, but I venture, no more, than what I've known, in my own path.

But I come to this, as our text declares, she, poured out, my soul, before the Lord, and we read this, in her prayer, and in her vow, she said, oh, Lord of hosts, what a word, and my friend, we say with reverence, what a God.

Oh, what a comfort this is. When you may feel, hosts of things, are against you, hosts of sins, oh, and everything, on top of you, and yet, to look up, and see, it's the Lord of hosts, the God, that rides in the heavens, for your health, lift up your heads, look up for your redemption, draw it nigh, the Lord God, omnipotent, reigneth, the Lord, of hosts, is anything, too hard, for the Lord?

[27 : 15] Again, I will lift up, mine eyes, unto the hills, from whence cometh my help, my help cometh, it's a wonderful word, is that, it doesn't say, has come, or will come, both of course are true, but cometh, it's like an open door, it's a flowing, that never fails, cometh, so when you, poor thing on earth, in all your helplessness, unworthiness, burdens, sinfulness, all that's going against you, all that overwhelms you, and all you can struggle out, and in this, cry, this pouring out, of your soul before God, why, it's, Lord, help me, and you look up, it's the Lord of hosts, little faith, looks up, and pleads it, and, oh, trust in God, there was a dear woman, who was known for great faith, and another dear soul, thought, I'll go and visit that woman, and she found her, and met her, and said, are you the woman, of great faith, she said, oh no, she said, but I have little faith, in a great God, and I believe it was great faith, trusting God, really looking up, and believing, in God, and trusting God, oh my friend, that our faith, might be confirmed, and increased, and her prayer, was if thou wilt, indeed, look on the affliction, of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not, oh how, often we pray,

Lord, remember me, how God says, oh Israel, thou should not be forgotten of me, yet will I not forget, thee, now what do we mean, when we pray, remember me, we do not charge God, with forgetfulness, we know that the eye, of the Lord, is upon them, that fear him, that hope in his mercy, we know that we're never, out of his sight, but I believe this, is Lord, I need from thee, a sweet token, for my soul, for the comfort, of my heart, of thy love, a word from heaven, a help from heaven, something real, something personal, something powerful, Lord, remember me, and so, we find, this is the prayer, of saints of old, David prayed it, remember me, with the favour, thou bearest, unto thy people, Lord, thou dost bear much favour, to all sinners on earth, even the wicked, but it's thy favour, those blessings, of Calvary, those blessings, from my soul, that's what I seek for, and remember me, with the favour, that thou bearest, unto thy people, oh, visit me, with thy salvation, as dear Jeremiah, the dear weeping prophet, he knew what tears were, didn't he, but he knew what it was, oh Lord, thou knowest, remember me, and visit me, poured out, my soul, before the Lord, the dear Nehemiah, in his serving the Lord, in all the difficulties, the oppositions, remember me, oh Lord, for God, and surely, we must be careful here, but we think of one, on the cross, that cried,

Lord, remember me, but remember this, there was another thief, that never prayed it at all, oh, how solemn, if people think, that they can leave, that these matters do, at their deathbed, but what a mercy, if in our heart, there's this pouring out, of our soul, this isn't just, repeating a prayer, parrot like, this isn't prayerless prayers, we get, oh, I don't know how my brethren, get in the ministry, and you dear brethren, in the, in the prayer meeting, oh, how we have to beg of the Lord, that is not, prayerless prayers, not just, words only, oh, how we do have to pray, I remember, one of my dear deacons, he's now very much afflicted, but once, a dear man was so troubled, and so burdened, I didn't know, I called on him in prayer, he stood up there, and he, just stopped for about, half a minute, or a minute, without saying anything, and just said,

God be merciful to me, a sinner, with broken language, and sat down, and some of us have never forgotten it, friend, that was prayer, that was pouring out, that wasn't just repeating a word, was it, so, remember me and not forget, and we'll give, it was God's gift, that thy, a man, and she would give it, to God, now, the prayer here then, the pouring out of the soul, was seeking, the glory, and honour of God, wasn't to, satisfy, just that, she should have a child, wasn't to, fulfil the lust of the flesh, but was that, she would, give this gift, that God would give her, that it would be given, unto, the Lord, all the days, of his life, she laid it, her case before the Lord, in sweet submission, to his will,

I will just observe this, you know, sometimes, and I know, no case, no case comes to my mind, whatsoever, I'm thankful to say, at the moment, you'll understand what I mean, but you know, even among God's people, even a minister, can misunderstand, somebody, we have to be, so very, very careful, how we judge, Eli, look, of course, the poor man, I can understand Eli, you see, the things were in such a dreadful state, that it was nothing, I usually see drunken women, around the tabernacle, and he thought, oh, here's another one, and, he looked on Hannah, and he could see, that her lips moved, and so forth, but she didn't, he didn't hear a voice, so he assumed, that she was, you see, how we should inquire first, before we judge, how we should examine matters, closely, and carefully, and prayerfully, and without bias, before we, make our judgment, and let me just name this, that, was Eli, misjudged, yet we do observe, how ready he was, to acknowledge his fault, and if we misjudge, then may grace be given to us, to do just the same, but that perhaps, is by the way, although, when I say by the way, is a very, needful word, so this, leads us to another, glimpse of this prayer, no words were heard, and I believe, sometimes friends, wordless prayers, are real prayers, sometimes you may be, such a place in this, pouring out of your soul, in such agony, and I say, it can be bound up, with spiritual, and providential together, that, you feel you can't, utter a word, or perhaps just,

[34 : 58] Lord save me, Lord help me, or it may be just, oh Lord, and some of us, are no strangers to that, but you know, I believe that's real prayer, though, it is not in words, it is understood in heaven, it is received in glory, it is, let me just quote, and I turn to the word, that I may name it, exactly as it appears, in the scripture, likewise, the spirit also, helpeth our infirmities, for we know not, what we should pray for, as we thought, but the spirit itself, make it intercession, for us, with groanings, which cannot be uttered, pouring out, no words, may be silent, may be just a groan, may be just a sigh, may be just the upward glancing, of the eye, but it's the moving, of the soul, under pressure, and load, and burden, and sin, and Lord, to the throne of grace, to the dear Jesus, and his precious blood, for that grace, and for that mercy, for that hope, and for that help, that you, a poor sinner, so greatly, need, and, so, we, read of, this pouring out, of the soul, and, what we read here, and I think I've passed over it, about her, her continuing, in prayer, that she, multiplied, in her, prayers, in, pouring out, her soul, yes, it comes in, as she speaks, and, in reply, to,

Eli, she didn't, rouse up, in a wrong spirit, I might have done, and I can easily do it, but for the grace of God, you know, something can touch, just a tender spot, and you're under trouble, you're under pressure, and, oh, up you go, and flare up, my friend, it's a great mercy, to be kept, great mercy, this spirit with Hannah, was of meekness, of patience, all that grace, may be given to us, to be, like her, and, she said, that, out of the grief, abundance of my complaints, and grief, have I spoken, hitherto, but have, poured out, my soul, before the Lord, just one more word here, and that is, as we notice this, that as she prayed, and Eli, spake kind words, to her, as she went on her way, she had no son, no evidence of it at all, of course, her countenance, was no more sad,

I believe, she left her burden, at the throne of graves, I believe, she thought, the Lord was with her, I believe, faith was given to her, that she, anticipated, and looked, with sweet assurance, that the Lord, would hear, and answer her prayers, oh friend, do we wait, and watch, for the answer, I do remember, at a Sunday school, and if that's it, Hannah the Tunbridge Wells, I think the subject, was brought into the subject, of forgotten prayers, we ask, and we forget, we do not wait, or we do not watch, to look for the answer, there was a young lad, in the days of Spurgeon, prayer meeting, and he asked Spurgeon, that prayer would be made, for his father, who never read the Bible, and prayer was made, and halfway through, the prayer meeting, Spurgeon looked up, and the boy, wasn't to be seen, at the end of the prayer meeting, the boy, turned up again, and so Spurgeon, sped him, well we prayed for you, boy, and what happened, where did you go, what did you do, why did you go, sir, he said,

I went to see, if my father, was reading the Bible, and he was, he went to see, if there was an answer, to those prayers, and the Lord, has certainly heard, an answer to those prayers, you may say, ah, but it's not so with me, I pray, I pray, I pray, and there doesn't, there's an answer, I pray, and my countenance, is still sad, I don't seem, to get the relief, my friend, still pray, for God, will all explain, nor shalt thou, seek his face, in vain, pray, though you may be burdened, for that grace, to be patient, that grace, to wait, that grace, to persevere, that grace, to continue in prayer, and to watch, in the same, with thanksgiving, why, doesn't that word, come again, go again, seven times, he'd been once, he'd got to go, seven times, so, beloved, men ought always, to pray, and not to faint, in God's time, and way,

Samuel was born, what a gift, and how she, honoured that vow, how he was given, to the Lord, and what a precious gift, and who can tell, how, wouldn't it be wonderful, even in these days, if there's, a Samuel was born, in this land, and other lands too, we read in Acts chapter 7, for example, in the dark hours, of Israel's bondage, in Egypt, in which time, Moses was born, God's purpose, who can tell, and who can tell, of the blessings, that flow out, from these prayers, this travail, these tears, and this groaning, before the Lord, and the answers, to the prayer, and the blessings, that flow from heaven, but these things, don't come lightly, this is, heart work, this is, sweating work, this is, work that, you'll be tempted about, tried about, devil says, now where's your God, where's the answer, to your prayer, but my friend, seek grace, to continue, hold on, and look up, just a closing, thought or two, then on this subject, poured out, my soul, before the Lord,

[41 : 27] I think it's, J.C. Philpott, in his writing, somewhere, speaks of this, in his very, apt illustration, he likens this, to, a sack, full of, corn, and he said, now if that sack, is full, and it's tied up, and it falls over, well nothing, will fall out, but he said, now if you take, a sack full of corn, and the mouth is open, and it falls over, that grain, just, doesn't just come out, trickle out, it just pours out, doesn't it, I mean the illustration, is quite simple, and I believe, that's a very true illustration, of the dear people of God, when, I was going to say, our sack is full, and the mouth is open, when my friend, we're, so overwhelmed, and yet, there's a pouring out, and yet, when I say a pouring out, there may not be a word, it may sound strange, but I think some of you, will understand what I mean, this pouring out, Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groanings, are not hid from thee, but I can't say a word, but thou knowest me,

Lord, thou knowest all the burdens, that I'm bearing, my pouring out, and, oh, the burden of your sin, do you know what it is, to pour out, do you know what it is, to cry out, do you know what it is, my friend, to look up, and to see, the cleansing, precious blood, of Jesus Christ, and as you grow older, and have tasted, a little of this love, and yet, a pouring out, of your soul, when you turn again, and see greater abominations, than these, when your heart, is a burden, and you feel, surely, I can't be so wicked, as I am, I never thought, I could be so wicked, I never thought, I could have such wicked thoughts, never thought, I could think such, unclean thoughts, I never thought, that I could find, in me, such wickedness, and such evil, and, oh friend, it sinks us, ever so low, oh wretched man, that I am, who should deliver me, from the body, of this death, I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, yes, pouring out, under the loads, of temptations, that you may be, under sometimes, there's something, that the devil, gets hold of you, and oh, you have to tell the Lord, seek it, seek help from him, that he's able, to succor them, that are tempted, when my friend, you may be in the dark, when you may be depressed, when you may be, in a low place, when you may feel, to be sitting down there, in the shadow of death, when I say, there seems no way out, and you're so burdened, and you're burdened, with the church, you're burdened, with your family, you're burdened, with your sin, you're burdened, with the nation, you're burdened, with everything, but I say, pour out your soul, tell the Lord, take it to the Lord, in prayer, and the Lord, sustain and support, and he will appear, he says, my grace is, sufficient, for thee, but the time is gone, there's just a few, simple thoughts, on this precious word, it was,

I tried to speak, just a few, seed thoughts, to my dear people, on this word, at the prayer meeting, on Monday, and it lingered with me, I hope that, the Lord may bless, this word, and grant help, for any troubled, tried soul, that may be, among us, and if, you may say, well, the Lord is smiling upon me, I'm in the comfort of his love, and God bless you, and I'm not going to damp that, oh no, my pastor said, if a child of God, is enjoying the love of Christ, don't you damp it, no, we wouldn't at all, enjoy it, dear child of God, but, as in life's past, and we all know what it is, there are those low places, then may God grant us grace, to pour out, our soul, unto, our God, and prove, that this God, is our God, forever and ever, and he will be our guide, even, unto death, Amen.