

## **A SACRIFICIAL HEART**

By Jenny Dees

Oh, the difference when the heart is willing to endure sacrifice! After all, all God is asking from us is a willing heart. He will lead you to and through the rest. The word sacrifice defines a moment of letting go of something (or someone) of value to you. When we sacrifice our desires and wants (for me, warm buttered bread, or any baked goods for example) we usually reach toward something that is worth the "letting go" of something else.

When God asks us to willingly reach for Him, He is asking you to identify His value over what is being let go of. Better yet, He desires for you to lay that at His feet so that the effects of gravity don't weigh you down as He is lifting you up.

Sacrifice is an act of voluntary submission. When it is done willingly, our hearts are preparing a fertile ground for God to sew a seed in us that is sometimes watered by our own tears during the release. In 1 Samuel 1, we meet Hannah, who cried out to the Lord in fervent prayer. Her prayers were so heartfelt, that she was presumed drunk. Her prayers for the thing that she desired most were lifted up to God's ears, and the ground was watered with the outpouring of her heart's cry. She promised God that if He opened up her womb and gave her a son, that she would bring the son back and dedicate his life to the Lord.

Not only did Hannah sacrifice her heart on the alter of God, but she returned to God what He gave her and what she promised Him. That could not have been easy. Yet even with the letting go of the person she loved and prayed for earnestly, she knew she was willingly reaching toward the Lord and placing her son in God's control.

When we receive what we have prayed for, do we place the value of that given to us above God? The outpouring of our heart is the first act of submitting our desires to God. When we look at Hannah's prayer as she brings Samuel to be raised up with the priest Eli, we don't see sadness, we see rejoicing, because she still knows that God's value is greater than what she was releasing at the alter. God continued to bless Hannah with the increase of more children as her first born (her tithe unto the Lord) became an instrument of God. What are you willing to release unto the Lord? What has caused you to fertilize the ground with your tears? Rejoice, because the Lord has heard your cry. You are not forgotten. Be forever willing.

### Hannah's Prayer:

"And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation. No one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children has become feeble. The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He has set the world upon them. He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed." 1 Samuel 2:1-10 NKJV

Be Blessed!