

When I was practicing this morning, Alyssa came in and said very clearly, make sure you emphasize this story is not about you. I'm like okay. She's like it's very important because sometimes you say you have a friend and everybody thinks your friend is you. So this is not me. I know she's listening downstairs. So I had to make sure she heard that. This week I was talking with a friend of mine, we're in our last class together. We're very excited that this part will be done. And our class is about leaving your ministry. We both started together. At the same time, we both had very similar situations. Our churches are very much alike. And in her church, they went six months when they're pastor left with an interim, and then he left. And so they went and did one month with a regular pastor, so they could do communion. And then they did three weeks with her, and now they've split it up again. She actually goes to another church for three weeks and does this. And then she goes back to her home church one weekend out of the month. And the other two times, they just have a devotional. They have somebody sit there and they read and they meet for about 15 minutes online. That's it. And she's upset Because her time's coming to an end at her other church, but she doesn't want to leave. She's having so much success at her other church, and so little success at her home church that she doesn't want to go back. We've been talking about this a lot the last couple weeks. And again, this is not me. I think we're having great success here, which is why her and I are talking. But she told me and she keeps praying As Hannah keeps praying looking for answers, looking for discernment, trying to figure out what's best for her; what's best for her home church? And she doesn't feel that they're the same.

We talked a little bit this week in Bible study, sometimes God's answer is no. And it's hard to accept. That's hard for her to accept because she doesn't want to fail. She doesn't want herself; she doesn't want her church to fail. And we talked about that and then I asked, "Are you reading Hannah song this week for church?" She said, no, I'm like we'll read it because sometimes the answer isn't yes, the answer isn't no. The answer is not yet.

For Hannah when she started, she was going through a really hard time and we didn't talk about it in today's reading. Sometimes they just assume that everybody knows what's going on. Hannah was a second wife, and she was infertile. So she was constantly being reminded that she couldn't have kids, and that really bothered her, especially at that time. Why wouldn't it? And she was struggling. She was struggling with that and so many times in our daily lives, we see so many people that are struggling with day-to-day opportunities. Parts of their lives that we don't know, we don't see. You know, we have a great support system here where we can talk to everybody, and we've had great success. I think with griefshare, I don't know, I don't go, but other people need support like that, and it's great that we have that opportunity to give that. But there's so many people out there on a daily basis. We don't know. A friend of mine, just came back from rehab two weeks ago. She's been struggling with alcoholism for at least 30 years, and she finally took the step and went into rehab. She came back and the first thing she said to me is that I keep praying but I haven't found God yet. Well, maybe you have, you just don't know how to hear him. The point that you're trying is you are miles beyond where you were six months ago.

And that was the same with Hannah. She went to church. She went to her church, and she was praying. She was crying because she didn't know what else to do. She tried everything

that she could to get through day by day. And now she's finally at church and she's saying, God, help me. And unfortunately, like so many times that we've seen in the Old Testament, the priest, just looked at her, and thought she was drunk because she wasn't praying out loud. She was praying inside to God. She was keeping everything inside of her, so there's only between him and her. She wasn't giving it an opportunity to share.

Well eventually she did share that. She started praying out loud. She talked to her husband, so he ended up trying to help her. He gave her more food than the other wife. He tried doing things for her to help her get through this process. She didn't go through it alone. She had the opportunity and somebody else was there listening. And it's helping, and that's the second part of today's reading. It's her thanking God. Her seeing the great that God does every day for everyone else. And for some reason, she felt that she wasn't good enough. She felt That God was punishing her, and she didn't understand why. She didn't know what she had done so terribly wrong in her life. As she kept praying, she kept looking for answers. She looked and kept looking for salvation and eventually, she found it because God kept telling her, not yet. He hadn't given up on her. He wasn't telling her no. He was just telling her not yet.

That's really hard to keep Faith. Day to day thinking I'm not getting anywhere. I'm not finding the answers that I'm looking for. I don't have the help I need. And it's really hard to think about God loving everyone, and being there for everyone when you're struggling.

It's really hard. I've been there. I've been that person. A long time I lost my faith. I couldn't understand why God would let such terrible things happen to kids, why such terrible things would happen to people I knew who had never done anything wrong in their lives. Why were people getting cancer or having strokes? We did nothing but good, I couldn't understand it.

I'm sure many of us have had those times. We don't know why God does what he does And it's not our job to understand. We know eventually we will meet God face to face and he will tell us why so many things happen. But what we can do is we can thank him every day. Thank him for the people that he's put in our lives, for the opportunities that he's given us. Not just to help others, but to be helped by others because that's very hard for us to do. Take steps to get help from somebody else. She finally stopped internalizing everything and put it out, and God blessed her. Let us pray.