

Graduation Sunday. Read also Jeremiah 1:4-10, 1 Timothy 4:12, and Matthew 18:3 Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Seniors, how many times do you think you've heard that fight song? (see the Duncanville High School band fight song at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YE6wgmJKf4>) How many times have you cheered because your team was victorious? You might be surprised to know there are victory songs in the Bible. Just like you cheer and celebrate when your school wins, there are victory songs when God answers prayer, or helps someone win a battle, or when God performs a miracle.

Our passage today is Hannah's victory song when she took her little son, Samuel, to leave him at the tabernacle to give him to the Lord. Only she explains it, "I'm LENDING him to the Lord" because God answered my prayer.

For those of you who weren't here last week, Hannah was a member of the original blended family – two wives and one husband. And Hannah couldn't get pregnant. The other wife taunted her so badly that she was deeply depressed. Finally Hannah turned to God. And she made a deal with God. She prayed, "God if you will give me a son, I will give him back to you and he will serve you all his life." And God did it! God gave her a son. After she weaned him, she took him to the tabernacle to live and serve. She exulted in her victory! (See 1 Samuel 1)

Now you may wonder, what does this story have to do with graduation?

Well, has high school with all its classes and requirements and tests been a cakewalk, or has it been work? Have you or your team ever been put down or taunted? Have you ever had to fight for a passing grade? Have you prayed, *O Lord, if you will just get me through this test I promise I will study next time!*

Now you see the fruits of your labors. You have certificate in hand. It's time for the celebration. All the worry over classes and tests is gone. All fears that "I am not going to make it through high school are over."

You may not know it, graduates, but God loves to help you. God enables you to do hard things, like play the game, sing the song, dance the dance, triumph over something that is hard. As you move into your future, you will face challenges again. There will be more schooling, more work, more games in which you are called to fight. Whatever challenges face you, whether the work is hard or some unexpected disappointment comes along, you do not face these things alone when you turn to God and pray.

When you pray, the battle cry rings from heaven. You score one for faith! You score two for learning what it is to walk with God. When the answer comes, and it may take a while but it will surely come, you will begin to know the magnitude of God

Cheer and do a victory dance in the end zone; it's God's way. We are exulting in your victory with you. Hear now Hannah's Victory Song: (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

My heart rejoices in the Lord! The Lord has made me strong. Now I have an answer for my enemies; I rejoice because you rescued me. ² No one is holy like the Lord! There is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

³ "Stop acting so proud and haughty! Don't speak with such arrogance! For the Lord is a God who knows what you have done; he will judge your actions.

⁴ The bow of the mighty is now broken, and those who stumbled are now strong. ⁵ Those who were well fed are now starving, and those who were starving are now full. The childless woman now has seven children, and the woman with many children wastes away. ⁶ The Lord gives both death and life; he brings some down to the grave but raises others up. ⁷ The Lord makes some poor and others rich; he brings some down and lifts others up. ⁸ He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. He sets them among princes, placing them in seats of honor.

For all the earth is the Lord's, and he has set the world in order. ⁹ "He will protect his faithful ones, but the wicked will disappear in darkness. No one will succeed by strength alone. ¹⁰ Those who fight against the Lord will be shattered. He thunders against them from heaven; the Lord judges throughout the earth. He gives power to his king; he increases the strength of his anointed one."

We like to believe that our own efforts are sufficient, with rather minimal help from God. But the Bible says that if you will trust in God, He will give you victory.

AMEN