

RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL | MOTHER'S DAY 2026

THE HEART OF THE FATHER

To know the heart of the mother is to know the heart of the Father

Bronnie | Sunday 10 May 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *To know the hearts of the women in this house is to know the heart of the Father. Through scripture after scripture, through ordinary women who said yes, God reveals his character - and he is still doing it today.*

The Heart of the Mother - And the Heart of the Father

At the very core of a mother's heart is fierce love, deep sacrifice, and quiet strength. It is a heart that holds others before self - often without recognition, applause, or rest. A mother's heart will fight when no one else is fighting, pray when no one else is praying, believe when everyone has given up.

And that kind of love didn't begin on earth. It began in heaven. When we see compassion, when we see sacrifice, when we see relentless love in the women of Scripture, we are seeing the very nature of God.

John 14:9 *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*

The Father's Heart in Scripture

♥ His love and compassion - 'See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called his children.' (1 John 3:1)

♥ His desire for relationship - 'That they may know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.' (John 17:23)

♥ His provision and protection - 'How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!' (Matthew 7:11)

♥ His joy and delight in his children - 'He will take great delight in you; he will rejoice over you with singing.' (Zephaniah 3:17)

♥ His patience and longing to restore - 'He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish.' (2 Peter 3:9)

God revealed himself through women who had limited cultural voice and uncertain circumstances - not through status, but through surrender, sacrifice, and faith under pressure. What was considered culturally wrong at the time was often so spiritually right. Today we look at three women whose faith disrupted cultural norms and revealed the heart of the Father.

Mary

A heart of obedience. A yes that changed the world. - Luke 1:26–38

Mary was a young, unmarried Jewish girl - likely between 12 and 17 years old. She was living in Nazareth, a small town with a questionable reputation ('Could anything good come from Nazareth?'). She was betrothed to Joseph, legally bound but not yet living with a husband. Pregnancy during betrothal carried enormous risk: public shame, social rejection, and real danger.

In this very ordinary, vulnerable moment, God interrupted. An angel appeared and greeted her: 'Highly favoured. The Lord is with you.'

Luke 1:30–31 *Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son.*

Scripture says Mary was greatly troubled. This was a holy disruption, not a calm, polished moment. Angels say 'do not be afraid' precisely because fear could be present. And Mary's response is remarkable: she didn't panic, she asked a logical question.

'How will this be, since I am a virgin?' - Faith doesn't mean silence. It means bringing your wonder honestly to God. God is not threatened by our questions.

Luke 1:37–38 *For nothing is impossible with God. 'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.'*

She said yes before she understood. A yes that cost her something - potentially her and her baby's life. A yes that carried divine purpose. She didn't shout it from the rooftops or try to control the narrative. Scripture says she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). Obedience isn't always noisy.

The Father's Heart Revealed Through Mary

- He is steady, faithful, and intentional
- He calls us to trust, not to control
- He sacrifices for his children
- He trusts ordinary people with divine assignments

God is not waiting for your full understanding. He is waiting for your yes.

Reflect: *What divine assignment is sitting within your spirit that you haven't stepped into yet? Fear may be present - but fear doesn't have the final say. We often disqualify ourselves because we're afraid of what people might say, what it might cost, what we can't control. But faith requires us to move before clarity. God qualifies the called.*

Hannah

Not barren, but out of season. A heart that prays, a heart that worships after the miracle. - 1 Samuel 1–2

Hannah was one of two wives in her household. Every day she lived surrounded by what she longed for most - a child. The other wife, Peninnah, had children, and made sure Hannah felt her emptiness constantly. Scripture says she was 'provoked continually' (1 Samuel 1:6) - not occasional teasing, but sustained cruelty. Hannah wept, refused to eat, and was deeply distressed (1 Samuel 1:7–10). These are not words of a woman having a bad day - they paint a picture of ongoing sorrow, possibly depression and exhaustion, across approximately 19 years.

Out of Season, Not Without Purpose

Was Hannah barren - or simply out of season? In Mark 11:13, Jesus approached a fig tree covered in leaves. It looked promising. But it was not the season for figs. The tree wasn't defective or dead - it was simply out of season. Hannah may have looked unfruitful in her own eyes and in the eyes of her culture, but heaven never called her barren. Heaven simply waited for the appointed time.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.*

Petitionary Prayer - Faith That Refused Silence

In her depression, Hannah didn't retreat. She returned again and again to God - nineteen years of returning. At the tabernacle, she prayed with such raw honesty that Eli the priest thought she was drunk. But she wasn't intoxicated - she was pouring out her soul.

Petitionary prayer is not weak faith, nor begging, nor a lack of trust. It is invited faith. Scripture consistently promotes it:

- Philippians 4:6 - By prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God
- Matthew 7:7–11 - Ask and it will be given; how much more will your Father give good gifts
- 1 John 5:14 - If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us

Hannah made a vow: 'If you give me a son, I will give him back to you.' Not a bargaining chip - but surrender. When we ask God for something, he often asks us to release our grip on it.

1 Samuel 1:19 *The Lord remembered her.*

Worship After the Miracle

God gave Hannah Samuel. And she was true to her word - she walked her promise back to God and released him into the house of the Lord. Her response wasn't clinging or fear. It was prophetic worship. In 1 Samuel 2:1–10, Hannah praises God for lifting the lowly, bringing down the proud, reversing shame, and establishing his purposes. Her worship declared who God is, not just what he had done for her.

Surrender doesn't stop at the breakthrough. Faithfulness continues after the miracle. Worship anchors the answered prayer.

The Father's Heart Revealed Through Hannah

- He invites real, raw relationship - not polished performance
- He redeems brokenness into calling
- He is consistent and deeply trustworthy
- Pain is never discarded by God - it is preparation

Your pain is not wasted. Her private anguish became public impact. Her surrendered son became a prophet who anointed kings. What generations of legacy are waiting in you?

Reflect: *Is there something you've been praying about for a long time and starting to give up on? What would it look like to keep returning - not because God is silent, but because his timing isn't yours? And is there a breakthrough you've received that you've already moved on from without properly worshipping? Hannah teaches us that faithfulness continues after the miracle.*

The Alabaster Woman

Pure, unrestrained devotion through costly surrender. - Luke 7:36-50

She is unnamed in scripture, described simply as sinful and of lower social standing. She entered a dinner hosted by the Pharisees - a male-only, social, religious setting she was not invited to. Then she did something extraordinary.

She brought an alabaster jar of expensive perfume - her dowry, her inheritance, worth an estimated equivalent of a year's wages (scholars estimate \$30,000-\$100,000 in today's terms). She wept at Jesus' feet, wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume over them.

Every Cultural Boundary Crossed

- She touched a male rabbi publicly - scandalous
- She let down her hair - intimate and immodest by cultural standards
- She entered a space she had no social right to enter
- She poured out her most valuable possession as an act of worship

She understood something in that moment that not even the disciples could fully grasp. The perfume was traditionally used for burial. Before the cross, before anyone else knew what was coming, something in her spirit knew. This was not just worship - it may have been a prophetic act of anointing Jesus for his burial.

The Pharisees judged her worth. The disciples questioned her. But not Jesus. He defended her publicly, reframed her action as love, repentance, and prophetic devotion.

Luke 7:47 *Her sins are forgiven, for she loved much.*

Extravagant faith and genuine repentance matters far more than social respectability. She broke every barrier to get to Jesus. And Jesus named her act as love and worship.

The Father's Heart Revealed Through the Alabaster Woman

- He lavishes - not sparingly, but extravagantly
- He is not limited by human systems or social hierarchies
- He restores completely and redeems fully
- He welcomes honest, open, broken hearts

Church, your sins are forgiven, because he loves you.

Reflect: *How often do we come to the Father with a guarded heart? How often do we limit how much he wants to lavish on us - thinking the weight of our sin is too big for him? She crossed every barrier to get to Jesus with everything she had. What would it look like for you to come to him that fully, that openly, this week?*

Conclusion - He Sees You. He Carries You. He Loves You.

Through Mary, Hannah, and the alabaster woman, we see the same God:

A God who says
YES

A God who
RESTORES

A God who
LAVISHES

A God who sacrifices. A God who strengthens. A God who never gives up. Jesus is revealing his heart to us fully. This morning he sees you. He carries you. He loves you.

Not every person in the room today has experienced a motherly love that reflects the heart of the Father. If that is you - God is not limited by what you didn't receive. He has placed people in your life who carry his heart. Women who noticed you when you were overlooked. Who nurtured you, spoke life, created safe spaces, celebrated you, protected you, modelled gentleness and strength. God restores what was missing - not by erasing the past, but by multiplying love through others. Giving pieces of motherly care through the hands of many, not just one.

And what you didn't receive, God can produce in you. You are anointed. You are appointed.

The word for this season: Release.

What does release look like for you today?

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Mary said yes before she had understanding, before she knew the full outcome. Is there something God is asking of you right now that you've been holding back on because you want the outcome before the obedience? What would a yes look like?

2. Hannah waited approximately 19 years. Is there a prayer you've been carrying for a long time that you've started to give up on? What does it mean to trust God's timing rather than his silence?

3. Hannah worshipped after the miracle - not just before it. Have you received an answered prayer that you've already moved on from without stopping to worship? What would it look like to anchor that answered prayer in gratitude?

4. The alabaster woman gave her most valuable possession without holding back. How guarded is your heart when you come to God? What would it look like to come to him more openly, more extravagantly, this week?

5. Bronnie said: 'Your pain is not wasted - it is preparation.' Is there pain in your life right now that you've been carrying alone? Can you begin to see it as something God is working through rather than something he has overlooked?

6. The closing word was 'release.' What is something you are holding on to tightly right now - a person, an outcome, a fear, a past hurt - that God may be asking you to release into his hands?

Key Scriptures This Week

- 1 John 3:1 — See what great love the Father has lavished on us
- Zephaniah 3:17 — He rejoices over you with singing
- John 14:9 — Whoever has seen me has seen the Father
- Luke 1:30–38 — Mary's yes; may it be according to your word
- Ecclesiastes 3:1 — A time for every purpose under heaven
- 1 Samuel 1:19 — The Lord remembered her
- 1 Samuel 2:1–10 — Hannah's song of worship after the miracle
- Luke 7:36–50 — The alabaster woman; her sins are forgiven for she loved much