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The high priest Eli is known for one of the most inspiring stories of faith in the bible, the story of Hannah who was barren for a long time and deeply longed to bear a son (NRSV, 1 Sam 1: 11-13), she received favor from the Lord after she made a promise to dedicate the child to the Lord (NRSV, 1 Sam 1: 26-28). Eli was a key person in this woman's story as He was the priest that released the Lord's favor over her life, and he was also the person who mentored the child in his journey serving the Lord. In this essay, I will focus on Eli and draw on his life, and the decisions he made, and draw a conclusion on what lessons I am taking from this story.

There are several things that Eli does good/well as a high priest, some of which include serving God, carrying out the Lord's commands for him to accept sacrifices and offerings for the Lord, and acting in the Lord's prophetic capacity by being his mouthpiece to the people of Israel.

Eli has misgivings when it comes to fathering his sons and being an overall moral and godly guide, his sons are described as corrupt in (NSRV, 1 Sam 2: 12) the verse also states that they were ungodly and acted in ways that did not reflect knowledge of God. The first thing that reflects badly on Eli is the fact that his own sons do not know God when he is the voice and eyes of God over the Israelites at the time, which means that he failed to teach his sons the way of the Lord. The second thing is that his sons were wicked and abused their position as priests by extorting meat meant for sacrifice and offering to the Lord (NRSV 1 Sam 2: 12-16) and they also committed sexual immorality with women who were coming to

the tabernacle (NRSV, 1 Sam 2: 22). Eli rebuked his sons but that rebuke did not follow any action to chastise them and prevent them from continuing to do their evil (NRSV, 1 Sam 2: 23-25). There was no punishment for their action.

In my opinion, I do not consider Eli to be a bad person, I think that he did his best to live for the Lord and serve him but he allowed the love that he had for his sons to cloud his judgment and not take any stern action to stop their evil. His passive reaction to his son's transgressions may have indirectly encouraged them to continue doing evil as they saw no repercussions for their actions.

I am taking quite a few lessons from Eli's story for my own personal walk, the first one is that being passive about the evil that is done by those close and dear to me, is the same as encouraging it and God will hold me to account for it because I know better, therefore, I should be the voice of reason by discouraging evil. I have also learned that I need to be honest in my walk with God if my calling is to teach his word to people, my family and friends should be the first people I preach to and I find this a valuable lesson because it is really easy to preach to people who do not know you then it is to those who know you best.

Works Cited

Keener, Craig S., and John H. Walton, eds. NRSV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture. Zondervan, 2019.