

Honing in on the Heart Vol I

A Commentary on 1st Samuel, Chapters 1-15

All Commentary in this document (unless quoted), was written by
Rev. R. Brady Henderson from January-October, 2024

Greetings,

My name is Brady Henderson and I serve as the Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Gaston, SC. Which is located in the midlands of South Carolina. We are a 'normative' size Church, averaging 270 in Sunday Morning Worship, 90 in our Sunday Evening Discipleship Groups, 185 for Sunday School, and 190 for Midweek Worship and Activities on Wednesdays. I have served here as the Pastor since February of 2021. I am married to my beautiful wife, Hannah, who serves as the director of communications for our local Baptist Association (Lexington Baptist Association), and is a ministry assistant for the WMU of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. I am also 'Dad' to my dog, whose name is Beamer. He is a Poodle. When not serving Christ in the local Church, you can find me serving Him as I support the South Carolina Gamecocks (in all sports), as well as the Atlanta Braves. In my free time I enjoy being a self proclaimed 'Historian', studying and writing specifically on Baptist History in South Carolina. I am also a full-time Masters of Divinity Student at The Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and hope to graduate in May of 2025. I am also a host of the Menorah Podcast ([\(15\) First Baptist Church of Gaston - YouTube](#)).

Each Wednesday at FBCG we have a Midweek service. During this service, just like the Sunday AM service, I walk our congregation through books of the Bible. In January of 2024, I began preaching through 1st Samuel. As of today, October 2nd, we are officially 25% of the way through our Sermon Series in 1-2 Samuel that I have entitled 'Honing in on the Heart!'. This document provides you with sermon notes that I have written from the 29 sermons that have been preached so far in this series. In addition to the sermon notes, I have included links to the actual sermons that I preached, which can be found on our YouTube Channel ([Intro Video for YouTube](#)). I have made these notes accessible to you for several reasons.

- **#1: Samuel is a hard book to understand.**
 - Due to the difficulty of the Hebrew in the Masoretic Hebrew Text, it is hard to translate. In this document, I have dealt *first* with the Hebrew text before every consulting a commentary. I have written my notes in such a way with the goal of a child or teenager being able to understand.
- **#2: Samuel confronts cultural issues that can make us uncomfortable.**
 - If you are going to preach through every verse in 1-2 Samuel get ready to be uncomfortable as the expositor. You must also realize your people will be uncomfortable.

- In these two OT books we find brutal deaths, donkeys being lost, heads being cut off, and witches being regarded as ‘counselors’. Indeed, it is tough.
- But if you preach the text faithfully each week, you will find that the text meets our people in the pews right where they are. It answers questions that many of them ask on a daily basis.
- **#3: *There are not many solid and reputable commentaries on Samuel out there.***
 - While Dale Ralph Davis, John Woodhouse, and Robert D. Bergen has written phenomenal exegetical commentaries on 1st Samuel (and others), there is not an abundance of solid works on these OT books as there are compared to other Bible books.
 - So, I wanted to provide my notes and sermons, to allow Pastors, Sunday School teachers, lay leaders, and simply students of God’s Word a document that they could use for **FREE** to easily understand how to draw out points of application from the narratives we find in Samuel.
 - What is out there on 1-2 Samuel, I have read, re-read, and read again to consult what others say. As I mentioned before, I always start out with the Hebrew text, thanks to my training at SWBTS.

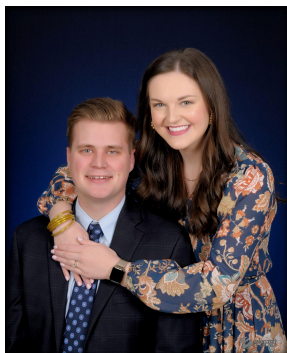
Please keep in mind that as of October 3rd, this document only contains sermon notes/commentary from 1st Samuel 1-1st Samuel 15. Once I preach through the rest of 1st Samuel, I will add my notes to this document as I go along. My main goal in making this available is to help you. I truly believe in the Kingdom of God, we are better when we work together. I hope these notes help you and allow the stories of 1st Samuel to come alive to you. That you see it in a deeper way than ever before, and that you apply it to your heart and life as the Lord leads and convicts you. If you have any questions or comments, please see my contact information below.

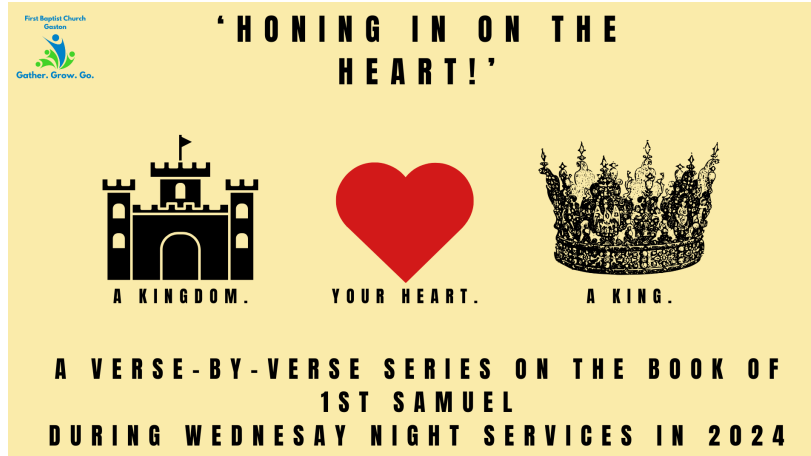
Sincerely,

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Sermon Titles, Texts, and Link to Sermon:

Sermon #1:

'An Overview of 1st Samuel!'

https://youtu.be/Oz5fYhC_OQw?si=nOp7GHHPp86Ydfu2

Sermon #2:

'Ask and Receive!'

1st Samuel 1:1-20

https://youtu.be/jcar9gxCUgk?si=IB_b3LFLJpyxSM2kz

Sermon #3:

'Desperate Dedication!'

1st Samuel 1:21-28

<https://youtu.be/vIU2GucM4KM?si=89mCYj-9UCEMhl-j>

Sermon #4:

'A Prayer of Praise!'

1st Samuel 2:1-11

Sermon #5:

'The Worthlessness of Wrong Motives in Worship!'

1st Samuel 2:12-26

https://youtu.be/_IMKCa30i-Q?si=kudMIZYhte3lz1AP

Sermon #6:

'Rejecting of the Rebels!'

1st Samuel 2:27-36

<https://youtu.be/wSt8EnPyTrs?si=T3kaVDczsPOcyXhx>

Sermon #7:

'The Call of God!'

1st Samuel 3

https://youtu.be/2-IUVyf6_E4?si=WkXGL1ixrbbuGMc7

Sermon #8:

'The Capture of the Ark of the Covenant!'

1st Samuel 4:1-11

<https://youtu.be/P3rg2wvofXI?si=sj81tYKfHNPwH4Dp>

Sermon #9:

'The Pitfalls of a Patriarchal Priest!'

1 Samuel 4:12-22

https://youtu.be/jjLPOuXbm98?si=R8_KZx1WlapLPXGs

Sermon #10:

'The Mistake of Messing with God!'

1st Samuel 5:1-12

<https://youtu.be/us0ZWz0ve3M?si=qHhZG6z2A4n1Ethf>

Sermon #11:

'The Ark Comes Home!'

1st Samuel 6-7:2

<https://youtu.be/rOIDDVMmpvI?si=TvVfy32ncEdeyEIG>

Sermon #12

'The Effect of an Ebenezer Epiphany!'

1st Samuel 7:3-17

<https://youtu.be/EKsnn356qk0?si=eP7rjx66fSb7FFEL>

Sermon #13:

Associate Pastor at the time, preached 1st Samuel 8:1-9.

Sermon #14:

'Do we Really Know What's Best?'

1st Samuel 8:10-22

<https://youtu.be/sHFqYjnTnp0?si=grZZMIKkeDUIH40F>

Sermon #15:

'A Survey of Saul!'

1st Samuel 9:1-2

https://youtu.be/q1gSHDlkgOY?si=3gVtUmOgyuuNXl_R

Sermon #16:

'From Donkeys Missing to a Divine Meeting!'

1st Samuel 9:3-27

https://youtu.be/Zaswqy4U83M?si=eyEivEEPs_maB5Gi

Sermon #17:

'The Private Plot!'

1st Samuel 10:1-16

<https://youtu.be/idX0uirqyNw?si=d-IIjHL2yxacTbwc>

Sermon #18:

'The Public Proclamation!'

1st Samuel 10:17-27

<https://youtu.be/IM40O0GEYFA?si=9dXwIY8yuHqwLNI3>

Sermon #19:

'How to Properly Handle Praise!'

1st Samuel 11:1-15

https://youtu.be/N_eEw0ty_Rk?si=z7nvqAD9ROiqEcPn

Sermon #20:

'Integrity is Invaluable!'

1st Samuel 12:1-5

<https://youtu.be/mZOKHKpc8NA?si=SwOf49MI3w0MhqKT>

Sermon #21:

'Last Words of an Exceptional Leader!'

1st Samuel 12:6-25

<https://youtu.be/nG8vWpf-pUk?si=9Nh9GLdbJPfJOnID>

Sermon #22:

'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands!'

1st Samuel 13:1-23

<https://youtu.be/si74x1qJIT8?si=v8GfOFy3qc--sfX5>

Sermon #23:

'Children, Learn from Your Parents' Mistakes!'

1st Samuel 14:1-23

<https://youtu.be/boUWZ4pgrpE?si=1U63XpQw3DgNUHY>

Sermon #24:

'Our Own Words and Actions can Wreck Our Own Family!'

1st Samuel 14:24-35

<https://youtu.be/S01pBw95Iwg?si=TYyK9Xh440ScQdjm>

Sermon #25:

'Sin in the Camp!'

1st Samuel 14:36-46

<https://youtu.be/VGQmKURE3ek?si=NqgNjXDh5zZHsRi5>

Sermon #26:

Rev. Steve Kittrell preached 1st Samuel 14:47-52.

https://youtu.be/34Sh92V2Ius?si=Tsl_7o_04osevKwy

Sermon #27:

'Abusing God Given Authority!'

1st Samuel 15:1-9

https://youtu.be/DJtmss9SaLI?si=JjVWIsFav5pMm_jZ

Sermon #28:

'The Results of Disobedience!' Part 1

1st Samuel 15:10-23

<https://youtu.be/cySgtTo0Rx8>

Sermon #29:

'The Results of Disobedience!' Part 2

1st Samuel 15:24-35

Sermon #1:

'An Overview of 1st Samuel!'

Sermon in a Sentence:

Tonight we will look at the book of 1st Samuel by looking at the authorship, composition, purpose, culture similarities, culture differences, date/location, type of book, literary style, main characters, secondary characters, and how Christ can be seen in 1st Samuel.

Authorship:

- If possible, it's always important for us to look at who wrote the Biblical book that we are studying.
- ***It's important to point out that the writer of 1st-2nd Samuel is anonymous.***
 - Which means that we do not know who wrote this book.
- Now, there are several different theories and theological guesses that many scholars and theologians have come up with.
 - ***In 1st Chronicles 29:29-30 it is implied that Samuel is the author who left these historical written records.***
 - But this can't be entirely true because Samuel dies in 1st Samuel 25.
 - ***Due to the fact that 1st Samuel includes very specific details, verbatim dialogues, and details of characters and events, scholars make a strong argument that this book was written by an eyewitness.***
 - If that's the case, David M. Howard Jr. suggests that Nathan, Seraiah, Ahimaaz or Abiathar would be good guesses as potential authors of 1st-2nd Samuel.
 - ***But still, the fact remains that we simply do not know who wrote 1st-2nd Samuel.***

Composition:

- One of the first things you probably noticed tonight, is that there is a 1st and a 2nd book of Samuel.
 - ***It's important to mention that the earliest Hebrew manuscripts include 1st and 2nd Samuel together.***
 - When it was originally written, the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel were all together.
 - ***The reason that they were separated is when the Greek translators were working on the Septuagint, they divided it to make it easier.***
 - But, when interpreting this Biblical book we still need to interpret it as one book.
 - All the narratives and points of the overall story of 1st and 2nd Samuel go together.
 - ***And we will see when we transition to studying 2nd Samuel, it is a seamless transition and fits like a glove.***

- Because it was all originally one big story with narratives throughout.

Purpose of 1st Samuel:

- Every book in the Bible has a purpose. Whether we realize the purpose each book plays within the canon of scripture, is up to us as interpreters and students of God's Word.
- ***The main purpose of the book of Samuel is to look at the Israelite Monarchy.***
 - ***I believe there are 6 details of the Israelite Monarch that 1st and 2nd Samuel were originally meant to cover within the history of Israel:***
 - #1: The initial request from the people for a Monarchy.
 - #2: The actual establishment of the Monarchy.
 - #3: The tragic reign of Saul, and how the first king of Israel did not work out.
 - #4: The choosing by God of the 2nd King of Israel, David.
 - #5: God's great promises to David (Davidic Covenant).
 - #6: The decline of King David in the later years of his life.
 - ***David M. Howard Jr. said this 'We see both the benefits and pitfalls of kingship. Aul is depicted as a tragic hero, and David, promising a character as he is, is presented with many flaws unhidden. The climax in the two books surely is found at 2 Samuel 7, where David is promised an everlasting dynasty.'***
 - When Samuel was first written, the purpose was for historical context for the Jewish communities.
 - ***Now, it gives context for us as believers to have a more accurate picture in the history of Israel and how God had His hand all over them to bring forth His Son through the line of David.***
 - ***Robert D. Bergen said 'These books also supply details about the religious history of Israel, including information about significant details about the religious history of Israel, including information about significant worship centers, priestly leaders, and the sacred ark of the covenant.'***
 - ***The purpose for our Church?***
 - We are studying 1st-2nd Samuel during Midweek services to deepen and widen our knowledge on the History of Israel and how it can shape and mold our lives even today, because ALL of scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.
 - ***Nothing should be 'out of bounds' in the Word of God to teach us and change us, all is breathed by Him!***

How is the Culture similar?

- An important factor in studying 1st Samuel, is realizing the cultural similarities and differences.
 - ***When studying a book that was written so long ago, it can be very easy to look at it and say that we can't relate due to the amount of cultural differences.***

- *But I believe that in a lot of ways, 1-2 Samuel is much like a **mirror** of what we are seeing in our culture today:*
 - *Here is a list of the things we find in our Micro study of 1st Samuel that you can also find in our culture today.*
 - Men abusing women.
 - Wives betrayed by husbands.
 - Children gone wild.
 - Corrupt religious leaders.
 - Conspiracy to murder.
 - Deceitful politicians.
 - Power struggles.
 - Horror's of war.
 - *Because there are so many similarities in 1st Samuel and in our culture today, we know that the Bible and each passage we will study in Samuel is relevant to our lives.*
 - I've often heard people attempt to say that the Bible is not relevant. That the Bible is outdated. But we will see completely that this is far from the truth.
- *Due to the many challenges and issues we are facing in our culture, it is my prayer that through this verse-by-verse study we will be able to have Biblical answers for many of the problems that we are facing and that our country and culture are facing.*
 - *Here's the thing, due to sin, there's nothing new under the sun.*
 - What was evil and sin then, is evil and is sin now.

How is the Culture different?

- *While there are definitely similarities between our culture and the cultural backdrop of 1st Samuel, there are some strong differences that we need to discuss as well.*
 - I believe there are 4 ways that we can see that the culture during the time of 1st Samuel was different:
 - **#1: Different Time Period.**
 - Especially to the western world, specifically America, the things mentioned in 1st Samuel might be somewhat foreign to us.
 - *For example, kings, priests, prophets and witches are all foreign to people like us that have computers in our pockets (phones), modern science, and a progressive culture.*
 - **Heath Thomas**, in his commentary on 1st Samuel said that '1st Samuel will take us back to the dark ages'.
 - *One narrative in 1st Samuel that will be sure to take us back to the dark ages is found in 1st Samuel 28:3-25.*
 - Where we find the witch of Endor.

- Which political leader do you know of today that would honestly put a ‘witch’ in his cabinet as an advisor?
 - *So, to us in the western world, the talk of witches and things seem very strange to us. But not to the context of 1st Samuel, it was a different time period.*
- **#2: Community and not just Individual Influence.**
 - When we read most Biblical texts, we can be tempted to ask what is God saying to me individually?
 - *But with 1st Samuel it’s important that God wanted His people to get the message that 1st Samuel attempts to get across.*
 - Instead of asking each service, ‘*what does this text mean for me?*’ I want to encourage all of us to ask ‘*what does this text mean for us as a community of Believers? God’s people?*’
 - *Heath Thomas said The book’s viewpoint is oriented more to the collective group than to the individual. What this means in practice is that the stories are oriented more to God’s work with the group rather than the individual.’*
 - Notice how foreign this is to us today?
 - Even as the Pastor, I’ve heard people say ‘this sermon impacted *ME*’ or ‘this message wasn’t for *ME* but it was for somebody’
 - *What differentiates us from the time of Samuel is that the original recipients interpreted Samuel as ‘How is God working in us, collectively’.*
 - Sadly, our culture is to consumed with ME instead of WE.
 - *As we go through this series each week, I want us to ask ourselves what God is saying to US as a group of believers in the Church. Not, what is God saying to ME.*
- **#3: An Honor and Shame Society.**
 - It’s hard for us to understand honor, and its direct opposite, shame.
 - *Within Biblical times and in the context of the ancient world, the way that people acted would dictate whether honor or shame was brought to their family.*
 - *If you’ve ever seen the Disney movie ‘Mulan’, it gives a good example of this.
 - How her actions brought her family shame and dishonor.
 - *Within the context of the OT, honor and shame was tied closely to a family’s relationship with God. And honor/shame was something that the family collective did or did not do.*
 - Just 1 family member could shame or honor the entire family.
 - *Let me show you several examples of an honor and shame society from the book of 1st Samuel that we will be taking a closer look at in this series.*
 - *1st Samuel 2:12, 2:17:*

- The sons of Eli were Hophni and Phinehas. Eli was a priest and so were his sons. But the actions of his sons as described in these scriptural texts brought shame to Eli & their household, but also to God.

○ **1st Samuel 26:8-25:**

- David takes care of Saul's household and family members. He does not want to be rude to Saul or his bloodline as to dishonor his anointing that God has given Him.

○ *There are many other examples, but they are found in 2nd Samuel. Tonight I want us to look solely at 1st Samuel.*

● **#4: Sexual and Family Structures.**

- The way that the ancient culture at the time of 1st Samuel dealt with Sex and the family is much more different than the way we view it today. (imagine that, even though our culture doesn't deal with it very well).

○ **Polygamy.**

- Within 1st-2nd Samuel we find that polygamy is very common.
- *For example, King David had at least 7 wives which didn't include concubines (mistresses essentially).*
 - We can't downplay polygamy, it's wrong now and it was wrong then.
 - *But just because the text describes the polygamy that David committed does not mean that God affirms it.*
 - We know that elsewhere in scripture He condemns it and scripture can't contradict scripture.
- Due to David's decision of polygamy, we see how dysfunctional his family truly is all throughout the books of 1st-2nd Samuel.
 - *I think the way that 1st Samuel is written, it allows us to see that the sinful decisions David made were not ideal and we shouldn't follow those decisions.*

○ *In many eastern cultures today, Polygamy is an issue that many evangelical Churches are dealing with.*

- Heath Thomas worded it this way, ***'Those who read scripture with non-western eyes perhaps can grasp the nettle of sex and sexuality in Samuel better than western readers.'***

- In our study of 1st Samuel we will come to hard passages that deal with different sexual and family structures than we are used to. We won't avoid these texts, we will take them head on, as we rely on the whole counsel of God's Word.

- *Realizing how different the culture was, is imperative to understanding how we must interpret 1st Samuel each week.*

Date & Location:

- ***We do not have a specific date as to when the book of 1st Samuel was actually written.***

- ***But we do have some pretty good clues that give us a pretty solid indication.***
 - The author most likely wrote Samuel ***after*** the division of the kingdom between Israel and Judah.
 - Because there are many references to Israel and Judah as distinct entities/different nations.
 - ***So, this would mean that it was after 931 B.C., because that's when the kingdom divided.***
 - Most scholars usually point to 1st Samuel 27:6 to show that it was a time after the division of Israel had occurred.
- ***But the events of 1st Samuel-2nd Samuel happen between 1050 and 970 B.C. which would have been before the Kingdom split.***
 - So it is likely that the writing and composition of 1st Samuel was later on.
- ***Exactly when, we don't know, but we have a good idea of WHEN the events recorded occurred.***
- ***As far as the location/setting of this book, we know that it took place mainly in the promised land, canaan.***
 - The architecture of Israel at this time was modest as the big building projects usually didn't take place until the reigns of David and Solomon.
 - ***For those who have read the book of Judges, the setting and location is very similar, because as far as chronologically, 1st Samuel would come after the time of the Judges.***
 - As far as 1st Samuel, when discussing setting it's important to mention that the threat of the ***Philistines*** was the biggest external problem that Israel had.
 - ***The philistines were a thorn in the side of the Israelites from 1124-1084, which is the time that the book of Judges took place.***
 - Remember Samson for example, one of the judges, was able to have several victories over the Philistines but was not able to ultimately defeat them.
 - ***1st Samuel will show us that the Philistines continued to be a consistent foe for the Israel even into the kingship of Saul.***
 - (Which shows that they were an enemy that only God could defeat, and not men in and of their selves.)

What type of book is this?

- The book of 1st Samuel is what we would call 'a historical narrative'.
 - ***It explains many of the historical events in the nation of Israel but does in stories.***
 - Many scholars comment that whoever wrote 1st Samuel, was an extraordinary storyteller.
 - The stories in this book are often told to our children when they are very young in Sunday School.

- *But even as adults, it's my prayer that these stories we find in 1st Samuel will open our eyes more than ever before on what God can and wants to do through His people as we look at the history of Israel.*

Literary Style & the Hebrew Text:

- **To Bible scholars, Hebrew Scholars, and OT scholars, it is very well known that the Hebrew Masoretic text of 1-2 Samuel is very well known for being very challenging.**
 - Samuel and Jeremiah are the two Biblical books where the ancient Greek translations and the Hebrew are different in some places.
 - **One reason that the Hebrew Masoretic text is hard to understand, is due to the fact that 1st Samuel was written as a story, and it was written to be heard orally.**
 - Because of this, there are spots in Samuel where the Hebrew follows the actual pronunciation instead of the standard ancient Hebrew.
 - **The Literary style of 1st-2nd Samuel is also much different than other historical narrative books in the OT.**
 - **Samuel is more focused in on heroes, than it is on broader groups of people seeking to cover more information.**
 - That's why we need to look at the Main Characters as well as secondary characters.

Main Characters:

- **Most scholars can all agree that the book of 1st-2nd Samuel has three main characters.**
 - But before we look at each of those 'main' characters can I remind you that there is really only one main character in 1st-2nd Samuel, the Lord Himself!
 - I love what John L. Mackay said when he said **'The principle lesson taught in the books of Samuel is that God is the one who shaped the action and outcome of the narratives, from His initial withholding of children from Hannah in 1st Samuel to His acceptance of David's sacrifice in 2nd Samuel 24.'**
- **As far as the narrative flow, there are three main characters that the book follows.**
 - **Samuel: 1st Samuel 1-12**
 - **Saul: 1st Samuel 13-31**
 - **David: 2nd Samuel**
 - **We are going to learn how God is going to use all three of these people in different ways to show us some very valuable lessons in scripture.**

Secondary Characters:

- Other notable characters within the narrative of 1st-2nd Samuel that come to mind are:
 - **Hannah.**
 - **Eli.**
 - **Eli's Sons.**
 - **Johnathan.**
 - **Goliath.**

- *Jesse (David's Dad).*
- *Philistines.*
- *Amalekites.*

■ *And many more!*

Christ in 1st Samuel:

- In every book of the Bible, Christ is at the center.
 - *I'm also a firm believer that every Biblical text ultimately points to Christ Jesus.*
- *The book of Samuel is no exception to this.*
 - I believe we can see God working in this book by the fact that this book shows God's continued care for His people.
 - *While Saul failed, God didn't give up on them and gave them a new King, David.*

■ *We can see Christ in Samuel by the fact that from King David, in spite of his moral failures and shortcomings, would come from Him a ruler who would lead Israel and all the World. A ruler who is now leading us.*

- 1st-2nd Samuel point to the fact that the Kingship of Jesus is everlasting, eternal and effective.

Conclusion:

- Just as we did for the Malachi series, I want us to spend time praying around the alter tonight.
 - *Tonight we've taken a Macro view of the book of 1st Samuel.*
 - *But it's my prayer that even tonight the Lord has shown you that He wants to use the book of 1st Samuel to move mightily in all of our lives.*
- *Let's close our service tonight by coming together and praying that God will use this series, His Word, in the life of our Church. To enhance and equip us with a better understanding of Him.*

Sermon #2:

'Ask and Receive!'

1st Samuel 1:1-20

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see that Hannah Asked and Received from the Lord by looking at the Ordinary Elkanah, the Oppression Experienced, an Overwhelming Entreaty, an Outward Expression, and an Outstanding Example.

Intro:

- We begin our verse-by-verse study of 1st Samuel tonight with one of my favorite passages in all of scripture.
 - *What we find in this text is a Mother's true desire to have a child, but that the child would be used by God.*
 - *What we will find tonight is that when we ask God with intentions to further His Kingdom and His name, we will often receive it.*
- So many parents in our culture today focus on what their children can achieve, whether that be:
 - Grades.
 - Sports.
 - Good behavior.
 - College education.
 - *And the list could go on and on. But what we find in this text is that Hannah had a healthy desire that Samuel serve God. She asked the Lord for a son, and we will see that she received a son.*
- *Throughout the first part of this series we will be able to see how God uses Samuel mightily even though he will experience hard times, God will never leave his side.*
- As we begin 1st Samuel tonight, it's my prayer that we will be able to see from the very beginning, how God has His hand in it all, and sometimes to be in God's will, we simply need to ask God the desires of our heart that will glorify and honor Him.

Read 1st Samuel 1:1-20

Question to Ask:

How does this passage reveal to us the importance of asking God what we desire as long as it is to further accomplish His will and for His Glory?

Point 1: Ordinary Elkanah. (V. 1-2)

- In order to understand Hannah, (as well as Samuel), we first need to pay attention to the fact that this book starts off with Elkanah. Hannah's husband will become Samuel's father.

- *It can be very easy to read verses 1-2 of this passage, and quickly brush through them and get into the rest of the passage.*
- *In order for verses 1-2 tonight to make contextual sense, we need to remember that the background for 1st Samuel, is the ending of Judges.*
 - *According to Judges, at this time in the nation of Israel, there was no king, everyone was living life for their own pleasure, and doing right in their own eyes.*
- *But yet in the middle of this we are introduced to a 'certain' man named Elkanah.*
 - But I believe there are two very important things to point out that can help us understand that God works in the small details and if we don't notice these details, sometimes we can miss God at work!
- *There are two ways I think we can see that Elkanah was an ordinary guy in verses 1-2.*
- **Elkanah's Family Tree. (V. 1)**
 - 'There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.' 1 Samuel 1:1
 - *What we find here in verse 1 is Elkanah's family lineage, as well as their geographical location.*
 - *As far as **Location**:*
 - Ramathaim-Zophim is also known as 'Ramah' later in verse 19.
 - This location is not of great importance in the OT up to this point.
 - *John Woodhouse calls it 'A relatively obscure town in the hills of Ephraim.'*
 - So the fact that the location he was from is not of importance, shows us that Elkanah was a pretty ordinary guy.
 - *As far as **Lineage**:*
 - Here in verse 1 we are given 4 generations of his family.
 - Jeroham was his **Father**.
 - Elihu was his **Grandfather**.
 - Tohu was his **Great-Grandfather**.
 - Zuph was his **Great-great Grandfather**.
 - *None of these names give us any clues or reason to believe that this man came from a powerful family, he was an ordinary man.*
 - *Which shows us that God can and wants to use ordinary people to be a part of accomplishing His will.*
 - Now it is important to point out that Elkanah's Great-Great grandfather is described in the text as an Ephrathite.

- *This potentially means that Elkanah could have had family connections in Ephrathah which would eventually be known as Bethhelem.*
 - As we look at the first verse at Elkanah's family tree, we see that he was ordinary, a 'nobody' in Israel. (which shows this book was written in a hero story type of way).
- **Elkanah's Family Trio. (V. 2)**
 - 'He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.' 1 Samuel 1:2
 - *The reason I've called verse 2 'Elkanah's Family Trio', is because in the family was Elkanah, and his two wives.*
 - Just as we touched on briefly last week, polygamy is not something that God set up in the beginning in Genesis 2:24.
 - *Due to the fact that Hannah is mentioned first in this verse and in the Hebrew text, we can infer that Hannah was the first wife.*
 - *In the ancient eastern culture it was extremely important to families, tribes, and clans to be able to have children.*
 - For two reasons:
 - #1: *So that they would have someone to pass their wealth onto, and they could build it further. Making the family name even greater.*
 - #2: *So that they would have a built in social security plan. The children would take care of them in old age.*
 - So, Elkanah finds that Hannah is not able to have children, so he goes and marries Peninnah and she has children.
 - *We must see that in his day, in his context, Elkanah was a 'good' man.*
 - *He didn't cast Hannah out of the home when many men in that culture and time period would have done so.*
 - *But, Elkanah also doesn't take the time to trust God to provide a child through Hannah, he takes the situation into his own hands. (Sadly, we do too.)*
 - Hannah is not the first barren woman mentioned in the scriptures, that would be Sarai/Sarah, which is mentioned in Genesis 11:30.
 - For the first 25 years of her marriage Rebekah had no children.
 - God raised up Samson from the barren womb of Manoah's wife in Judges 13.
 - And of course, Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist, the forerunner for Jesus.
 - *Dale Ralph Davis said 'Barren women seem to be God's instrument in raising up key figures in the history of redemption,'*

- Yes, Elkanah was ordinary, but through all of this God was up to something extraordinary.

Point 2: *Oppression Experienced. (V. 3-8)*

- It's often that you hear children worry and speak often of 'bullies'. If I were to define bullies, I would simply say 'one who puts down another in an effort to try to make oneself feel better.'
 - *It's not just as children that we experience bullies, but sometimes as adults bullies are even more prominent.*
 - *What we find in verses 3-8 is a situation where Hannah was bullied by Peninnah due to her barrenness.*
 - *Notice that Hannah experienced oppression from Peninnah, but Hannah didn't go to Elkanah initially, she went to God to cast her cares on Him.*
 - *When you experience oppression and strife from the world, run to God, the only one who can cure and comfort your pain!*
 - In these verses I believe we see 4 important things to bring out of the text concerning this oppression.
- ***The Duration. (V. 3)***
 - 'Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD.'
 - *The phrase 'year by year' indicates that this went on for years.*
 - Every year Elkanah would take his entire family 15 miles away from their home, for a time of praising the Lord and offering a sacrifice unto Him.
 - *I'm sure that Hannah dreaded this time each year. Because as we see in verses 6-7, I'm sure during the 15 mile journey that Peninah belittled and bullied her the entire time.*
 - Just in verse 3, we see that Elkanah was a man of faith in God and took his relationship with God very seriously.
 - John Woodhouse said *'Elkanah was a man of faith in God. He gave thanks to God and honored Him in the way appropriate to his time.'*
- ***The Dedication. (V. 4-5)***
 - 'On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.'
 - *I believe that these two verses show us an important thing about Elkanah.*
 - He was dedicated to his entire family.
 - *He offered sacrifices for all of them including Peninah and her children even though verse 5 reveals to us that Hannah was his favorite.*

- *Verse 5 is clear that Elkanah loved Hannah. This verse states that to Hannah he gave a double portion for two reasons.*
 - *Because he loved her.*
 - His love for her is certainly clear. He loved Hannah, which is why he didn't cast her out like many husbands would have done in the ancient east if their spouse couldn't produce children.
 - *Because the Lord closed her womb.*
 - Elkanah sought to comfort Hannah that best that he knew how too. He was trying to compensate for the fact that she wasn't able to have children.
 - *He was still trying to fill a void in her that only God could fill.*
- Elkanah was dedicated to the Lord and to his family.
 - *But there was still discrimination in the home amidst this domestic ordeal.*
- *The Discrimination. (V. 6-7)*
 - 'And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7 So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.'
 - The English word for 'provoke' in verse 6 does not do this passage justice in the discrimination that Hannah received in her own home.
 - *The English word provoked is translated from the Hebrew verb **Ka'as** which literally means to thunder or to roar like a storm in anger.*
 - *Constantly, for years, Hannah was oppressed by the other woman in the home, Penninah.*
 - The type of oppression that Hannah received would be enough to make anyone go crazy.
 - But here's what commentator Dale Ralph Davis said about this: *'Year after year it went on-baiting Hannah, irritating her, winding her up until the sobs broke out, goading her to complain against God. In any case, it drove Hannah to God, drove her to the throne of grace, to the presence of Yahweh, to fervent supplication, from which eventually, came Samuel.'*
 - Penninah is a great example that people are going to be mean regardless.
 - *You are not in control of what someone says to you but you are in control of how you respond to it.*
 - *When you face oppression, does it cause you to grow closer to God, or to run away farther from Him?*
 - Your response to oppression reveals the nature of your relationship with God. As it did with Hannah.

- **The Despair. (V. 8)**
 - And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”
 - **Have you ever been so upset that you didn’t feel like you could even eat?**
 - That’s the situation here that Hannah is in.
 - She’s in despair, she’s upset, and Elkanah tries to encourage her, **but God is the only one who can heal a broken heart.**

Point 3: Overwhelming Entreaty. (V. 9-11)

- **So far tonight we’ve seen the Ordinary Elkanah and the Oppression Experienced, but we need to see the Overwhelming Entreaty that came out of this oppression.**
 - The word ‘entreaty’ can be defined as **an earnest or humble request.**
 - **Obviously Hannah had been burdened by the fact that she could not have a child, so she cries out to the Lord what we find in verses 9-11, we find Hannah’s first prayer unto the Lord (recorded in scripture).**
- ‘After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. **10** She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. **11** And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.” 1st Samuel 1:9-11
 - **So far in our passage tonight, Hannah has been a passive recipient of the actions of other people:** Peninah’s taunting, Lord closing her womb, Elkanah’s comforting words.
 - **For the first time in this passage thus far, we see Hannah’s passion for the Lord and for her barren womb in her prayer that she prays to God.**
- **Hannah Takes Action!**
 - **It’s obvious that there’s a big conflict in Hannah’s life. She is being belittled by Peninnah and there’s not telling how hard her home life really was.**
 - So the first action verb that we find in this passage is ‘Hannah rose’.
 - **She was ready to do something about her circumstance so she decided to go to the one who could do abundantly more than Hannah could think or imagine.**
 - **Hannah shows us that in order to win the biggest battles in our lives, it starts by going to our knees in prayer to the Lord.**
 - We see that Hannah decides to fight this battle on her knees in prayer, but I want us to look specifically at her prayer.
- **The Peculiarity of her Prayer.**
 - ‘And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will

give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.” 1st Samuel 1:11

- *She begins her prayer with a well known phrase in the OT, ‘if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant’.*
- **This echoes Exodus 3:7 when God assures Moses when He says ‘Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,’**
 - *Because the narrator (writer) of Samuel has already mentioned it twice that God was the one that closed up her womb, we can assume that she knows it.*
- And in faith, seems to know that God has seen her affliction.
 - *Now in her prayer she stated that she wanted her child to belong solely to the Lord. Literally, ‘I will give him to the Lord’*
- **The last phrase in verse 11 is important to understanding what Hannah meant when she would be giving her son (if God gave her one) to the Lord.**
 - ***‘And no razor shall touch his head.’***
 - This is a reference to the Nazirite Vow.
 - Which meant her son, Samuel, would leave the family and serve God in the temple.
 - J.D. Grear said *‘The Nazirite vow was a special provision for those in the nation of Israel who wanted to serve God like the priest. If a person outside of the Levite tribe desired to serve in God’s presence, he could take the Nazirite vow to consecrate himself.’*
- **In Numbers 6 we find the requirements for taking a nazirite vow.**
 - But when Hannah takes this vow, it literally means that she is letting go of all claims on her son in order for him to live in the temple and serve God.
 - ***The one thing that she desired and wanted most in this world, she made a commitment to give him fully to God. Wow.***

Point 4: Outward Expression. (V. 12-18)

- Verses 12-18, give us more insight and detail as to what was physically happening to Hannah as she passionately prayed, and it also reveals to us who was watching her as she prayed.
 - ***The outward expressions that we produce, reveal the inside prayers that have or have not been taking place.***
 - Hannah is a great expression of someone who was burdened, and allowed God to take care of her burdens by going to Him.
 - I think there are two important things about this outward expression:
- **False Accusation. (V. 12-14)**
 - ‘As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. **13** Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard.

Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. **14** And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.”

- *Eli was the priest at Shiloh, and the priest would often sit at the door of the temple or in the temple.*
 - So, he would’ve been able to see Hannah praying.
- *What happens here is that he (Eli), falsely accuses Hannah for being drunk, that's just how intense she was praying.*
 - John Woodhouse points out **‘In the light of what we will learn in chapter 2, it is likely that Eli’s misunderstanding was based on too many experiences of improper conduct at the Shiloh temple.’**
- It’s possible that Eli had seen this too many times and falsely accuses Hannah as an intoxicated woman.
 - Or, there are those that choose to view Eli’s false accusation as a means of incompetence.
- *No matter what the case was, we know that Hannah was not drunk due to the Full Access answer she gives in verses 15-18.*
- *Full Access. (V. 15-18)*
 - ‘But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. **16** Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” **17** Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” **18** And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.’
 - *In Hannah’s response to Eli, she gives full access to him on what is going on, but she is also giving God full access to what is truly going on in her heart.*
 - When I read verses 15-18, I can’t help but think of ***Psalms 142:2*** **‘I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.’**
 - *When was the last time that you poured your heart out to God so intensely and fervently that someone mistakenly thought you were drunk?*
 - Dale Ralph Davis said **‘In her bitterness of soul, with many tears, out of grief and despair, she pours out her anguish. Yahweh is a God who allows her to do that.’**
 - Prayer changes situations, but where prayer is most effective, is when prayer changes us.
 - And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.’
 - *If your prayer life isn’t changing you to be more like Jesus everyday, you’ve got to ask yourself if you are truly dedicating enough time in prayer to Him.*
 - **Or, am I truly letting Him know what’s on my heart?**

Point 5: *Outstanding Example. (V. 19-20)*

- ***Tonight we've been able to see the Ordinary Elkanah, Oppression Experienced, Overwhelming Entreaty, Outward Expression, and now we see an Outstanding Example in Hannah.***
- 'They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. **20** And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."
 - *Verse 19 reveals to us that they went back home, but I guarantee you that Hannah was feeling much different now than she had in previous years.*
 - ***She had faith in God and knew that He was going to do something great! Her face had been lifted! There was a change because of the faith she had in God.***
- Most of us would expect the order of events in Hannah's case to be as follows:
 - *Hannah Prays.*
 - *Hannah gets pregnant.*
 - *Hannah is joyful.*
- Instead, this is how the situation of Hannah unfolded:
 - *Hannah prays.*
 - *Hannah is joyful.*
 - *Hannah gets pregnant.*
- ***No matter the outcome of our prayers, we should be joyful no matter what happens knowing and trusting that it is God who is in control.***
 - Hannah is an overwhelming example to us of what Asking God and Receiving from God truly looks like.
 - *In many ways, Hannah's story is so similar to that of Mary's story, the mother of Jesus.*
 - ***Yet Mary's story is even more remarkable because she wasn't barren, she was still just a virgin.***
 - It is evident, that both Mary and Hannah understood the Gospel, and trusted God.
 - *The similarities:*
 - Hannah & Mary: Childless.
 - Hannah & Mary: Divine Intervention.
 - Hannah & Mary: Praise.
 - Hannah and Mary: Praise unto God!

Conclusion:

- Tonight as we close, I want you to see that God is faithful.
 - ***When we ask, we will receive in accordance with God's will. Not necessarily our own, but God's will.***

- If you are here tonight and you feel heavy laden and burden, I encourage you to drop those burdens at the altar tonight. Give them to Him who cares for you!
- Tonight we've seen:
 - **Point 1: *Ordinary Elkanah.* (V. 1-2)**
 - **Point 2: *Oppression Experienced.* (V. 3-8)**
 - **Point 3: *Overwhelming Entreaty.* (V. 9-11)**
 - **Point 4: *Outward Expression.* (V. 12-18)**
 - **Point 5: *Outstanding Example.* (V. 19-20)**

Sermon #3:

'Desperate Dedication!'

1st Samuel 1:21-28

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can show Desperate Dedication unto the Lord when we Sacrifice our Time, Supply our Treasures, and Serve in Totality unto the Lord.

Intro:

- Dedications are something that we are familiar with and aware of in our culture.
 - ***Organizations and Churches will have times where they dedicate buildings with kind words and a great service.***
 - ***Usually on Mother's Day we have a time in the service where we allow parents to dedicate their children to the Lord by taking a pledge.***
 - ***Authors will often dedicate their books to someone by inserting their name in the first few pages.***
 - ***Dedicating things or people in our lives to God or to a certain person are normal. We see it often.***
- Last week we saw that Hannah made a verbal vow with God that she would give her child to Him.
 - ***Tonight we will see that she will fulfill that vow to God.***
- ***But what I think we are going to see tonight in the text, is that dedication is more than a neat service with sweet words.***
 - A dedication is an action. It's a lifestyle.
 - I think Hannah will show us this evening that we need to be desperate to dedicate who we are and what we have to the Lord!
- I've heard the phrase before ***'there's nothing stronger than the love between a mother and her child.'***
 - Whether that's true or not in your life, this young mother was going to come true on her promise to God by dedicating her son to a lifestyle of service to Him.
 - Tonight, may we be encouraged and inspired to be more desperate to dedicate three specific things we find in this text to the Lord!

****Read 1st Samuel 1:21-28****

Question to Ask:

How can we show the same kind of Desperate Dedication to the Lord that Hannah showed in regards to her son?

Point 1: Sacrifice our Time. (V. 21-23)

- 'The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and

dwell there forever.” 23 Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.’ 1st Samuel 1:21-23

- ***While it may not seem significant, these verses show us even more evidence of why Elkanah was a good man.***
 - But even with Elkanah and Hannah both mentioned, we can see that each of them sacrificed time in fulfilling this vow to the Lord.
- ***When we make God the essence of our very lives, sacrificing time to Him will truly become 2nd nature.***
 - I believe there are three important things that we find in these three verses.
- ***Yearly Sacrifice. (V. 21)***
 - ‘The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow.’ 1st Samuel 1:21
 - ***Elkanah faithfully led his family to go to shiloh to offer up their yearly sacrifices to the Lord.***
 - It is believed that this yearly sacrifice was a part of the pilgrimage festivals prescribed in the Torah in Deuteronomy 12:5-7.
 - ***Now verse 21 says that Elkanah had to pay his vow, this is not the same vow that Hannah made although her vow did affect him (it was his son too).***
 - ***We do not know which vow this is referring to due to the fact no information is given in the scripture about it other than the fact his family went with him.***
 - But even in this yearly sacrifice we can see that Elkanah was setting the example for his family by taking the several day journey to offer sacrifices to the Lord as it was prescribed in the Torah.
 - ***Numbers 30:2 and Deuteronomy 23:21 shows that you could voluntarily make vows and then fulfill them.***
 - ***Notice that Elkanah sacrifices his time, yearly, to spend time giving back to God a sacrifice, and showing them the importance of keeping your word.***
- ***Young Samuel. (V. 22)***
 - ‘But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” 1st Samuel 1:22
 - ***Verse 22 shows us that during this time Elkanah was going up yearly, Hannah was Sacrificing her time raising her son so that he would be ready for a lifetime of service unto God.***
 - The fact that Elkanah allows Hannah to stay behind to wean Samuel (plus what we find in verse 23), shows us that Elkanah was very supportive in Hannah’s vow.

- ‘And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,[a] an ephah[b] of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. **25** Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.’ 1st Samuel 1:24-25
- ***No matter what we have, all that we have is because of the Lord.***
 - *What we have as possessions is not actually our own, they are things that God has blessed us with.*
 - So when we supply our treasures to Him, we are simply giving back to God what He’s already given to us.
- ***These verses describe what Hannah did as soon as Samuel was old enough to make the trip.***
 - Every firstborn male child belonged to the Lord according to the Torah (Exodus 13:2, Numbers 3:47) and yet was then given back to the parents at one month of age for five shekels.
 - As part of a vow, a male child could be given to the Lord for a period of five years, and then come home after that according to Leviticus 27:1-8.
 - ***What differs in this vow that Hannah made, is that Hannah chose to give Samuel to the Lord for permanent service.***
 - On the way up the mountain, I’m sure she was thinking, ‘this is the last time I can have extended time/freedom with my son’
 - But don’t you see, that the thing she treasured and loved the most (her son), she freely and willingly gave it to the Lord?
 - ***I can’t answer this for you, but everyone has something that they treasure. Whatever that is for you, have you supplied it to the Lord for Him to use whatever He sees fit?***
 - I believe there are two things that we need to point out concerning Hannah’s supply of the treasures.
- ***Generous Offering. (V. 24)***
 - ‘And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,[a] an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young.’ 1st Samuel 1:24
 - ***While she was going to drop off her son for him to serve the Lord in the temple at Shiloh, based on this verse we know she was also ready to worship.***
 - ***The sacrifices that she was bringing to worship the Lord at Shiloh were considered very generous for this time period.***
 - ***It’s possible that due to the fact it had been at least three years since she was able to go to Shiloh with the family, that this sacrifice was more generous.***

- ***In most translations (not all), you see ‘a three-year-old bull’. It’s important to point out that in the Hebrew language it literally means three bulls, which makes sense***
 - *Numbers 15:8-10 shows us that when a bull was given as part of a vow offering, only 3/10 of an Ephah of flour and half a hin of wine were to accompany the offering.*
 - Our text reveals that Hannah gave three times that amount.
 - ***This makes it more likely to believe that it was three bulls.***
- Robert D. Bergen said *‘Clearly, the writer expected the audience to be impressed with the extreme generosity represented by the gift and thus with the heart of faith that conceived it.’*
 - Hannah’s generosity comes out in the items that she and her family brought. But also reveals that it was genuine, not only generous.
- ***Genuine Offering. (V. 25)***
 - ‘Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.’ 1st Samuel 1:25
 - ***In the Hebrew text, it’s important to note that Hannah is not the subject of the verbs described in verse 25 due to the fact that women were not permitted to perform these actions.***
 - Most scholars assume that her family, Elkanah included, came on this journey to offer Samuel to the Lord.
 - ***Just how Abraham was genuine in offering his son as a sacrifice to the Lord, Hannah is genuine in offering Samuel to the Lord.***
 - She kept her word.
 - I personally don’t know how much more genuine you can be than offering your child to live with the priests and serve the Lord for the entirety of his life.
 - ***Hannah supplied and made available her treasures to the Lord for Him to use them.***
 - Can you and I honestly say the same in our own lives tonight?

Point 3: *Serve in Totality. (V. 26-28)*

- ‘And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. 28 Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD. And he worshiped the LORD there.” 1st Samuel 1:26-28
- ***Samuel was a gift from God, who, due to his mother’s vow, would spend his entire adult life serving the Lord, totally.***
 - May we not forget ***Psalms 127:3 ‘Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.’***

- Hannah understood this, so she didn't give part of her son to the Lord, but she gave him totally and in doing so gives all Christian parents a great Godly example.
 - I love what Stephen J. Andrews said *'Hannah serves as a faithful role model for all Christian parents. Children are gifts from the Lord. We should seriously desire that each of our children be given to the Lord. God's gifts should be given back to Him. It is not a coincidence that many Churches hold special dedication services to help parents present their children to the Lord.'*
 - How does Hannah show us though that we can live a life of Desperate Dedication by serving the Lord totally?
- **Remember how far He's brought you! (V. 26)**
 - 'And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD.'
 - **Hannah is reminding Eli that she was the woman who he thought was crazy and drunk. She is the woman who God answered her prayers and did what only He could do in and through her!**
 - God is the one who has brought Hannah to the point where she could totally surrender her son to serve the Lord.
 - **At this time that Hannah brought her son back for full time service at the temple, she had no way of knowing what all God was going to do through Samuel.**
 - She didn't know he'd be a leading prophet in Israel, and that he would also be the one to anoint the first and second king of Israel.
 - She didn't know these things but she didn't have to.
 - **It started with her remembering the request that she made to God, and serving Him totally by giving Him to the Lord.**
 - Think, for just a moment, about how far the Lord has brought you this evening.
 - Think about what He's taken you through and what He has taught you through that.
 - **Are you serving Him in Totality or just partially?**
- **Reminded by Samuel's name. (V. 27-28)**
 - 'For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. 28 Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD. And he worshiped the LORD there.'" 1st Samuel 1:27-28
 - **Verses 27-28 are not as incredible in the english, as they are in the Hebrew language.**
 - **In the Hebrew text, there is something very striking that must be pointed out about these two verses:**

- In the Hebrew, there is an artistic wordplay that is found in Hannah's confession.
- *There are 4 different word plays of the Hebrew root word 'sl' which means to ask.*
 - 'Petition', 'lent' (both times), and 'Samuel' are all extensions of the Hebrew word which means to ask.
- *Hannah's loss in raising her son, would end up being Israel's gain.*
 - What do you need to lose, or better yet, dedicate to the Lord that would be your loss, but gain for the kingdom of God?
- *Samuel would one day serve Israel well but also serve them Totally. I believe he was able to be such a successful leader for Israel due to the fact that his mother was a great example of what it meant to serve the Lord, totally.*

Conclusion:

- Being desperate to give God our very best, should be something that we voluntarily do.
 - *Not something that we complain about or do begrudgingly.*
- Now, I'm not asking you to take the Nazarite vow and give up your son tonight, we no longer live under the OT law.
 - *But what I am asking all of us to do, including myself, is to be desperate in our daily lives to give to God the best of what we have in every area.*
 - *I believe that means being willing to:*
 - **Point 1: Sacrifice our Time. (V. 21-23)**
 - **Point 2: Supply our Treasures. (V. 24-25)**
 - **Point 3: Serve in Totality. (V. 26-28)**
 - *How can you begin sacrificing more of your time to the Lord?*
 - In Prayer, Bible Study, Service opportunities.
 - *How can you begin supplying more of your most valuable treasures unto God?*
 - Your tithe, your talents, and your offering (going above and beyond what God has asked for.)
 - *How can you begin serving in totality? All of you, in worship and adoration of the King?*
 - Don't just serve to check off a box, and don't just serve partly, but serve in totality, giving your all to the Lord.
- *These are all questions that we need to ask the Lord in our personal relationship/walk with Him tonight.*

Sermon #4:

'A Prayer of Praise!'

1st Samuel 2:1-11

Sermon in a Sentence:

In Hannah's Prayer of Praise, we can learn how we can praise the Lord no matter what we are going through when we Exalt the Lord, see the Expansiveness of the Lord, and His Excellence.

Intro:

- Last Wednesday we left off with Hannah and her family worshiping the Lord after Samuel had been dropped off at the temple so that he would be raised there and live there.
 - ***But tonight, we get to look at Hannah's response to this entire situation.***
 - ***Let's just be honest, with something as emotional and heart pulling as this year long situation that Hannah went through, I'm sure she was worn down.***
 - Emotionally and physically.
 - ***It would be very easy to see and understand if Hannah went and had a 'good cry' away from everyone.***
 - Or if she wanted to go and be by herself for a while.
 - ***But instead, this passage reveals to us that yet again, she goes to the Lord.***
 - Tonight we will examine the prayer that Hannah exclaimed after one of the most life altering things that could have ever happened, occurred to her.
 - ***I believe Hannah will teach us tonight what our lives should be like no matter what happens.***
 - ***We should praise God whether we are on the mountain top or in the valley low. A prayer of Praise should come out of our lips.***

****Read 1st Samuel 2:1-11****

Question to Ask:

How does Hannah give us a great example of what our prayer life should look like and exemplify?

Point 1: Exalting the Lord. (V. 1-3)

- Hannah's prayer is certainly widely known in the 'Biblical community' but also in the world at large.
 - ***Hannah's 'song' and 'prayer of praise' are a mark of the end of the story concerning Samuel's birth.***
 - From this point forward the scriptures in 1st Samuel will show us of his life and ministry and how God would end up using Him.

- **Hannah's Prayer of Praise, is still breathtaking and should be a great example to all believers in Christ.**
 - **No matter what stage or status you are going through in your own life, we can and should, honor and glorify God. Lifting up Prayers of Praise unto Him.**
- **Mary's Magnificat has themes that are very similar to what we find here in Hannah's song.**
 - Also, the songs of David in 2nd Samuel 22-23 are similar.
 - **It's also important to point out that there are similarities in this passage to Psalms and very close to Psalms 113.**
 - **Either way, Praising God no matter what is a theme we see all throughout scripture. And it is a theme that should be visible and prevalent in our own lives.**
- Hannah gives us a great example in how to do this, in the way that she exalts the Lord.
 - **I believe verses 1-3 show us WHY she exalts the Lord and it's the same reason that you and should exalt the Lord too.**
- **Salvation. (V. 1)**
 - 'And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.'
 - **Hannah's prayer is personal because the Lord has saved her from the oppression that she was experiencing from Penninah.**
 - **Our salvation from God is a very personal thing.**
 - **We can see that this is personal by looking at verse 1 in the Hebrew text.**
 - **In the Hebrew text there are four first person pronouns that are meant to show delight in what God had did for her.**
 - We should exalt and lift the name of God up simply for what He's done for us on a personal level.
 - Even in the english translation we can see the phrases:
 - **'My heart exults'**
 - **'My horn is exalted in the Lord.'**
 - **'My mouth derides my enemies.'**
 - **'I rejoice in your salvation.'**
 - **Hannah is giving God praise for Yahweh's salvation in the middle of her crisis.**
 - Notice how different this prayer is from her first Prayer back in 1st Samuel 1:11.
 - The first prayer was a vow and it came as the result of anguish and hurt.
 - This song is a song of praise and thanking God for this salvation she's experienced.
 - **Dale Ralph Davis notes that this is what scholars call 'Micro Salvation'**

- Meaning God intervened for her and saved her from a situation. Not a reference to her actual eternal salvation.
 - *In these verses Hannah is speaking of the heart change that God has done.*
 - Just a few verses earlier her husband Elkanah had asked her ‘Why is your heart sad’
 - Now, her heart exults in the Lord.
 - *When we have an encounter with YAWHEH, our heart and everything about us will change.*
 - *John Woodhouse said ‘Hannah spoke of the difference God had made to her ‘heart’, her ‘strength’, and her ‘mouth’. The language is extreme for the very good reason that the impact God had on her was overwhelming.’*
 - *God was now the focus of her heart and life, no longer was she focused on what she did not have, but who she had living in her heart.*
- *Sovereignty. (V. 2-3)*
 - “There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”
 - *Hannah continues to exalt the Lord by pointing out the sovereignty of God.*
 - The fact that the Lord is in control of her situation even when she felt in despair.
 - *Do we praise God for our salvation and HIS sovereignty in our lives only when things are smooth? Or even when they are rocky?*
 - When Hannah was at Shiloh, she felt the Lord’s Holiness. And she said ‘There is no holy one like the Lord.’
 - See, ancient Canaan was known for their idols.
 - *These were small clay figurines that people prayed to in order to increase the fertility of their owners.*
 - *Hannah was different. She did not pray or trust in a clay DEAD figurine, she trusted in almighty God, who she describes here is her rock.*
 - *Isn’t this passage so simple yet relatable? That Hannah felt that there was no ROCK like our God?*
 - I’ve been in that situation before and I’m sure you have too. Where you feel like your back is against the wall. And the only one who can trust in is the firm foundation and firm rock of the Lord!
 - *Just as Hannah praised God for His sovereignty, so did Moses and the Israelites out of the exodus of Egypt in Exodus 15:11:*
 - *“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”*
 - *Hannah also shows that she knew God was sovereign by the fact that she knew the scriptures...*

- The verbiage that is used in these two verses show that she borrowed images and confessions from the Torah in showing God’s holiness and sovereignty.
 - Levitus 10:3, 11:44, 19:2, 20:26 show us this.
- She also took the term rock (*Hebrew word sur*) from Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31.
 - “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice.’
Deuteronomy 32:4
- So far tonight we’ve seen that we can praise God by exalting Him, but we also need to see that Hannah praises the expansiveness of God.

Point 2: *Expansiveness of the Lord. (V. 4-8)*

- *The word expansiveness can be defined as covering a wide area in terms of space or scope; extensive or wide-ranging.*
 - I believe these verses change to looking at how wide ranging God is and what He is capable of.
 - *What Hannah is seeking to get across here, is the way that God delivered her, is similar and characteristic of the way that God rules His world.*
 - The beautiful thing about these verses is the way in which Hannah reflects on the expansiveness of God.
 - How God is all knowing, God is over all, and God is ultimately the judge.
 - *Our God has such a wide range to His power and glory that we will not fully be able to comprehend on this side of Heaven.*
 - I believe there are 8 to point out here concerning the Expansiveness of the Lord.
- *God is greater than Warriors. (V. 4a)*
 - ‘The bows of the mighty are broken,’
 - It’s possible that Hannah is reflecting again on the Egyptians here, as they were very great warriors that were feared by most in the ancient world.
 - *John Woodhouse points out ‘Within a few pages in 1 Samuel the Philistines will appear. The people of Israel will have a reason to tremble.’*
 - It is ironic though, that the ‘bows’ of the Philistines will appear in 1st Samuel 31:3 (last chapter of the book), and will be responsible for Saul’s death.
 - *Here the Hebrew word for Bow is used (occurs 76 times), and then in 1st Samuel 31 is when Saul will be killed by the archers bows.*
 - *These warriors were strong, but God is indeed stronger and Hannah shows that here.*
- *God lifts up the Weak. (V. 4b)*
 - ‘but the feeble bind on strength.’

- *Hannah knew that there was no one like our God, and that God lifts up the weak!*
 - *Later on in 1st Samuel God will show us that a young kid with a few rocks would take down a philistine giant in 1st Samuel 17:40-51.*
- *But all throughout Samuel who will find God using ‘weak’ and ‘feeble’ people to accomplish His will.*
 - John Woodhouse said *‘Human power and human weakness look completely different if you believe in God as Hannah believed in God.’*
- **God sees the Wasteful. (V. 5a)**
 - ‘Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,’
 - *1st Samuel 25:1-12 shows us that there was a rich man who had plenty of food and resources, and would not give strangers something to eat and drink.*
 - Oftentimes people who have plenty seem to be the most wasteful of the opportunity that God gives them.
 - *So often those who are ‘full’ of life and what it has to offer and even full of themselves, don’t realize the precious resources and opportunities that God has given that they are wasting.*
 - But Hannah knows that God knows the human heart. Hannah knows that God is the ultimate judge, and that he sees and weighs the human heart.
- **God sees the Weary. (V. 5b)**
 - but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.’
 - *Hannah had made herself weary desiring a child, a void that only God could fill in her life and He did so.*
 - Following the narrative in 1st Samuel 25, verses 18-35 of that passage show us that God would care for the physical needs of the weary strangers.
 - *Your material/physical needs is not contingent on human resources, but by God himself.*
 - As Hannah stated in verse 2, there is no rock like our God!
- **God controls the Womb. (V. 5c)**
 - ‘The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.’
 - Now, Hannah goes back to her circumstance and how God’s wide range of power and love affected her.
 - *Hannah would one day bore 7 children including Samuel.*
 - *I’m sure God did this on purpose and with symbolism because the # 7 in the Bible often represents completion and perfection.*
 - *The womb that was once closed, is now open and God blessed her greatly.*
 - No matter what doctors or people think, it is ultimately God who is in control of the mother’s womb and we must keep that in mind.
 - *The phrase ‘but she who has many children is forlorn’ is a reference to Peninnah. A direct compare and contrast here.*

- Do we live and think about life remembering all these expansive attributes of God?
 - *I feel God is far greater and far mightier than we often give Him praise for.*
- So far tonight we've seen Hannah's prayer of praise by how she Exalted the Lord, the Expansiveness of the Lord, but we can't forget the Excellence of the Lord.

Point 3: *Excellence of the Lord. (V. 9-11)*

- When we look at this passage as a whole, we would probably say verses 4-8 are the body or the meat of this passage.
 - *One commentator called verses 4-8 as a solid Biblical Worldview.*
 - *To Hannah, this is what her life looked like because she was exalting and rejoicing in Him.*
 - But having a Biblical worldview is not enough, we have to recognize God's excellence and have a good logic based on what we believe about God's Excellence.
 - I believe Hannah points out a good conclusion concerning how God affects the lives of the people that He's made.
 - *There are Winners. (V. 9)*
 - "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail."
 - *Those who are found in the Lord are the true winners. For theirs is the Kingdom of God!*
 - The ways of the world would quickly tell us that the strong, powerful, or wealthy, the famous and the popular ones are the real winners.
 - *NEWSFLASH: No matter how big or small your house or bank account is has no impact on whether or not you are a winner in eternity.*
 - As this text states "but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail."
 - *The wicked will not prevail, for they are not true winners if they are not found in our Lord.*
 - There are winners and there are losers in life.
 - *Those who have a relationship with the Lord are the 'faithful ones'*
 - *Those who don't have a relationship with the Lord are the 'wicked ones'.*
- *There are Losers. (V. 10)*
 - "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - *I'd rather God break me to pieces now, on this side of Heaven, than to be broken to pieces by God in hell as punishment.*

- *Hannah shows us from the beginning of this book, that it is not a wise decision to set oneself up against the Lord.*
- *All throughout the book of 1st Samuel we will see it demonstrated that you do not want to be on the opposite side of our God.*
- Does your prayer life reflect that you are a victorious winner in our Lord?
 - *Which side are you on?*
 - *Are you a winner, or are you a loser?*

Conclusion:

- Tonight we've looked at a beautiful yet simple passage on prayer.
 - *It's my prayer tonight that based on this text, our prayer life will improve.*
 - *That we will seek to see the world God has made in a similar way that Hannah saw the world.*
 - May we recognize in our own daily lives that our prayers should be that of praise unto God.
 - **Point 1: *Exalting the Lord. (V. 1-3)***
 - **Point 2: *Expansiveness of the Lord. (V. 4-8)***
 - **Point 3: *Excellence of the Lord. (V. 9-11)***
 - *How does your prayer life need to change before you leave this place tonight?*

Sermon #5:

'The Worthlessness of Wrong Motives in Worship!'

1st Samuel 2:12-26

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see the Worthlessness of Wrong Motives in Worship when we see that the sons of Eli were not saved, they were stealing, Samuel's ministry starts, the son's reputation spreads, and Samuel's walk with God is strengthened.

Intro:

- I've said before, I'd rather have someone serving in the Church who was less talented but had the right motives in their heart, then the most talented person in the world with the wrong motives in their heart.
 - *A major theme all throughout 1st Samuel is the heart.*
 - ***Hence why I've entitled this series 'Honing in on the Heart!'***
 - *God looks and cares about the Human heart, while most humans just focus on what's on the outside.*
 - *In this text tonight we will see just how much God really does care about the heart as the leader of Israel's children were not leading with the right motives.*
 - In this passage we see the downfall of Eli's sons, but we will also the start the Samuel has as he begins to grow up in the temple of the Lord.
 - *Tonight I think it's very important that we realize it doesn't matter WHAT we do for God if our motives are not in the proper place.*
 - Our motives matter to God!
 - *And unlike human beings, God sees the heart and He knows the truth of the motives that are in your heart.*

****Read 1st Samuel 2:12-26****

Question to Ask:

How does this passage show us that Eli's sons were going through the motions of worship as a job and not a calling?

Point 1: The sons were not Saved. (V. 12)

- 'Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD.' 1st Samuel 2:12
 - *The main reason that God rejected their service in the temple is because they were not saved by the Lord. They did not know Him.*
 - ***The writer of 1st Samuel puts this verse at the beginning of this narrative that we are about to read, to set the tone for everything that is about to occur.***
 - If someone is not saved and doesn't have a personal relationship with Him there is not way that person can have good motives in worship.

- *How can you have ‘good motives’ in serving someone that you don’t even believe in if you aren’t saved?*
- In the English, this verse seems simple and straightforward.
 - *But in the Hebrew text, we are able to see the severity of Eli’s Sons.*
- We are first introduced to them earlier in Samuel when we are told that the sons of Eli ministered at Shiloh in 1st Samuel 1:3.
 - Let’s look at the Hebrew text to see how severe their ‘worthlessness’ to God really was.
- **Word Study**
 - The phrase ‘*Worthless men*’ comes from the Hebrew word **Belial** which literally means wickedness, death, and rebellion.
- *This is not the first time that ‘Belial’ appears in the book of 1st Samuel.*
 - Back in 1st Samuel 1:16, we find that Hannah asks Eli to ‘*not regard your servant as a worthless woman.*’
- *The fact that this same word is used in regards to two different people shows the power of compare and contrast.*
 - John Woodhouse said ‘*The description of Hophni and Phinehas as ‘sons of Belial’ sets them in utter contrast to Hannah who was not a ‘daughter of belial’.*
- *This Hebrew phrase ‘Belial’ can be found in Deuteronomy 13:13, Judges 19:22, 1st Samuel 25:25 and Proverbs 16:27.*
 - What is interesting about this phrase, is the fact that the Apostle Paul will use this same phrase as a synonym for Satan.
 - ‘What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?’ 2nd Corinthians 6:15
- *So why does the writer of 1st Samuel call these sons the sons of Belial?*
 - I think one reason is to show that they do not take after their father, but rather Satan. Wickedness, death, and destruction.
 - If you are not a child of God, then you are a child of Satan and there is no inbetween.
 - *The main reason that the sons of Eli were called worthless is because they did not know the Lord.*
- *Even men who serve in Godly vocations can not know the Lord.*
 - A personal relationship with the Lord is key in serving Him for the right reasons and for His Glory.
- *While verse 12 does not shock us because we’ve all seen, read and witnessed men who served in Godly vocations that acted like sons of Belial, we need to see that for the original readers this was meant to be shocking.*
 - *At this time Shiloh was the place where God’s holy tabernacle was set up. This is where the dwelling place of God was for this time.*

- So the fact that these young priests were not doing what they were supposed to do, would have been appalling to the people of Israel.

Point 2: *The sons were Stealing. (V. 13-17)*

- *In order for you and I to get an accurate picture of the severity of the ‘stealing’ that Hophni and Phineas were guilty of, it would benefit us in our own time to go back and read **Leviticus 10:1-11** to see how serious God takes the misconduct of the priest in the Old Covenant.*
 - What Hophni and Phineas were guilty of was hot water to be in for sure. We are reminded here that God does not take sin lightly.
- ‘The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, **14** and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. **15** Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” **16** And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” **17** Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.’ 1st Samuel 2:13-17
 - ***What the sons of Eli were leading at Shiloh was an evil act that dishonored God.***
 - ***What we find happening in verses 13-17 that was describing what was occurring at Shiloh, is not found anywhere else in the OT and is not what was prescribed in the Torah according to Leviticus 10:14-15, Numbers 18:18.***
 - ***Robert D. Bergen said ‘The writer described the strange traditions of the Shiloh priests in detail to clarify the need to destroy the Elide line and remove the central Israelites worship site from Shiloh.’***
 - Now, don’t get me wrong. The OT is clear that the priests were able to have certain benefits from their work in the tabernacle according to Leviticus 7:28-38.
 - ***But what we find in these verses describing their methods, is taking advantage and stealing from God’s people. Which ultimately, was stealing from God.***
 - Notice that Hophni and Phineas were not the ones actually committing these acts, but they were the orchestrators.
 - ***Verse 13 reveals ‘the priest’s servant would come’***
 - ***If people were to question what the priest were doing based on the instructions prescribed in the Torah, verse 16 shows that they would take it by force.***

- ***Surely these sons of Eli had begun to be feared by those in Israel for what they were doing.***
- Verses 15-16 give us a more specific view as the exact acts they were committing against God.
 - ‘Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” **16** And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.”
- ***To explain, either Hophni or Phineas or their ‘servant’ would take their share of the offerings before the fat was burned.***
 - ***This means before the Lord had been given His portion has was prescribed in Leviticus 3:3-5 and Leviticus 7:30.***
 - This also would indicate that the priests were eating fat from sacrificed animals that they were *not allowed to do according to Leviticus 7:22-26.*
- ***Not only did the sons of Eli steal from God and Israel, they also stole the innocence and free will of women.***
 - Verse 22 is clear that the sons of Eli were seducing women in the temple, another thing that they were not supposed to be doing.
 - ‘and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.’ 1st Samuel 2:22
 - ***It's obvious that the motives of the sons of Eli were to not give God Glory, but to steal from Him and take everything for themselves.***
 - God forgive us when we are guilty of the same crime!

Point 3: *Samuel's ministry Starts. (V. 18-21)*

- ***Right here in the middle of a very serious description concerning the sons of Eli, we find a sprinkle of Samuel in this text.***
 - Right in the middle of the turmoil that was going on at Shiloh, there was a young man beginning his ministry that God intended to use greatly one day.
- Dale Ralph Davis said ***‘Yet in the middle of this liturgical and moral morass at Shiloh a careful reader can detect a hint of hope. There are these short notes about little Samuel scattered through the text and standing in quiet contrast to the deeds of Hophni and Phineas. They are silent witnesses of Yahweh's provision.’***
 - ‘Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. **19** And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. **20** Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.” So then they would return to their home. Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.’

- *The first thing that we find in verse 18 that sticks out to me, is this phrase ‘Samuel was Ministering before the Lord’*
 - Still we can see the contrast between this young man Samuel, and Eli’s Sons.
- **Word Study**
 - The phrase ‘*was ministering*’ comes from the Hebrew phrase **‘Haya Mesaret’** *which literally means an ongoing activity, and Robert D. Bergen points out ‘something ingrained in Samuel’s lifestyle’*
 - Even from the start of Samuel’s ministry I believe we can see that his focus was on God.
 - It was ingrained in Him but He was also before the Lord, ministering in His presence.
 - ***It would not have been possible for Hophni and Phineas to have been ministering in the presence of the Lord because their was sin in their life.***
 - *The ‘Linen Ephod’ that is mentioned in verse 18 was a simple garment that was to be worn by the priests in the temple.*
 - Even with the fact that the writer mentions that Samuel was wearing a linen Ephod, we can still see the contrast.
 - ***A linen Ephod is what the priests were supposed to wear. Even as a young man Samuel was doing what he was supposed to be doing, while the sons of Eli were not.***
 - *Verses 19-21 make tears come to my eyes, for this reason **Samuel’s family supported his ministry and work for the Lord.***
 - Verse 19 reveals that Hannah brought Samuel a robe. Which in Hebrew is the word **Meil** *and was a long outer garment that was worn by members of the Levitical tribe that involved priestly service according to [Leviticus 8:7](#).*
 - Even this small gift that Hannah gave her son shows us that even though he wasn’t physically present in her life, he was still in her heart.
 - ***Yet again, I think even in the fact that we see Samuel’s family supporting his ministry, I think we see that Eli did not in the way he should have.***
 - *When it comes to Eli’s sons, Eli verbally reprimanded them but did not give the discipline that they needed.*
 - A true parent shows true love for their child when they discipline them.
 - *Notice that verse 19 reveals that Hannah made this Robe each year on the yearly journey to Shiloh.*
 - Each year the robe got a little bigger, but the journey to Shiloh for Hannah was much easier now, than it was in the previous years.

- *Verses 20-21 seem clear that it was Eli who dealt with Elkanah and Hannah and not Eli's sons.*
 - 'The petition she asked of the Lord' is a reference to her request for Samuel, her son.
 - But Eli blesses both of them in the fact that Hannah will now be able to have children, for the closing of her womb was temporary.
- *So far tonight we've seen that the sons were not saved, the sons were stealing, Samuel's ministry starts, and now we will see...*

Point 4: *The son's reputation Spreads. (V. 22-25)*

- *Now the narrative flips back to look at Eli's sons again and the reputation that had begun to precede them.*
 - 'Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. **23** And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. **24** No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. **25** If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.' 1st Samuel 2:22-25
 - *First thing that I think we need to notice here is this:*
- *Their Dad knows. (V. 22)*
 - 'Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.'
 - *So the sons of Eli were obviously so bad, that it did get back to Eli what was going on.*
 - *This reminds me of when I was younger, and my Grandad would say 'If you do something bad, I'm gonna hear about it before you get home so you better not do anything bad.'*
 - Word got back to Eli that his sons were not doing what they were supposed to be doing, but we can't miss the detail in the text that '*Eli was very old*'
 - I think we can safely infer in the text that due to Eli's old age, he probably wasn't aware of what all was happening at Shiloh and the severity of what was happening.
 - *But now, he knows.*
 - He's aware of his sons forcing people to do the wrong things with their offerings (contrary to the Bible), for their own gain.
 - Verse 22 reveals to us that they were also having sexual relations with women at the temple.

- *Before we look at how Eli responded, we have to see that Hophni and Phineas reveal to us two forms of corruption that can easily take place in ministry if we are not checking our motives:*
 - #1: **Greed.**
 - The sons of Eli used their position as priests for their own personal gain.
 - #2: **Sexual Immorality.**
 - These leaders used their position of power as priest for the benefit of their own sexual pleasures.
- **Eli Confronts his sons. (V. 23-25a)**
 - ‘And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. **24** No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. **25** If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?’
 - **Unlike his sons, I believe verses 23-25 show us that Eli realizes the severity of the sin that his sons actions have caused.**
 - As we would hope any parent would, Eli gives his sons *a good talking to* based on their behavior.
 - **Verse 24 shows that many if not most of the people of Israel knew what was going on.**
 - I can’t help but think of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 14:13 when I read of the actions of Eli’s sons.
 - ‘Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.’
 - **There’s no telling how many people in Israel stumbled due to the actions of Hophni and Phineas.**
 - **When you and I have worthless motives in worship, it affects more people than just you and I.**
 - **Verse 25 is where Eli reminds his sons that they have sinned against God Himself.**
 - So, this meant that no one was capable on interceding on their behalf
 - **Stephen J. Andrews said ‘Since Hophni and Phinehas had committed capital offenses (Leviticus 7:25, 22:9), they could expect the death penalty to be brought against them.’**
- **The sons Ignore. (V. 25b)**
 - ‘But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.’

- *This verse affirms what we found in verse 12, these sons really were the sons of Belial.*
 - Those who repeatedly ignore the Lord, like these sons ignored their father, are also sons of evil who choose not to repent and turn to the Lord.
- Dale Ralph Davis said *'Hophni and Phinehas' resistance was not the rationale for Yahweh's judgment but the result of his judgment.'*
 - *May we not remain in our rebellion so long that God chooses to take us out and remove us.*
 - God can do that, so we must not ignore Him.
- *Tonight we've seen that the sons were not saved, the sons were stealing, Samuel's ministry starts, the reputation of the sons spreads and lastly:*

Point 5: *Samuel's walk Strengthens. (V. 26)*

- While verses 27-36, that we will look at next week, will pick back up with Eli's sons and what God is going to do, for now we see the fact that Samuel is growing in the Lord.
 - 'Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.'
 - *While Hophni and Phineas were failing and going down a bad path, Samuel was growing and walking with the Lord.*
 - While the little fella was growing up, I'm sure not many at Shiloh noticed him.
 - *But one day, God was going to use him and God was going to raise him up to be the spiritual leader in Israel.*
 - *Never underestimate what God can do in the life of a child who is fully dedicated to Him.*
 - Even as a young boy, Samuel's walk in the Lord strengthened. Is your walk in God strengthening currently?

Conclusion:

- *Tonight it is my prayer that we are able to see how important it truly is to have the right motives when worshiping and serving the Lord.*
 - Whether that's serving on a Wednesday night food team, as a greeter, a nursery worker, on the praise team or even in the pulpit.
 - *It's essential that we check our motives and make sure we are not worthless in the sight of the Lord.*
 - We need to make sure that we are saved, not stealing from God, and that our bad reputation doesn't spread and affect others.
- *Now we focused a good bit tonight on the worthlessness of Eli's sons, but I believe it's also important that we glean from tonight's text that Samuel is being brought up in the Lord.*
 - Although these sons of Eli failed and failed greatly, God was raising up a child who would one day be his mouthpiece for the Lord.

- Make sure your motives in Worship are not worthless.
- **'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.' 1st Corinthians 10:31**
 - Do it all for the Lord, and not yourselves.

Sermon #6:

'Rejecting of the Rebels!'

1st Samuel 2:27-36

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this passage we can see that God, through His messenger, rejects the Rebels of the House of Eli. We can see this in how a Messenger Brings Conviction, the Messenger Bestows Consequences, the Messenger Broadcasts a Curse, and the Messenger Brings Change.

Intro:

- Later on in King David's life, there would come a prophet by the name of Nathan who let David know that he had greatly messed up in the situation with Bathsheba.
 - ***Nathan revealed a hard truth to David and had a hard message to bring to one of the most powerful men in the ancient world at that time.***
 - ***But the message that he revealed was one that David needed to hear and in the long run, would certainly make David better.***
- ***Tonight we will see that God sends a messenger to let Eli know that his sons and his line will no longer be in the priesthood.***
 - ***God intervenes and enacts discipline on Hophni and Phineas (Eli's sons), partly due to the fact that Eli knew what was going on and chose not to do anything.***
 - Dale Ralph Davis said ***'In any case, he had taken no action to expel Hophni and Phineas from the priestly office. Eli might protest but his sons suffered no unemployment. There was no Church discipline.'***
 - Tonight I believe we will see the rejecting of the rebels in a clear way.
 - ***God does not like things to be swept under the rug. If they are, He has shown countless times again that He will and can expose them.***

****Read 1st Samuel 2:27-36****

Question to Ask:

How does this passage show us that God rejected the rebels of the house of Eli due to their actions in the temple?

Point 1: *A Messenger Brings Conviction. (V. 27-29)*

- ‘And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? **28** Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. **29** Why then do you scorn[a] my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’” 1st Samuel 2:27-29
 - **The word ‘conviction’ in the English language literally means a formal declaration that someone is guilty of a criminal offense, made by the verdict of a jury or the decision of a judge in a court of law.**
 - While there is no jury here, God knew all along what the line of Eli was doing in the house of God (the temple).
 - God does not take it lightly when His servants disobey Him and in turn, cause others to stumble.
 - *I believe there are 3 things that we find in verses 27-29 that show us how this Messenger brings Conviction.*
- **Mystery Messenger. (V. 27a)**
 - ‘And there came a man of God to Eli’
 - When it comes to this visit, there is a good amount of mystery.
 - **We don’t know who this man is.**
 - **We don’t know when this visit took place.**
 - 1st Samuel 2:12-26 shows us what happened at Shiloh over a number of years under the leadership (or lack thereof) of Phineas and Hophni.
 - But, we don’t know how long after that this visit took place.
 - **This unnamed individual is called ‘a man of God’**
 - **In the context of the OT this is the second most common verbiage for a prophet in the OT.**
 - 71 times in the OT a prophet is called a ‘man of God’.
 - Robert D. Bergen said **‘The man of God’s statement opened with the classic introduction to the body of a prophetic speech ‘this is what the Lord sas’**
 - **This mystery man has a convicting message for the aging Eli.**
- **Memory Lane. (V. 27b-28)**
 - ‘and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? **28** Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.’”
 - **This prophet takes Eli through the memory lane of his ancestry.**

- The word *'scorn'* in the Hebrew literally means to kick coming from the Hebrew verb **'ba'at'**.
- Robert D. Bergen makes the observation ***'Eli was implicated in some sense in the sin, even if it was only in the sense that as the eldest priest at the sanctuary he bore ultimate responsibility for what occurred there.'***
- The fact that the pronouns in the Hebrew are plural, give us substantial evidence that possibly Eli was involved in this to a greater degree than previously mentioned.
 - *Even if Eli didn't have anything to do with the sacrifices, verse 29 reveals that Eli still put his sons over the Lord.*
 - ***Folks, God is clear throughout scripture that anything we put before God is an idol. Even if it's our own kids!***
- John Woodhouse said ***'Eli himself, by doing no more than rather feebly rebuking his sons, had honored them more than he had honored the Lord.'***
 - *Eli knew he should've kicked his sons out of the priesthood a long time ago. But he wouldn't do it, so God sends a messenger to convict.*

Point 2: *The Messenger Bestows Consequences. (V. 30)*

- 'Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.' 1st Samuel 2:30
- ***We cannot expect to let sin go on in our lives or under our watch care and not expect God to give us consequences based on this.***
 - ***Yes, Eli and his sons were an object of God's amazing grace. They were allowed to serve God in the temple because of the promise that God made to the house of Aaron.***
 - 'and you shall gird Aaron and his sons with sashes and bind caps on them. And the priesthood shall be theirs by a statute forever. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.' Exodus 29:9
 - ***Eli was the highpriest at Shiloh, and therefore he represented one family among all the descendants of Aaron.***
 - I think there are 2 things to point out about how this messenger Bestows Consequences to Eli and his family.
- ***Sudden Change. (V. 30a)***
 - Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares'
 - ***Some translations translate this as 'But now' and the ESV says therefore.***
 - ***No matter how it's translated, it shows a detailed announcement of judgment that is coming.***

- We go from the conviction that Eli was most likely feeling in his heart, to the consequences that are to come because of the actions of his sons and even his own actions.
 - ***This sudden change is going to greatly affect Eli and his household, but God still has the priesthood in His hands.***
- ***Sovereignty Seen. (V. 30b)***
 - ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.’
 - ***This is God speaking here through the prophet to Eli.***
 - At first glance of this verse, it can cause naysayers and unbelievers to say that God is contradicting Himself here.
 - ***It can cause people to look at this verse and say that God nullified or revoked his promise to Aaron.***
 - But I do not believe that is the case here.
 - As we see in the future of Israel to come, the priesthood would continue to be in the hands of Aaron’s descendants.
 - ***But, God makes it clear that this generation of serving priests would be destroyed in the Family of Eli and that the Family of Eli will be removed.***
 - ***God keeps His promise to the house of Aaron, but He has to prune the priesthood due to the decisions and poor choices made by Eli and his family.***
 - Robert D. Bergen said ***‘As a result of the house of Eli’s sins, the Lord would ‘cut short’ their ‘strength’.***
 - Even in this, we see God’s sovereignty in the phrase ‘those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.’
 - ***John Woodhouse said ‘The truth of God’s sovereignty in revealing himself, choosing, and giving does not nullify but intensifies the demand for holiness in the recipients of His grace.’***
 - God is going to honor those who honor Him.
 - But Eli, Hophni and Phineas did not honor the Lord, and there ARE consequences for that...
 - ***So far tonight we’ve seen that the messenger brings conviction, messenger bestows consequences, but there are two other things in our text that we need to point out tonight:***

Point 3: *The Messenger Broadcasts a Curse. (V. 31-34)*

- ‘Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. **32** Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there

shall not be an old man in your house forever. **33** The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his[b] eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants[c] of your house shall die by the sword of men.[d] **34** And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.’

- ***Bad decisions, as they often do, bring punishments.***
 - ***Surly at this point, Eli had to be on his knees. Sad and burdened that his son's actions have caused this kind of shame and agony to their family, but also to the Lord.***
- Verses 31-34 show that the daily of Eli would not just forfeit the promise of the priesthood (shown in verse 30), but now they would also reap real physical consequences.
 - ***The sinful decisions that you and I make even in our ‘rebellious’ moments, do have consequences.***
 - God can’t turn and look the other way when it comes to our sin. Neither should we!
- ***The curse that this messenger broadcasts was a punishment due to the actions of Hophni and Phineas, and the lack of action by Eli.***
 - There are **4** ways that this punishment will be carried out:
- ***The Days are Coming. (V. 31)***
 - ‘Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.’
 - ***Verse 31 is showing Eli that the punishment is in the works. The prophecy is going to come to pass.***
 - Verses 32-34 show the practical outworkings of what this judgment will become and how it will devastate.
 - ***The words used in verses 31-34 are the same type of verbiage that is often used in other curses in the old covenant.***
 - ***The Hebrew text of verse 31 is much more graphic than what we are given in the english text itself. The Hebrew literally reads:***
 - ***‘I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house.’***
 - ***This is a graphic warning, because this curse is serious and the days are indeed coming.***
 - The days are coming, and the following verses show us what was going to occur in the future.
- ***The Distress is Coming. (V. 32)***
 - ‘Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.’ 1st Samuel 2:32
 - ***Most of this curse, Eli will not see come to actuality.***

- Including the distress that is coming in verse 32.
 - *At the time Eli received this part of the curse, it is likely he had no idea what it meant.*
 - *But when we are able to look at all scripture, we can see how this prophecy played out.*
 - *The phrase ‘The prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel’ is most likely alluding to the days when Solomon will be king.*
 - According to the scripture, in those days, there will be a surviving descendant of Eli by the name of Abiathar.
 - *But Abiathar will look on in distress because one of the first things that Solomon does as king, is he kicks Abiathar out of the priesthood and banishes him.*
 - And in [1st Kings 2:27](#), when this historical event is recording, the writer includes this note with it:
 - *So Solomon expelled Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, thus fulfilling the word of the LORD that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.*
 - The days were coming and so were distress but also...
- **Death is coming. (V. 33)**
 - ‘The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his[b] eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants[c] of your house shall die by the sword of men.’ 1st Samuel 2:33
 - *Twice in verses 31 & 32, we see that it is mentioned ‘that there will not be an old man in your house’*
 - Part of the fulfillment of this is the massacre that we find in 1st Samuel 22:6-23. Saul killed the priests and although it was sad, it was part of the fulfillment of what we see here in our text.
 - *In that passage of scripture, the priests of Nob, who were descendants of Eli, were going to be killed by Saul.*
 - *The only survivor of this group would be Abiathar who would ‘weep his eyes out of drive his heart’.*
 - And as we just mentioned, he would be banished by king Solomon.
 - John Woodhouse said *‘His escape will leave him bearing the sorrow of the tragedy and the distress of his eventual banishment.’*
 - With this curse, we see Days are Coming, Distress is Coming and Death is Coming.
- **Depression is coming for Eli. (V. 34)**
 - ‘And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.’ 1st Samuel 2:34

- ***This part of the curse is the gut wrenching part for Eli.***
 - This is the part of the curse that he will personally see come to life so that he will know it is legitimate and real.
- ***Exactly what the messenger said here concerning Hophni and Phineas came to reality in 1st Samuel 4.***
 - His own sons are going to die and he will see this and it will be a confirmation to him that the curse is real.
- ***Yet again we see the reality that God cannot stand sin and there are consequences.***
- Tonight we've seen that a messenger brings conviction, the messenger bestows consequences, and the messenger broadcasts a curse:

Point 4: *The Messenger Brings Change. (V. 35-36)*

- 'And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. **36** And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."'"
- ***As this word from the messenger begins to slow down, verse 35 is an example that in all of this, God still has a plan for His Word to go on!***
 - Even when God has to execute judgment, He does with Grace and Glory for Himself.
- ***Impacting Change. (V. 35)***
 - 'And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.'
 - ***When reading this verse, some will think that it's immediate fulfillment is the fact that Samuel would be a faithful priest. But we need to realize that Samuel ends up being more of a prophet than a priest.***
 - ***I believe the fulfillment of this prophecy in Israel, is one that is an impactful change for generations to come.***
 - ***I believe this prophecy is fulfilled in the longer term by the fact that Zadok is going to be appointed as priest in the place of Abiathar.***
 - And according to 1st Kings 2:35 and 1st Kings 4:1, the house of Zadok will become the priestly line.
 - ***And if we look even further ahead, it's possible that this messenger is even referencing the 'faithful' priest being our High Priest, Jesus Christ!***
 - 'Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the

service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.’
Hebrews 2:17

- ***An impacting change for Israel, is an indefinite contention.***
- ***Indefinite Contention. (V. 36)***
 - ‘And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.’ 1st Samuel 2:36
 - ***The house of Eli would live in contention the rest of their days.***
 - Knowing that their ancestors disqualified them from the priesthood.
 - ***The punishment they are going to receive would be fitting of their crime as John Woodhouse states it ‘The gluttonous bullies will become hungry beggars.’***
 - What happens to the line of Eli reminds us of what Hannah said in 1st Samuel 2:5 ‘*Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.*’
 - Robert D. Bergen said ***‘The priestly line of Eli would become so unimportant in the religious power structure of future generations that they would not even be eligible to receive payment for the services they rendered.’***
 - Indeed, it’s a sad story. But the truth remains. God rejects sin. And because He does, He rejects the rebels who do not repent of their sin.

Conclusion:

- ***Based on tonight’s message, it is the desire of my heart that we will see the doctrinal and theological truth that God rejects those who consistently and constantly rebel against Him.***
 - This unnamed messenger brought a strong word to the lead priest in Israel.
 - ***This shows that no one is so ‘high up’ that God can’t bring them down.***
 - Tonight, is there some rebellion left in your heart that you need to let go of and give it to God?
 - ***Maybe the Lord used His Word as a messenger to you tonight to show you something in your life that you need to make right before Him.***
 - ***Point 1: A Messenger Brings Conviction. (V. 27-29)***
 - ***Point 2: The Messenger Bestows Consequences. (V. 30)***
 - ***Point 3: The Messenger Broadcasts a Curse. (V. 31-34)***
 - ***Point 4: The Messenger Brings Change. (V. 35-36)***
 - ***As this time, I encourage you to respond to the Lord, and to squash the rebel side of you in your heart and life.***

Sermon #7:

'The Call of God!'

1st Samuel 3

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this passage we can see the Call of God by looking at a Quiet Period, a Quandary Presented, a Quivering Pronouncement, a Question Proposed and a Quest that Presents itself for young Samuel.

Intro:

- ***As long as I live, I'll never forget the night that God called me to the ministry.***
 - As an 11-year old boy at Centri-Kid camps at Toccoa Falls College in Georgia, God called me to the ministry.
 - ***At that time I obviously didn't know what all it would entail, but I knew that God had called me and that I was to follow Him, all the days of my life.***
 - ***There are many strong things that we find in our world today, but I can promise you that there is nothing stronger than the call of God.***
- ***In our scripture text tonight, we are going to see that God calls Samuel to his first prophetic message that he is to deliver.***
 - And boy, is it quite the doozy.
 - ***The first act of Samuel as a prophet may have been one of his more difficult tasks that God had called him to do.***
 - ***He was to announce the judgment of the Lord to the most powerful family in Israel!***
 - And what we will find tonight, is that Samuel's message is coming right after the unnamed messenger just gave Eli bad news concerning his family.
 - ***While the messages that God would give Samuel to speak were hard and never easy, they were always necessary. The Call of God would sustain Samuel throughout His ministry.***

Read 1st Samuel 3

Question to ask?

How does this passage of scripture show us that the Call of God is strong and Persistent?

Point 1: *A Quiet Period. (V. 1)*

- 'Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.' 1st Samuel 3
 - ***As a Christian who has the OT and the NT, it can be very easy for us to take for granted the Word of God and the Holy Spirit that resides in believers.***
 - But even then, sometimes we may feel as if we are in a 'quiet' period. Meaning, we haven't heard from the Lord.
 - ***Israel had gotten used to not hearing from God very often.***

- So as young Samuel was growing up and ministering unto the Lord, he was learning from Eli and the Word of the Lord was rare.
 - *Not necessarily an exciting time to begin your ministry...*
 - I believe there are two things to pull out of verse 1 that show us that this was a Quiet Period...
- ***The Rarity of God's Words.***
 - 'And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision'
 - ***We must remember, that just because God is sometimes silent, does not mean He's not present.***
 - God is always present whether we choose to listen with our ears or open up our eyes to see what He is doing
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word for 'rare' in the Hebrew literally means precious.
 - ***During this time in Israel's history, prophetic visions were not the normality as they had been in days gone by.***
 - Stephen J. Andrews points out ***'Between Joshua and Samuel there were only three prophets mentioned and five revelations given.'***
 - Those 3 prophets can be found in Judges 4:4, Judges 6:8, and 1st Samuel 2:27-36.
 - The 5 visions that God gave were found in Judges 2:1-3, Judges 6:11-23, Judges 7:2-11, Judges 10:11-14, and Judges 13:3-21.
 - ***God wasn't speaking as much since the days of Joshua, so this can cause us to ask, 'what is going on that God was so silent in Israel at this time?'***
- ***The Reason for God's Quietness.***
 - 'there was no frequent vision'
 - The rebellion of the Lord by the people of Israel was the reason for His silence here.
 - ***God does want us to obey Him, and we should not take our obedience to Him lightly.***
 - ***Most recently, in 1st Samuel 2:11-36, we see that the sons of Eli had disobeyed God.***
 - But, Judges 2:14 also shows us that Israel rebelled against God in those days and God handed them over to their enemies.
 - 'So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.' Judges 2:14
 - ***God is good, but He cannot tolerate disobedience.***
 - The fact that God was not speaking to them regularly, could have been to show them His judgment on them.

■ ***Psalms 66:18 shows us that if we keep sin in our lives, God cannot hear us!***

- ‘If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.’ Psalms 66:18

○ This truly was a quiet period for Israel. We see the Rarity and the Reason.

Point 2: *A Quandary Presented. (V. 2-7)*

- ‘At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.’ 1st Samuel 3:2-7
 - A **‘quandry’** is defined as **‘a state of perplexity or uncertainty over what to do in a difficult situation.’**
 - The fact that verse 1 says the voice of the Lord was rare in those days, is important to us understanding this quandary that Samuel finds himself in.
 - ***Verse 7 reveals that Samuel didn’t even know the Lord yet, so he mistakens God for Eli.***
 - There are **2** things to pull out of these verses concerning this Quandary that is being presented.
- ***Business as Usual. (V. 2-3)***
 - ‘At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. **3** The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.’ 1st Samuel 3:2-3
 - ***Verses 2-3 are describing what a usual night at Shiloh must have been like.***
 - Eli was sleeping in ‘his own place’ while Samuel was the closest of all Israelites to the presence of God, sleeping where the ark of God was.
 - ***In verse 2, we see that yet again the writer of 1st Samuel shows us clear evidence that Eli, the High Priest, was aging.***
 - Stephen J. Andrews said ***‘The reference to Eli’s eyes is intended to cause us to pause and wonder about his spiritual sight.’***
 - ***We know that it is still night time, due to the fact that the lamp of God had not yet gone out.***
 - According to Exodus 27:20-21 and Leviticus 24:1-4, the lamp would burn from evening to morning in the tabernacle.

- John Woodhouse said *‘On the other hand, in the darkness represented by God’s silence and Eli’s blindness, the news that God’s lamp ‘had not yet gone out’ suggests that God had not yet abandoned His people. There was still hope.’*
 - While there is quite the interesting symbolism that you find in verses 2-3, the main thing is that it was a normal night, but it wouldn’t remain normal for long.
- *What verse 3 describes of what Samuel was doing right before God called Him, was an example that he was fulfilling the obligations to tend to the lamp as given in the Torah according to Leviticus 24:3 and Numbers 18:23.*
 - We see Business as usual, but also...
- **Bewilderment Unrecognized. (V. 4-7)**
 - ‘Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.’
 - **The Hebrew form of Samuel’s response here in these verses, closely parallels Abraham, Jacon and Moses when God called them.**
 - Genesis 22:1, Genesis 22:11, Genesis 31:11, and Exodus 3:4 all show us their responses.
 - **Samuel’s is similar in the sense that he responded by saying ‘here I am’ even though he did not know the Lord at this time and thought it was Eli.**
 - In this text, I believe it seems clear that although the voice of God was rare in those days, this night it was audible.
 - *I’ve never heard God speak to me in an audible voice, but I know He has led me and spoken to me in other ways.*
 - But here, it seems as if it is audible.
 - *What I love about these verses is how persistent the Call of God is which shows how patient He truly is with us!*
 - This call that God was giving Samuel was personal, purposeful, and private.
 - **Samuel was hearing the call, but not YET listening to the call.**
 - **Verse 7 reveals to us ‘Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord’**
 - This is one of those ‘wait up hold a minute’ moments in scripture for me.
 - In the previous scripture verses were *we not* told that Samuel was ministering to the Lord, growing with the Lord and enjoyed God’s favor?
 - **After further examination of these words in the Hebrew, 1st Samuel 2:12, where it was said that Hophni and Phineas did not**

know the Lord, is the same wording used here except for one important detail.

○ **Here in 1st Samuel 3:7, it says ‘Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord’**

- Hophni and Phineas didn’t know the Lord simply because they rejected the Lord.
- Samuel did not yet know God because God’s Word had not yet been revealed to Him.

● **So while Samuel had been working for God, He wasn’t yet living for God. There’s a big difference.**

- God wasn’t known by the people in and around Shiloh, but all of that was about to change with the Quivering Pronouncement that we find here in verses 8-14.

Point 3: A Quivering Pronouncement. (V. 8-14)

- And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.10 And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” 11 Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,[a] and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”
- **In these verses we see that God is going to give Samuel his first mission as a prophet. One that I’m sure would make anyone quiver.**
 - I believe in these verses we find **4** things to pull out of the text concerning this Quivering Pronouncement.
- **Eli’s Realization. (V. 8)**
 - ‘And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.’
 - **After 3 times of the Lord calling Samuel, Eli finally starts to catch on.**
 - **Due to various reasons, it had been a long time at Shiloh since something like this had happened.**
 - **And yes, Eli’s sight was dim, but he was not completely blind.**
- **Eli’s Recommendation. (V. 9)**
 - ‘Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.’

- *After Eli realizes what is going on, he gives Samuel the instructions that he will need if the Lord calls to Him again.*
 - Eli gives simple and sound instructions here for what Samuel is supposed to do if God speaks again.
 - *Eli simply tells the young man to tell him to ‘speak’ and he (Samuel) will hear.*
- **Samuel Responds. (V. 10)**
 - ‘And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.”’
 - *Verse 10 really and truly is an incredible verse of scripture that we find in the OT.*
 - *The fourth time that God calls Samuel, is different from the first three. There are two main differences.*
 - #1: ‘The Lord came and stood’
 - *This was no dream or a figment of Samuel’s imagination.*
 - *Since we are not given anymore details than what is in the text, we don’t need to speculate on the manner of God’s presence.*
 - We just know that God was present.
 - #2: ‘Samuel! Samuel!’
 - Previously, God only said his name once.
 - *The fact that God repeated Samuel’s name twice, is similar to the call of Abraham at Mount Moriah in Genesis 22:1 and Genesis 22:11.*
 - Samuel identifies himself as a servant of the Lord, and for the first time in a very long time, God begins to speak to Samuel.
- **God Reveals. (V. 11-14)**
 - ‘Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,^[a] and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”’
 - *What the Lord says to Samuel is a confirmation of the judgment that was given against the house of Eli by the mystery messenger in 1st Samuel 2:30-36.*
 - Now it’s being given to Samuel.
 - *The language here is strong enough to make anyone quiver and shake.*
 - *Just imagine the young Samuel receiving this message concerning one of his mentors and his boss.*

- Robert D. Bergen said ***‘Furthermore, the magnitude and form of God’s judgment would be so shocking that it would cause ‘the ears of everyone who hears it to tingle’ that is, to give rise to great fear and dismay.’***
 - God was going to destroy the line of Eli that no offering or sacrifice could make atonement for it.
- ***It’s simple, yet still terrible. God is going to do what He said He was going to do.***
 - ***This was the way that Samuel’s ministry started and the weight that he would carry.***

Point 4: A Question Proposed. (V. 15-18)

- ‘Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” 17 And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.” 1st Samuel 3:15-18
 - Obviously since Eli was the one that Samuel went to concerning ‘the call’, Eli wanted to know what God said to the young boy.
 - ***So, we see that Eli proposes this question to the young boy. I believe there are 3 that we need to pull out of the text here.***
- ***The Fright. (V. 15)***
 - ‘Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.’
 - ***Samuel continued on with his regular duties in the temple, but he was burdened by what God had told him.***
 - ***One thing that those who don’t stand behind the pulpit may not understand, is the burden of being a messenger for the Lord.***
 - Those who are in ministry carry a burden that only those who are also in ministry carry.
 - The caring for souls, the handling of God’s Word, and Leading God’s Flock is an incredible burden at times.
 - ***The night that God called me to the ministry when I was 11, I didn’t sleep very well that night. As I assume Samuel didn’t sleep well on this night that God first spoke to Him.***
 - ***It’s also not revealed that Samuel knew what was going on at Shiloh. We know he worked closely with Eli and not Hophni and Phineas.***
 - So it is likely that all of this is new to him, so it makes total sense for him to be afraid.
 - I know I would be!
 - Stephen Andrews said ***‘The prophetic call of God is both a joyous occasion and a painful one. On the one hand, the prophet is called to***

Speak a message of hope to Israel. But on the other, the message could also be one of doom and destruction.'

- **The Force. (V. 16-17)**

- 'But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." 17 And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you."
- *Eli wants Samuel to tell him what it is God revealed to him, after all, Eli is the high priest at Shiloh.*

- **Without realizing it possibly, Eli teaches Samuel a great lesson about being a prophet here.**

- *A prophet back in the OT and a Pastor today, has the obligation to proclaim what God shares with them.*
- *Whether it's good news or bad news, if God tells His messengers something, that messenger is to proclaim the Word of God to others.*
 - Still, Eli was kind. In verse 16 Eli says 'Samuel my son.'
 - Yet Eli is firm with him.
- **This is a lesson that Samuel learned here that would benefit him later on in his ministry when he has to stand firm against Saul.**

- **The Fate. (V. 18)**

- 'So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."
- **God says what He says and what He says is truth. Whether we like it or not.**
 - Many if not most humans in their flesh, would expect Eli to get mad at God here and maybe even lash out at Samuel in a rude or physical way. Maybe even verbally.
- *Eli's response teaches Samuel and can teach us an important lesson.*
 - **That we are dealing with a Holy and Sovereign God, and Eli takes responsibility for his actions.**
- At this point I'm sure Samuel had put two and two together. From the mystery messenger and now God speaking to Samuel.
 - *That Samuel would be the immediate successor of Eli.*
 - Maybe Eli felt regret for the mistakes he made and wanted to teach young Samuel what it would take to be God's messenger to a nation that did not want to listen to God.
- So, Eli accepts his fate as he accepts what the Lord said to Samuel.
 - **Whether you like it or not, truth is truth.**
- Tonight we've seen a quiet period, a quandary presented, a quivering pronouncement, a question proposed, but now we see a quest that presents itself.

Point 5: A Quest Presents itself. (V. 19-21)

- ‘And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.’ 1st Samuel 3:19-21
- ***The quest of Samuel’s life would be to be God’s spokesperson for the nation of Israel.***
 - As these verses reveal, Samuel was God’s man.
 - ***And God, who was once silent, was speaking through his messenger Samuel and verse 20 reveals that the whole nation knew that Samuel was God’s man for this time.***
- ****Word Study****
 - The word ‘established’ in verse 20, comes from the Hebrew word **‘amon’** ***and literally means trustworthiness and reliability.***
 - Due to Hophni and Phineas, the priesthood had become unreliable in the minds of many.
 - ***But Samuel was going to restore much of this because of what God is going to do through Him.***
 - ***God has presented a Quest for each of us.***
 - Are we seeking to follow God in the quest of Matthew 28:19-20?
 - Going therefore to all nations?
 - Sharing and spreading the Gospel?
 - ***Robert D. Bergen points out ‘For the first time since Moses, Israel had a national prophet.’***

Conclusion:

- ***The call of God is strong and is something that should never be underestimated.***
 - The most important thing you need to make sure of tonight, is, have you responded to God’s call from darkness to His light?
 - ***If you have responded to that call, what is God calling to you to do in your life in the here and now?***
 - ***Have you responded to the Call of God?***
- ***Point 1: A Quiet Period. (V. 1)***
- ***Point 2: A Quandary Presented. (V. 2-7)***
- ***Point 3: A Quivering Pronouncement. (V. 8-14)***
- ***Point 4: A Question Proposed. (V. 15-18)***
- ***Point 5: A Quest Presents itself. (V. 19-21)***
 - You come as God leads during this time of invitation.

Sermon #8:

'The Capture of the Ark of the Covenant!'

1st Samuel 4:1-11

Sermon in a Sentence:

We see the significance in the Capturing of the Ark of the Covenant by looking at the Despair in Losing, Distinct Loudness, Dumbfounded Leaders and Disappointment Lingering.

Intro:

- Tonight, we begin transitioning into the narratives found in Samuel that describe the daily life of Israel as well as the main events.
 - ***Specifically tonight, we will dive deeper into the Ark of the Covenant.***
 - The Ark of the Covenant was briefly mentioned in our scripture text last week in 1st Samuel 3:3.
 - ***The Bible Dictionary Defines the Ark of the Covenant as 'Original container for the Ten Commandments and the central symbol of God's presence with the people of Israel.'***
 - The ark of the Covenant was crucial for Israel because it was God's presence with them.
 - ***The Ark of the Covenant is also a major theme in 1-2 Samuel.***
 - ***Throughout 1-2 Samuel, the Ark of the Covenant takes quite the interesting Journey.***
 - Look at your paper or on the screen to see the journey that the Ark takes throughout 1st and 2nd Samuel:
-

1st Samuel 3:3	The Lord calls to Samuel who is sleeping in the tent where the Ark of God was.
1st Samuel 4	Philistines capture the ark and have it for 7 months according to 1st Samuel 6:1.
1st Samuel 5:1-7	Philistines bring the ark to Ashdod, setting it up beside the idol dagon.
1st Samuel 5:8-9	Philistines bring the ark to Gath.
1st Samuel 5:10-12	Philistines send the ark to Ekron.
1st Samuel 6:10-15	Philistines return the ark with a guilt offering to Beth-shemesh.
1st Samuel 6:19-21	The Lord strikes 70 men dead for looking at the ark.

1st Samuel 7:1-2	Men of Kiriath-Jearim take the ark to the house of Abinadab (stays there 20 years).
1st Samuel 14:18	Saul commands Ahijah to bring the ark to the war camp.
2nd Samuel 6:2-5	David begins to move the ark to Jerusalem on a cart.
2nd Samuel 6:6-7	The Lord strikes Uzzah dead for holding on to the ark.
2nd Samuel 6:10-11	David takes the ark to the house of Obed-edom, where it stays for three months.
2nd Samuel 6:12-17	David brings the ark to Jerusalem, and places it inside a tent.
2nd Samuel 15:24-25	Zadok brings the ark to David, who commands him to carry it back to Jerusalem.
2nd Samuel 15:29	Zadok and Abiathar carry the ark back to Jerusalem.

○ ***As you can see, the ark is going to take quite the journey in our study of 1-2 Samuel.***

- Tonight we will begin that study, by looking at 1st Samuel 4:1-11, as we look at ‘The Capturing of the Ark of the Covenant!’

****Read 1st Samuel 4:1-11****

Question to Ask:

How does this passage of scripture show us the significance of the Ark of the Covenant being taken by the Philistines?

Point 1: *Despair in Losing. (V. 1-4)*

- ***Israel was not different from most ancient cultures when it comes to the fact that they fought against other nations and people groups.***
 - All throughout the OT we read of battles that the Israelites were in and different locations where they occurred.
 - ***These verses show us the Despair in losing a battle and what happens because of this.***
- ***Verse 1:***

- ‘And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek.’ 1st Samuel 4:1
- ***We are told clearly here in verse 1 that there is a battle, but we do not know why the battle started.***
 - ***Geographically, we are given some pretty important information.***
 - In the first half of the 12th century, it is believed that the Philistines migrated to the coastal regions of Southwest Israel in large numbers.
 - ***In the book of Judges, we are introduced to the Philistines and that they are a threat to Israel.***
 - Judges 2:14, Judges 3:8, Judges 4:2, and 1st Samuel 12:9 all show times when the Philistines defeated Israel.
 - The geography points that are given in verse 1 show us where each nation was prospectively encamped at.
 - ***The Philistines:***
 - It is believed that the philistines army had their base camp along the banks of the Yarkon River at Aphek.
 - ***This would put them 2 miles to the east of Ebenezer.***
 - ***The Israelites:***
 - The israelites were at Ebenezer which would have been 20 miles west of Shiloh.
- ***Verse 2:***
 - ‘The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle.’
 - ***We know the two sides were lining up to do battle, but verse 2 explains the depravity that ensued.***
 - 4,000 casualties during this battle, which seems like a pretty serious defeat.
 - ***Israel lost the battle, and this leads us to the question that the leaders of Israel proposed in verse 3.***
- ***Verse 3:***
 - ‘And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it^[a] may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.”
 - ***Obviously anytime a nation suffers a defeat in any kind of war, it can be a time of crisis.***
 - Bryan Chappel stated that the circumstances for Israel were high:

- *'This disaster fits into the pattern that had been going on for some 200 years, through the period covered by the book of Judges. Again and again the existence of the young nation of Israel was threatened.'*
 - *The elders of Israel wanted to know why this defeat happened when they were God's chosen nation, God's chosen people, and God had promised many things to them.*
 - The way that the elders word this question in verse 3, show that they somewhat had an idea of what was going on.
 - *They knew that their defeat was an act of God, allowing this to happen, instead of viewing it as the Philistines just coming out and defeating them.*
 - I think what I find so interesting here is that the elders of Israel ask God why. Which is different then how they responded in Judges when faced with defeat.
 - *In Judges 3:9, Judges 3:15, Judges 4:3, Judges 6:6, Judges 6:7, Judges 10:10, and Judges 10:12 all show that Israel had cried out to the Lord.*
 - This time, they just asked WHY.
 - All we don't know exactly why God allowed this defeat, I think the simple answer is that Israel was disobedient.
 - *We must not forgot that in 1st Samuel 3 God told Samuel that He would do something to make every ear tingle.*
 - *1st Samuel 4:3b shows us that wanted to send for the Ark of the Covenant, God's Presence, from Shiloh.*
 - Their immediate quick fix/solution to this problem that they faced was to bring the Lord's Covenant into the battle arena.
 - *This is not the first time this had been done.*
 - *Numbers 10:33-36, Joshua 3:3-7, Joshua 4:1-18 and Joshua 6:6-21 all show was that the ark was present among Israel's military forces for leadership and protection.*
 - I tend to agree with what Robert D. Bergen said: *'The problem with Israel was not the bad theology of the elders—faith in things rather than faith in God— but the sins of 'Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas,' who 'were there with the ark of the covenant of God.'*
 - We're still seeing the consequences of Hophni & Phineas's actions and how what they did is greatly affecting Israel.
- *Verse 4:*
 - 'So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.'

- *The two men that had disobeyed God and caused most of the problems that Israel was experiencing, were sitting right there with the Ark of the Covenant.*
 - Despite Hophni and Phineas, the writer of Samuel makes it clear that **'the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim.'**
 - The writer is reminding us that this is the God of Hannah and that this is almighty God!
- *Bryan Chappel said 'The elders and the people of Israel may not yet have understood, but the answer to their 'why' question was not God's failure to keep the promise of the covenant represented by the ark, but the failure of the two wretches who were carrying the ark down from Shiloh.'*
 - As we can see 4 verses in, there was great depravity in losing.

Point 2: *Distinct Loudness. (V. 5)*

- *Verse 5 reveals to us that action that comes from the Israelites once the Ark reaches the camp.*
- *Verse 5:*
 - 'As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded.'
 - ***The Israelites were excited and they shouted so loud that the Philistines heard them nearly 2 miles away.***
 - *Verse 5 says that the ground literally shook.*
 - I think the Israelites felt that now that God was in the camp, that they would be able to win the battle against the Philistines.
 - ***While they had the right idea that God is the only one that could allow them to obtain victory, there was still sin in the camp and Israel had still been disobedient!***
 - In fact, Hophni and Phineas were the ones who delivered it into camp.
 - ***So how could God bless us a nation that was still being very disobedient?***
 - We've seen the Despair in losing, Distinct Loudness, next we see...

Point 3: *Dumbfounded Leaders. (V. 6-9)*

- *The Philistines were able to hear this commotion from over 2 miles away.*
 - So, that shows us how loud this really was.
 - ***The following verses show us that the Philistines were truly dumbfounded when it came to the commotion that heard in Ebenezer.***
- *Verse 6:*
 - 'And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp,'

- The leaders of the Philistines would obviously be dumbfounded because they just defeated these people and all of a sudden they are shouting?
 - *The fact that the Philistines referred to the Israelites as ‘Hebrews’, is important.*
 - *Most of the time in the OT foreigners often called the people of Israel ‘Hebrews’ in a derogatory tone.*
 - This is seen in Genesis 39:14, Genesis 31:12, and Exodus 1:19.
- *Verse 7:*
 - ‘And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, 7 the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.’
 - *To me, the reaction that the Philistines have of hearing the shout and the arrival of the ark is shocking.*
 - *They just defeated their enemy and killed 4,000 of their soldiers.*
 - So why would the philistines be afraid of the Israelites?
 - *Verse 8 reveals to us why the Philistines were afraid.*
- *Verse 8:*
 - ‘Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.’
 - *I believe the Philistines were dumbfounded in a way because they had heard the news of what God had done years earlier in Egypt.*
 - When a move of God occurs, people find out.
 - *Even in the ancient world without mass communication and social media, word had gotten to the Philistines on how amazing their God was.*
 - While the Philistines did know some things about God of Israel, they also struggled with some misconceptions.
 - *Verse 8 reveals that the Philistines viewed the Israelites as Polytheistic meaning that they had multiple gods.*
 - This is very possible for them to assume when they heard about the plagues that hit Egypt.
 - *It wouldn’t be far fetched to see that they may have thought each plague came from a different ‘god’.*
 - *We know that they must have understood that the ark was the visible throne of God’s invisible deity.*
 - Because why else would they be so afraid?
 - *So the Philistines had somewhat of an understanding of the history of Israel.*

- ***But, even if they were incorrect on viewing the God of Israel as Polytheistic, they were correct on the fact that Israel had experienced a supernatural deliverance that could only come from God.***
 - Remember, at this time in the ancient world, Egypt was the most powerful nation. And Israel was delivered from them!
- *Verse 9 will go on to show us what the Philistines decide to do.*
- ***Verse 9:***
 - ‘Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.’
 - ***So, the Philistines decide to engage the Israelites in battle again!***
 - ***For what we believe was the 2nd time that very day!***
 - Robert D. Bergen said *‘Knowledge of these details, compounded by a fear of the consequences of losing to the Hebrews energized the Philistines to battlefield bravery.’*
 - *The philistines didn’t want to become slaves, so they decide to approach the Hebrews again.*
 - We’ve seen Despair in Losing, Distinct Loudness, and Dumbfounded Leaders.

Point 4: *Disappointment Lingering. (V. 10-11)*

- ***Not only did Israel lose one battle, they lost two battles with a total of 34,000 people dying.***
 - The disappointment in Israel only got worse and it seemed to linger.
 - ***Here’s what the scripture says about the disappointment that Israel experienced.***
- ***Verse 10:***
 - ‘So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell.’
 - The Israelites lost 30,000 men and the Bible says ***‘they fled, every man to his home.’***
 - ***Which essentially means the army has been disbanded either by decision or by defeat.***
 - Here, it seems to be because of the latter.
 - ***I believe we see God’s judgment begins for Israel.***
 - The things that God said through the unnamed messenger and through Samuel, were coming true.
 - ***God was judging Israel quite harshly to get their attention.***
 - ***Robert D. Bergen said ‘The presence of Yahweh, God of the Sinai covenant, in the camp of Israel meant that the covenant’s supreme enforcer had now been***

forced into a direct confrontation with the two most egregious violaters of the covenant.'

- The Israelites expected and assumed that God would be an ally against the Philistines, but the Lord had His own agenda.

- *One that did include judgment.*

- *While the loss of life was no doubt severe, this was the first time in Israel's history that their most sacred material possession was gone, as we find out in verse 11.*

- *Verse 11:*

- 'And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.'
- *Two important things are communicated to us in verse 11.*
 - *#1: The ark of God was captured and we will see this saga continue later on in 1st Samuel.*
 - *#2: the two priests who had brought much destruction on Israel, were dead.*

- *We know that at this time Eli was still living. So, he was able to see part of the prophecy enacted in the fact that his own sons dad.*

- *Such a heavy text of scripture, what can we gain from this as Christians?*

- Don't forget God's Power.
- Don't forsake God's Promises.
- Don't fumble God's Plan.

Conclusion:

- This scripture text is truly sad.

- *God's people were defeated.*

- *But sometimes God does allow defeat to occur so that He can come in and change things for the better and for His Glory.*

- As tough as it is, this was God's judgment on the years that Israel's spiritual leadership had decayed immensely.

- *Don't forget, there are consequences and God cannot let sin go unpunished.*

- Tonight we see the capturing of the Ark of the Covenant by:

- **Point 1: *Despair in Losing. (V. 1-4)***
- **Point 2: *Distinct Loudness. (V. 5)***
- **Point 3: *Dumbfounded Leaders. (V. 6-9)***
- **Point 4: *Disappointment Lingering. (V. 10-11)***

- Who's capturing your heart tonight?

- The Lord? Or the enemy?

Sermon #9:

'The Pitfalls of a Patriarchal Priest!'

1 Samuel 4:12-22

Sermon in a Sentence:

The Pitfalls of a Patriarchal Priest, Eli, that can be pulled right from the text are the Disheveled Priorities, Dead Parents, and the Dissolving Presence of God due to the absence of the Ark of the Covenant.

Intro:

- I've heard it said many times by other Pastors I listen to and too many of my mentors *'Don't sacrifice your family on the altar of ministry'*
 - *And what this means is simple. Don't make your ministry so high of a priority, that you neglect the ministry that God has given you in the home.*
- In our scripture text tonight, we are going to see that Eli is going to die because he's upset the Ark of the Covenant is gone, and due to his poor spiritual leadership skills, his sons and many other people's sons will die as a result.
 - *What we find in our text tonight are the results of a ministry that was built on unhealthy and unsustainable ministry habits over a long period of time.*
 - All Christians are called to serve Christ in ministry, but we are not called to make ministry an idol.
- *Although we don't know all the specifics, due to the results we find in this passage, we see that the spiritual decisions that were made over a period of time, would be detrimental to Israel.*
 - Now that we live under the New Covenant through Christ Jesus, we no longer go through priests and the old covenant.
 - *So while we may not be priests, we still have a ministry.*
 - And whether you are a Pastor, SS teacher, Deacon, on any committee, we all must make healthy choices when it comes to our family or we will end up like Eli and his family, that we read about in this text.

Read 1 Samuel 4:12-22

Question to Ask:

What were the pitfalls that led to the downfall of the entire family of the Elide priestly line?

Point 1: *Disheveled Priorities. (V. 12-18)*

- 'A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head. **13** When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. **14** When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?" Then the man hurried and came and told Eli. **15**

Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. **16** And the man said to Eli, “I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.” And he said, “How did it go, my son?” **17** He who brought the news answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.” **18** As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.’

- ***The reason that Israel was in battle that day, Eli was sitting by the road, and the ark of the covenant was gone, was because Eli had kept disheveled priorities for years.***
 - Disheveled can be defined as *disorderly, unity, or disarranged.*
 - *When we choose not to keep the write priorities in life by doing our own thing separate from what the Lord expects of us, we will reap the results of that.*
- I think scholar Robert D. Bergen summarized this section of Samuel 4 well when he said *‘The prophetically announced curse against the house of Eli proceeds here, as two additional generations are now touched by it. Not only does the elderly Eli die in the tragic section, but Eli’s grandson Ichabod is made an orphan, deprived not only of his father but now his mother as well.’*
 - What we find in verses 12-18, are the initial results of the pitfalls that Eli fell into. The results of Disheveled Priorities.
- ***A Messenger Arrives. (V. 12)***
 - ‘A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head.’
 - ***It’s important to know that even without phones, email, or mass communication technology, that word did travel fast.***
 - The battlefield where Israel was fighting that day was approximately 22 miles away from Shiloh.
 - *Verse 12 tells us that he physically ran. So, this young man traveled 22 miles on foot to share the devastating news.*
 - Now, other than the fact that this man was from the tribe of Benjamin, we are not told much about him.
 - ***But there is something in verse 12 that should be of importance to us...***
 - ***His appearance.***
 - The bible tells us ***‘with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head’***
 - In OT times, when someone had tore their clothes and put dirt on their head, it was a sign of reacted to grief and horror.
 - While Eli was blind, when folks saw him entire into town, they new that the news was certainly not good.

- John Woodhouse says *‘One look at him, and it was plain that he brought bad news. I picture him with tears streaming down his face. Look at him, and you dread what he is about to say.’*
- **The Man Anticipates. (V. 13a)**
 - ‘When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God.’
 - Previous verses that we’ve studied in 1st Samuel, told us that the priest Eli was blind by this point in his life.
 - ***So, he was not able to see these things happening, but he was able to sense them by what he heard.***
 - *I find it interesting that Eli was sitting on the side of the road, waiting for news to arrive.*
 - I believe this shows that he is anticipating the news.
 - *I’m sure that his heart was broken before the Lord that the Ark had even been lost, so he is anticipating the news that maybe, just maybe, the Israelites had won the battle and the ark would be returned home.*
 - But, as verse 13 continues, we know this wasn’t the case.
 - ***Don’t forget, that according to 1 Samuel 2:34, 3:11-12, 18, that Eli was promised that his sons would die on the same day.***
 - Eli was terrified for the Ark, and that his two sons would die carrying the ark.
- **The Messenger Announces. (V. 13b)**
 - ‘And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out.’
 - The way that verse 13 is written, it seems that the man of Benjamin runs past Eli and tells the whole city.
 - ***But due to the details of verse 12, we know that he did not have to hardly speak. For everyone knew what had occurred based on his appearance.***
 - Verse 13 tells us that the city cried out at this news.
 - ***Remember just earlier in 1 Samuel 4:5, that there was a mighty shout from all of Israel when the ark came down from Shiloh down to the camp at Ebenezer.***
 - ***My, how circumstances had changed vastly in a short amount of time.***
 - Be careful, for what you prioritize today may take you down tomorrow.
- **A Mess Appears. (V. 14-17)**
 - ‘When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, “What is this uproar?” Then the man hurried and came and told Eli. **15** Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. **16** And the man said to Eli, “I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.” And he said, “How did it go, my son?” **17** He who brought the news answered and said, “Israel has fled

before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.”

○ ***Eli Questions. (V. 14)***

- Obviously, Eli heard what was going on so and though he was bound, he asked what was happening.
- It's strange to look at 1 Samuel 4:6, and the same way that Eli responds here, is how the Philistines reacted when they heard the uproar in the camp of the Israelites.
 - ‘And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, “What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” 1st Samuel 4:6
- ***Eli wanted to know what was going on, so he was about to find out.***

○ ***Eli's Physical Condition. (V. 15)***

- Verse 15 tells us that Eli was 98 and that he was blind.
- 1st Samuel 3:2 is the first time where we were told by the writer that Eli's sight was failing him.
 - ***Now he was completely blind. In all reality he wasn't the road as we were told in verse 13, he was listening for what was going on.***
- John Woodhouse said ***‘Weak, blind, trembling old Eli-Israel's leader-needed to ask what the uproar meant.’***
 - He was old, but his heart was no doubt heavy due to the decisions he had made over the course of his life.

○ ***Eli Receives the news. (V. 16-17)***

- It's highly possible and most likely that this messenger knew who Eli was, so he knew what kind of magnitude his words would have on him.
- ***If the vocal tone of the messenger didn't give him away, I feel certain that his words in verse 16 ‘I fled’ from the battle today, most certainly did.***
 - Eli then asks him what happens and the young man brings the news of the results of the battle.
- Two big blows that this messenger reveals:
 - ***Eli's two sons are dead, and the ark of God has been captured by the philistines.***
- ***In the Hebrew text, the phrase ‘there has also been a great defeat among the people’ would be better translated as a great ‘slaughter’, which is how it is translated in 2nd Samuel 17:19.***
 - John Woodhouse describes the benjamites news as ***‘This was not a minor setback in the ongoing conflict with the Philistines. This was a disaster of huge proportions. Many, many were dead.’***

- ‘Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. **20** And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.’
 - ***Death continues to touch this family.***
 - Phinehas’s wife was pregnant, and due to the news, she goes into a premature birth, and due to the difficulty, she will die.
 - ***She was given a three fold blow of bad news.***
 - The Ark of the Covenant was gone.
 - Her husband was dead.
 - Her father in law and brother in law were also dead.
 - ***In 1st Samuel 4:21, she shows that her main concern is that the Ark is gone, by the way that she chooses to name her son.***
 - ***The devastating thing that we find here with Eli’s reaction and Phineas’s wife reaction, is that they are concerned with God when He was gone, but were not concerned of the sins of those closest to them while He was present.***
 - I believe there are 2 things we need to consider with the fact that there are Dead parents for this young child.
- ***Shock. (V. 19)***
 - ‘Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.’
 - ****Word Study****
 - The english word bowed here, is translated from the hebrew word ***‘Kara’*** which literally means to crouch down.
 - Most scholars and theologians all agree that it was this threefold news, especially the ark, that caused her to go into labor prematurely.
 - ***What a sad story. Where there should be excitement with the announcement of life, there is doom and gloom due to the death of the Mother, and now, this child is left as an infant.***
- ***Solace. (V. 20)***
 - ‘And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.’
 - Even in her dark situation, these women (plural) that were there sought to comfort her.

- ***But she ignored them due to her anxieties over the fact that the ark had been lost.***
- By this point her mind and anxiety over the recent news had already taken over.
- ***I'm sure that these women meant well, but their solace would not ease the pain, and she would die.***
 - Her grief has already suck in, and she is not able to enjoy the news that she had just had a son.
- Tonight we've been able to see the Disheveled Priorities, and the Dead Parents, lastly, I think we can see the Dissolving Presence of God from Israel.

Point 3: *Dissolving Presence. (V. 21-22)*

- 'And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed[b] from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."
- ***In her dying words, she releases more theology from her lips in her last words, than Phineas probably did in his entire lifetime.***
 - By naming her son what she did, she showed evidence that she knew what had occurred in Israel and she knew what the ramifications of that would be.
 - ***The presence of God had dissolved from Israel.***
- There are 2 important things to point out concerning the dissolving presence of God from Israel at this time.
- ***The Name. (V. 21)***
 - 'And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed[b] from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband.
 - She names her son Ichabod, which in the Hebrew, means '***Where is the Glory?***'
 - This is so powerful.
 - ***It is a powerful theological statement within the OT because it shows that she knew the Glory of God had left and she recognizes His power.***
 - H.L. Ellison was a polish Bible Scholar, and he said '***She was wrong. The Glory of God had indeed departed, but not because the ark of God had been captured; the ark had been captured because the glory had already departed.***'
 - Eli trusted too much in his own actions and priestly ways, instead of following God by disciplining those in his own household.
 - He just let things go by the wayside, as many of us do today.

- Dale Ralph Davis said **'sometimes God must depart from us in order that we might seek Him rightly. And in the meantime we do well to ponder what a tragedy it is when the presence of God no longer abides among the people of God.'**
 - **Church, is it possible that even today that the word 'Ichabod' could be written on the signs of our Churches instead of the Church name?**
 - Where has the Glory gone in our Churches?
- God cannot keep His hand on a Church that is falling into the pitfalls of ministry, and the results that we've seen tonight, will somehow be evident and visible in that particular Church.
- **The New Nature of the Land. (V. 22)**
 - 'And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."
 - **The wife of Phineas describes what was happening in the land and what would continue to happen.**
 - While the Glory had been taken by the philistines in the ark of the covenant, the Glory left Israel when the prioritizing of God was replaced by religion and lackadaisical living, under Eli's leadership.
 - **I believe in 1st Samuel 4:12-22, we can see a small mini history lesson of the history of Israel as is seen throughout the OT.**
 - Eventually the nation was driven out by the Assyrians and then the Babylonians.
 - Every physical item that they possessed that represented their relationship with God, was destroyed.
 - **While in the land of Babylon, Ezekiel would become a prophet to lead the 'Remnant' to to come back to the Lord.**
 - Doesn't the meaning of Ichabod's name cause us to literally ask the question?
 - 'Where is the Glory of God?'
 - I think the answer is at the beginning of John's Gospel:
 - **'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son[a] from the Father, full of grace and truth.'** John 1:14
 - **The glory of God can only be present in your life if Jesus is in your life.**
 - **The Glory of God can only be in our Churches if Christ is at the center of our Churches and their mission.**

Conclusion:

- Tonight as we close, we've looked closely at the 'Pitfalls of a Patriarchal Priest!'.
 - **It is my prayer this evening, that as we look at the results of the pitfalls that Eli fell into in ministry, that we can examine our own ministries tonight, and even our own households.**

- May we not forget the results of these pitfalls as we saw them in the text tonight:
 - **Point 1: *Disheveled Priorities.* (V. 12-18)**
 - **Point 2: *Dead Parents.* (V. 19-20)**
 - **Point 3: *Dissolving Presence.* (V. 21-22)**
- As we close, I want to do so with an illustration.
 - ***A.W. Tozer was an incredible Pastor, Preacher, Author, Traveling to Preach, and Mentoring young men are the main things that he did so well in his ministry.***
 - His books are incredible and still impact people today.
 - In the early 1950's after the Tozer's had moved to Toronto and their 7 children had grown up and moved out of the house, here's what biographer Dorsett said concerning the couple's marriage:

'While Tozer had fewer responsibilities as a Pastor in Canada, he seems to devoted little if any more of his newfound freedom to his wife of 40 years. Prayer, preaching, writing, travel, and mentoring young men took up most of his hours, leaving no time to develop the marital intimacy that they had both learned to live without.'
 - ***But on Sunday morning of May 12, 1959 Tozer had chest pains.***
 - His wife went home that night, and at 12:45 AM, A.W. Toer died. He was 66 and she was 64.
 - ***To make the situation worse, his wife never knew anything about the family finances.***
 - Once he died she learned that her husband gave half of his salary back to the Church every month.
 - He had avoided getting a pension fund/retirement account with the Christian association he was in, and had also signed away his rights to royalties on paperback additions of his book to his christian publisher.
 - ***By the time it was all said in done, she had \$5,000 in insurance and \$7,000 in savings to live on the rest of her live.***
 - A.W. Tozer did not leave her in the best of shape.
 - ***Just a year later, his wife met and married a man by the name of Leonard Odam.***
 - ***Here's what Tozer's wife said about him in the later years of his life:***
 - 'I have never been happier in my life. Aiden loved Jesus Christ, but Leonard Odam loves me.
 - ***Yes, it's important for us to love Jesus Christ with all we have, but not so much that we neglect the one's closest to us that God has given us.***
 - ***As we close tonight, let's make sure that we live in such a way that our family has no doubt that we love Jesus and THEM well.***

Sermon #10:

‘The Mistake of Messing with God!’

1st Samuel 5:1-12

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see the Mistake of Messing with God in 1st Samuel 5:1-12, when we see that the false gods fell, and that fear goes very far throughout Philistia.

Intro:

- Messing with God is the biggest mistakes that anyone can make.
 - ***Oftentimes non-believers and pagan countries make the big mistake of messing with God simply because they do not know the power of God.***
 - Even in our own country, we have seen different non-believer groups show acts of hatred towards God and His people.
- ***Tonight in our study of Samuel, we will see that those who mess with God, are making a really big mistake.***
 - When I think of the results/effects of messing with God, I can't help but think of what is going to occur one day, soon.
 - ‘so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ Philippians 2:10-11
 - ***Tonight we will see that the philistines thought that they wanted the Ark of the Covenant as a war trophy from their recent victory over Israel, but as we will find, they messed with God, and they made a big mistake.***
 - Many of the philistines were murdered and or miserable due to the fact that they took the presence of God (the ark), and put it up against their gods.
 - Tonight I believe we will see how no one should mess with God. There are bad consequences.

****Read 1 Samuel 5:1-12****

Question to Ask:

How can we see that when the Philistines steal the ark of God and put it with their other gods that they are making a big mistake of messing with God?

Point 1: *False gods Fall. (V. 1-5)*

- ***1st Samuel 5 picks up with discussing what happened to the ark of God after the Philistines had already won the battle.***

- Remember back to 1st Samuel 4, where Eli and Phinehas's wife were both extremely worried about how the ark had been captured and I assume, they were concerned with what was going to happen to it.
 - *In the ancient world, it was common that once you defeated your enemy and battle, that you would take any physical item or resemblance of their god and 'test' it with their own.*
- *So because the Philistines defeated the Israelites they think that their god, Dagon, is superior to the God of Israel.*
 - By thinking this, the Philistines are showing that they do not truly know the power of our God and who He really is.
 - *Their own people will pay greatly for their tragic/deathly mistake of taking away the Ark of the Covenant.*
- In verses 1-5, I believe there are 4 key things to point out concerning how the false god of the Philistines fell.
- **The Capitol. (V. 1)**
 - 'When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.' 1st Samuel 5:1
 - *Ebenezer was the battlefield where the Philistines and Israelites fought one another.*
 - So, they take back the ark of the Covenant to Philistia, and they take it to what some scholars call the capitol of Philistia.
 - *The city of Ashdod was located three miles from the Mediterranean coast and about 30 miles southwest of Ebenezer.*
 - *There were 5 major cities in Philistia that were known as the 'ruling' cities.*
 - Those were Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.
 - *Robert D. Bergen said 'Due to the fact that the ark was brought to the temple there, Ashdod may have been the preeminent site for worship of Dagon.'*
 - Either way, this was a prominent city within Philistia.
- **The Competition. (V. 2)**
 - 'Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon.' 1st Samuel 5:2
 - *This was an action that was done on purpose by the philistines. It was their attempt to show superiority over the God of Israel.*
 - *In their minds, they had just defeated them in battle, so their god would defeat Israel's God, in their mind.*
 - *This is an example of how different countries acted with one another after battle, in the ancient world.*

- As far as **Dagon is concerned**, this is not the only mention of him in the OT scriptures.
 - When Samson died, this false god of the philistines is mentioned.
 - *'Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." Judges 16:23*
 - When King Saul and his sons would die, this false god of the philistines is also mentioned.
 - *'And they put his armor in the temple of their gods and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.'* 1st Chronicles 10:10
- **Concerning this false god dagon, John Woodhouse states 'He (dagon) is thought to have been a god associated with vegetation and fertility.'**
 - There are ancient written accounts of 'Dagon' being worshiped in ancient mesopotamia and Syrian cities.
- ***Word Study***
 - In verse 2, it's important to pay attention to the phrase 'set it up' in the english.
 - This comes from a strong Hebrew verb, **'Yasag' יָסַג** which literally means to set, place and present.
 - **This is the same Hebrew word that is used in 2nd Samuel 6:17, where the Ark is brought in to the tent of David.**
 - 'And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.'
- **The reason that this particular Hebrew verb is used, is to show that this was a deliberate act of a formal presentation.**
 - **The philistines thought that they 'owned' the God of Israel because they had control over the ark.**
 - What happens to them in the verses that follow, is a direct result to how they tried to control our God and how they were wrong about Him.
- **I believe that God punishes them in such a public and painful way, so that they will not forget to never mess with the God of Israel.**
 - The philistines wanted to place the ark of God beside their false god in their temple, to show who had won on the battlefield, and in their mind, whose god had won.
 - **To them it was a competition, one that clearly and detrimental cleared their sight to the truth, for a time.**
- We've seen the capitol, the competition, but now we need to look at:
 - **The Conceit. (V. 3)**

- ‘And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.’ 1st Samuel 5:3
- ***In their own temple, their own false god falls.***
 - Now, the scripture doesn’t tell what happened to the false god dagon over night, we are just told that he had fallen face downward, right in front of the Ark of the Covenant.
- ***Ever since the Philistines captured the Ark of the Lord, they had referred to it as the ‘Ark of God’. This is seen in 1st Samuel 4:11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.***
 - ***But here in 1st Samuel 5:3 is the first time that the narrator refers to it as the covenant of the LORD (YAHWEH in the Hebrew.)***
 - I believe that this is significant, because the fact that their false god had fallen face down, showed that God was superior and holy.
- ***We must remember that God is not going to allow Himself to be mocked.***
 - ***Scholar John L. Mackay said ‘The Lord does not permit Himself to be mocked by the treatment accorded to the ark.’***
- We also get the vibe throughout chapter 4 and into chapter 5, that the Philistines felt proud and very possessive, of the ark.
 - ***In the Hebrew text they use possessive verbiage to show and indicate control and ownership over Israel and their God.***
- ****Word Study****
 - The english word ‘Behold’ here in the middle of verse 3 is conveying a strong sense of surprise.
 - The Philistines had been so proud of their ‘god’, and know, he was on the ground.
- ***The Philistines show their conceit even more when they just simply passed it off as not a big deal, since they put it back on the pedestal.***
 - What we don’t need to miss here, is the Narrator’s ironic commentator when he says ‘So they took Dagon and put him back into place.’
 - ***It’s interesting that they have to ‘prop him back up’, which shows how powerless their false god is.***
 - ***Sadly, you and I do it too. When God purposely knocks something down that may be taking His place in our lives, we prop it back up on our own, because nothing can take God’s place in our lives unless we allow it too.***
- ***The Conquering. (V. 4-5)***
 - ‘But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. 5 This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.’

- *While verses 4-5 may not seem like a ‘conquering’ to us, we need to view it though the lenses of the ancient world.*
 - In the ancient world severed heads and hands were known as battlefield trophies.
- We see this when David defeated Goliath:
 - *‘Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.’ 1st Samuel 17:51*
- In one of the battles referenced in Judges:
 - ‘And the officials of Succoth said, “Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?” Judges 6:8
- David E. Garland notes *‘this (cutting of hands), helped the victor to find the correct body of the dead.’*
 - *God did this to show the philistines just how powerless their great god really was.*
- The false god has no head, and no hands, so what else could he do?
- *Verse 5 is an indication that everyone who goes into Dagon’s temple will remember this night.*
 - *Because of their remembrance of this, they would not touch the entrance of the door where the head and hands were cut off.*
- Now, they were fully aware of the power of our God, and that their false god had officially fallen.
 - *False gods fall, and now we are going to see that fear is going to go far into the land of the Philistines.*

Point 2: *Fear goes Far. (V. 6-12)*

- *The fact that their false god, who they had trusted in so passionately had fallen, wasn’t enough.*
 - Things were about to get a whole lot worse for the Philistines.
- Before we look at the three ways that fear went far in the land of the Philistines from verses 6-12, we need to look at the beginning of verse 6.
 - *‘The hand of the LORD was heavy against the people of Ashdod’*
 - *This is something that even our nation does not accurately understand. When God is mocked and messed with, He will respond.*
 - We don’t know when necessarily, but I can promise you that it won’t go unpunished.
 - *I believe this phrase is pretty powerful because ‘Dagon’ lay in the dirt with no hands, but God’s hand was heavy against them.*
 - *Remember that when God brought the nation out of Israel, He did so with His hand.*

- ‘And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror,[a] with signs and wonders.’
Deuteronomy 26:8

○ ***Just as God can do powerful things, He can also give powerful punishments, and the Philistines at Ashdod were about to feel His wrath.***

- In verses 6-12 we can see how the fear goes far into the nation by looking at 3 specific things!

● ***A Plague. (V. 6)***

- ‘The hand of the LORD was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory.’
- ***God sends them a plague here. The key to understanding the plague that He sent, is the word ‘Tumor’.***
- ****Word Study****
 - The english word ‘tumor’ comes from the Hebrew word **‘Thoriym’** which literally means to swell up, and is a references to boils and or swelling in the skin.
- ***In 1st Samuel 6, there are four mentions of ‘mice’ and or ‘rats’.***
 - ***This has caused some scholars over the years to infer that this was possibly the Bubonic plague that hit the Philistine nation.***
- ***Whether or not this was the bubonic plague, we can not be sure of. But we can be sure of the fact that God sent this and He (God) was responsible for this.***
 - What the Philistines once thought as humorous, putting the God of Israel beside their god, had not become deadly and their were ramifications all across Ashdod.
 - We see the plague that affects them, but it also turns into a nationwide panic.

● ***A Panic. (V. 7-10)***

- ‘And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god.” **8** So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?” They answered, “Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath.” So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there. **9** But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. **10** So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people.”

- **Finally, the Philistines realize that the fact that they have the Ark of the Covenant, could be the reason as to why they are experiencing all of this tragedy in their nation.**
 - The leaders panic, but also the citizens panic as well.
- **Now they are aware and know that their defeated god, Dagon, is no longer able to protect and help them.**
- **In verse 8, we see the leaders of the Philistines put their heads together, and decided to send the Ark down the road to Gath, thinking that may solve their problem to get the ark out of 'Dagon's' city.**
 - The city of Gath was 12.5 Miles southeast of Ashdod, so it would've been closer to the border with Judah.
- **Verse 9 shows us though, that just because they moved the physical location of the ark, people still had trouble.**
 - **This is a lesson for us today. No matter how much you try to move the idols around in your life, until you commit to kicking them out of your life, they will still wreck havoc and cause immense pain.**
 - **You've got to get idols OUT. Not let them swap around in your life.**
- Then in verse 10, the Philistines send the ark to Ekron, which was 5 miles north of Gath.
 - **There the population must've already heard what was going on, because as soon as the ark came, the people wanted it to go away.**
 - **Remember when the Philistines first heard the Israelites cry out when the ark came to Shiloh?**
 - And these Philistines went and got it, they said 'Be men and fight'
 - **What had happened to that? God had caused confusion and chaos on the people. But, they brought it on themselves.**
 - Often like we do.
- **The Pain. (V. 11-12)**
 - 'They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. **12** The men who did not die were struck with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.'
 - **Now the pain had quite literally swelled up, to where the leaders of the Philistines decided to meet again.**
 - The panic had become too great, and the pain. So, they made the decision to send the ark back to the Israelites.
 - **Next week we will study and see how the Philistines returned the ark back to the Israelites.**

- *Now verse 12 indicates that not everyone died that got the tumors, but the way that it is worded, does indicate that they had the long lasting effects of the tumors.*
 - *I think that it's important to note that the Philistines were prideful and arrogant. Yet now, they were humble and just wanted the pain to go away.*
- *John Woodhouse stated 'The Philistines who had defied God, fearing that they would become slaves of the Hebrews, found themselves crying out of Heaven, ust like the Hebrews when they were slaves of the egyptians.'*
 - The pain had just become too much.
- Before you choose to be defiant to and mess with God, weigh the consequences before you do.

Conclusion:

- *Tonight here in our sanctuary, I'm very well aware that no one is a worshiper of 'dagon'.*
 - *But, I do feel certain that we have believers in this room who need some false gods to fall in your life, in order for God to use you the way that He wants to.*
 - Don't expect God's upmost blessings if He is not in first place in your heart and life.
- *When you make the mistake of putting anything before God, you make the mistake of messing with Him.*
 - *I hope and pray that tonight you've seen what a big mistake it truly is to mess with God.*
- If you've got some idols that are in your life, no matter what they may be, it's time on this wednesday night to lay them down, let them go, and allow God to reign supremely in your heart and life tonight.
 - **Point 1: *False gods Fall. (V. 1-5)***
 - **Point 2: *Fear goes Far. (V. 6-12)***

Sermon #11:

'The Ark Comes Home!'

1st Samuel 6-7:2

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this scripture text we see that the Ark of the Covenant will come home to Israel, for now. This is significant because we see an Experiment that was Planned, an Exciting Path, but it ends in Excruciating Pain for Israel.

Intro:

- Due to the fact of how much the Ark of the Covenant moves around in the books of 1-2 Samuel, we may be tempted to deem tonight's text as **insignificant.**
 - *In fact, I know some Preachers who have preached through 1st Samuel, that have skipped over chapter 6 due to the fact that it may 'bore' their hearers.*
 - *May we not forget that it is God who put His Word together through His Spirit.*
 - Everything, (both NT and OT), has a purpose and a reason for being included.
- **For the nation of Israel at this time, the Ark of the Covenant had been gone for 7 months.**
 - Meaning, they had been absent of the presence of God.
 - *This is significant because the Ark was a representation of God's Covenant with the people.*
 - *This was an arrangement that God was to be Israel's God and Israel was to be His people.*
 - *This is also significant because this was the first time that Israel had lost the Ark!*
 - Here's what **John Woodhouse** said **'Never before had Israel lost possession of the ark. They had suffered setbacks from enemies, but no enemy had ever taken the ark of the covenant of Yahweh.'**
 - Much of this stems from their own disobedience to God, as well as the ramifications from the Elide Priestly line that we saw earlier in 1st Samuel.
 - *But even as we will see tonight, once the Israelites have the ark back again, they still do not obey the Lord fully and violate the rules of the Ark, to where even more Israelite people will die.*
 - There's a lot we can grow from and glean from in God's Word tonight.
Read 1st Samuel 6-7:2

Question to Ask:

What is the significance of the Ark returning home to Israel that we find in this text?

Point 1: *An Experiment Planned. (V. 1-9)*

- The Philistines had realized that they had a really big problem.
 - ***The majority of people in their country had been touched in some form or fashion by this plague.***
 - And as we saw in chapter 5 of 1st Samuel last night, they finally were able to put two and two together that it was the possession of the ark that was causing this.
 - ***They tried moving it about their own nation, but this ended up causing even more problems for the Philistines.***
 - ***The reason that they were not more open to the idea of returning it back to Israel early on, is the fact that this wasn't usually done.***
 - It would be a slap in the face to their own government and nation if they were to return their beloved trophy from war.
 - ***But when physical pain becomes so severe, you just want it to be over with with any means necessary.***
 - So, the Philistines have an experiment planned on how to figure out whether or not this plague came from the God of Israel due to their possession of the ark, or not.
 - I believe there are **4** things that we can see in these verses that demonstrate the Experiment that the Philistines had planned.
- ***Time Period. (V. 1)***
 - ‘The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.’
 - For 7 entire months, the Philistines let their pride get to them and the pain spread.
 - ***I believe ‘7 months’ is to be interpreted symbolically as well as literally.***
 - ***Think about how many Philistine lives were lost simply because their government didn't want to swallow their pride, do the right thing, and return the ark to Israel.***
 - For 7 Months, this went on.
- ***True Perplexity. (V. 2)***
 - ‘And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.”’
 - I'm sure at this point, that the leaders of this nation were working under severe peer pressure.
 - ***The phrase ‘the philistines’ in verse 2 is plural, and conveys a general sense.***
 - ***The leaders needed to do something because people were dying.***
 - ***In chapter 6, they consulted and pleaded with the ‘lords’, the government officials.***
 - But now, they want the priests and the diviners to do something. But just who are these priests and diviners in the context of Philistia?

- *Both of these religious positions were a part of their religious functionaries.*
 - *Priests: the priests were in charge of the worship of the multitude of philistine gods.*
 - *Diviners: The diviners were those that would obtain information about the future by interpreting different signs and omens.*
 - What you and I would refer to today as future telling of sorts.
 - *Isaiah briefly mentions them and their reputation in Isaiah 2:6*
 - *‘For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.’*
 - *In Deuteronomy 18:10-14, these activities are not allowed in Israel. Deuteronomy 18:10-14 also gives a small glimpse into what the culture of ancient civilizations was like.*
 - ‘There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering,[a] anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer **11** or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, **12** for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. **13** You shall be blameless before the LORD your God, **14** for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do this.’ Deuteronomy 18:10-14
 - *So, the Philistines go to these religious leaders with their main question, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.”*
 - *They are tired of the pain and what is going on, and they believe that getting rid of the ark will go a long way in helping them improve.*
- *The Plan. (V. 3-6)*
 - ‘They said, “If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you.” **4** And they said, “What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?” They answered, “Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. **5** So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land. **6** Why should you harden your hearts as the

Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had dealt severely with them, did they not send the people away, and they departed?’

- *So the religious leaders come up with what they think the nation of the Philistines needs to do.*
- **Ronald Youngblood, a Hebrew Scholar and Professor, said this ‘Ancient religious protocol prohibited the worshiper from approaching his gods empty-handed’**
 - While this is odd and very foreign to us, this was regular in the ancient world.
 - In fact, our God even told the Israelites that they should not come to Him empty handed in the following scripture verses:
- **Exodus 23:15:**
 - ‘You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed.’
- **Deuteronomy 16:16**
 - “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.’
- *The philistines religious leaders believed that if the Lord were to accept this offering, that they would be healed and that they would know that it was the God of Israel who was responsible for this plague.*
 - I also think that verse 4 gives strong evidence for the possibility that this was the bubonic plague that the Lord put on the philistines. Due to the linking of the tremors, rats, and the plague.
- **But this plan is significant because according to scholar Robert D. Bergen, this section is the longest recorded speech ever given by Philistines in the OT.**
 - In this section there are 120 Hebrew words that were spoken by the Philistines. This is also the longest stretch of dialogue between the Philistines, four consecutive statements.
- **The amount of detail given here into the Philistine dialogue, may be there to demonstrate an important theological truth. Even to us today.**
 - *We’ve already read tonight scriptures from elsewhere in the OT where diviners were wrong and God’s people were not to use them.*
- The Philistines did, and perhaps this is part of the root of their problem all along.
 - **I believe this dialogue with the Philistines gives great evidence that Christians today should not ever go to fortune tellers.**

- Or people that supposedly talk to the dead, witches, or anything of that nature.
 - Verses 4 & 5 show us that the Philistines thought they should make images of the plague that had hit them so hard.
 - *(I wonder if they had someone with tumors pose for the sculpture making?)*
 - *Interestingly, the Philistines use some verbiage that would resemble the Torah, but they also went against what God had told His people concerning these things.*
 - In making these ‘offerings’ the Philistines would be in direct violation of the prohibition given in OT scripture.
 - *Exodus 20:4*
 - “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”
 - Robert D. Bergen said *‘This advice apparently represents a syncretistic blend of pagan imitative magic and perverted Torah Ritual.’*
 - *Which shows that you can have the ‘right’ motives when doing something for God and still completely miss actually glorifying God.*
 - Verse 6 reveals that the Philistines religious professionals knew about what had happened in the Exodus. They had heard about the Hebrew God.
- *Tricky Process. (V. 7-9)*
 - ‘Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them. **8** And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off and let it go its way **9** and watch. If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm, but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by coincidence.”
 - *In addition to the golden figures that they were going to send with the ark, they came up with a tricky process in order to determine whether or not these trials/tumors really did come from the Lord.*
 - After all that they had been through, they were still not 100% that this had come from the God of Israel.
 - *So, the Philistines come up with a plan to transport the ark to on a cart.*
 - *Transporting the ark on a ‘cart’ was also not allowed according to the Torah in Numbers 7:7-9 and 2nd Samuel 6:3-13.*
 - *The philistines had 2 distinct reasons for going about this tricky process with the Cart, the Cows, and the Ark.*

- #1: Remove the Deadly Object from their nation.
- #2: Figure out what the true origin of their tumors and disease was.
- *They want to figure out whether or not this has come from God, based on where the cows will go.*
 - It was known at that time as it is known in our day, that two untrained milk cows could not pull a cart together very well.
 - *And if they were to pull it anywhere, it would be home to their calves.*
- ***But, if the calves pulled it towards Israel, they knew that this would be a work of God and that it was the God of Israel who was responsible for this.***
 - *A mother would never leave her baby, unless it was a work of God upon her. And in this case, we will see that it was.*
- This situation reminds me greatly of where Gideon put out the fleece to see whether or not it was God in Judges 6.
 - So, we have seen that there is an experiment planned by looking at the Time Period, True Perplexity, The Plan, and a Tricky Process.

Point 2: *An Exciting Path. (V. 10-18)*

- ***For us today, it was an exciting path that the cows and carts followed, straight to Israel, simply because we know that this was God's hand and power at work.***
 - As it was exciting to the Israelites at first, they would eventually die due to looking straight at it as our scripture indicates.
 - In verses 10-18, I believe there are **3** things that we can see about this exciting path that the cows took.
- ***Convincing Fashion. (V. 10-12)***
 - 'The men did so, and took two milk cows and yoked them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. **11** And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. **12** And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.'
 - *Verse 10 shows us that the Philistine men obeyed the counsel that they received from the religious leaders, and went about this tricky process to see who afflicted them with these tumors.*
 - *What occurs in verse 12, is in convincing fashion indeed.*
 - Verse 12 tells us that they went in the 'Straight' direction.
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word 'straight' comes from the Hebrew word **'Yasar'** יָסַר **which literally means straight and not crooked or twisted.'**

- ***This straight route is emphasized in the Hebrew to show that this was God in action!***

- *The phrase ‘Lowing as they went’ in the Hebrew texts suggests that they were going against their natural instincts and inclinations, by a power other than themselves.*
 - *It was creator God, who was causing them to do this. He (God) is over all creation.*
- Indeed, this was a convincing fashion.
- **Citizens Flabbergasted. (V. 13-16)**
 - ‘Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. **14** The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. **15** And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD. **16** And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.’
 - *Verse 13 shows us that the citizens of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest, which means that it was probably spring time (May-June).*
 - *The destination of the cows and the cart is also very important to consider.*
 - *Beth-Shemesh was a Levitical city that was set aside for the clan of Kohath, which was the Levitical family that was in charge of taking care of the Ark.*
 - According to Numbers 4:4 and Numbers 4:15.
 - *Beth-Shemesh was also the homeplace for the descendants of Aaron, according to Joshua 21:13-16.*
 - *I believe this important detail shows us that they should have known how to handle and treat the Ark of the Covenant. Which is why God strikes them down dead when they do it incorrectly.*
 - *Verse 14 shows us that the cart came into the field and was stopped there.*
 - They probably placed the ark on the stone, and used the wood from the cart to produce a burnt offering.
 - *This is where the citizens of Beth-Shemesh make their first mistake.*
 - *According to Leviticus 1:3, only males were to be used for burnt offerings. Not female cows, heifers.*
 - “If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD.’ Leviticus 1:3

- *Scholar Stephen J. Andrews said ‘This reckless act in not precisely following the sacrificial regulations of God ‘serves as an early indication of impending divine judgment’ against the people of Beth-Shemesh’*
- In verse 15, we see that the Levitical priests were called to come and take care of the Ark.
 - While they did make an attempt, they did not cover the ark but left it exposed on the stone.
 - *Numbers 4:5 reveals that the ark was supposed to be covered.*
 - ‘When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it.’
- *While it is a great and noble thing to give an offering to God after the Ark returns home, they didn’t follow God’s rules and regulations in doing so.*
 - *Yet again, it’s great to do great things for the Lord, but we must do them under His parameters.*
- **Custom Formality. (V. 17-18)**
 - ‘These are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, **18** and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and unwalled villages. The great stone beside which they set down the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.’
 - *Verses 17-18 is a formal list with a heading.*
 - Details from this event and a summary are given.
 - *You may find this odd that the narrator puts a summary of the statue offerings that the Philistines made and gave, but in reality this is part of the narrator showing the validity of these events.*
 - *There have been those that have come along and stated that the cows couldn’t have done that, they could not have gone opposite of their babies and towards Israel.*
 - *The narrator mentions this custom formality to show that God really did do this.*
 - *Scholar John Woodhouse says ‘It sounds as though these golden objects were still around as the narrator wrote this account. His readers knew of them. The known golden articles testify that the Philistines followed the advice of the priests and diviners with regard to the golden tumors.’*
 - It was still known to that day, which is why the narrator mentioned this custom formality.

- Tonight in looking at how the Ark Returned home, we saw the Experiment that was planned, the Exciting Path, now, we need to look at the Excruciating pain that the Israelite people experienced because of their disobedience.

Point 3: *An Excruciating Pain. (V. 19-7:2)*

- ***These verses that we find here are perhaps some of the most confusing and perplexing in the OT.***
 - God was mocked and belittled while the ark was in a pagan land.
 - ***But just because the ark had returned to Israel, did not mean that God was any less powerful or terrifying than He had ever been before.***
 - I believe there are **2** ways that we see Israel endured an Excruciating Pain.
- ***A Deadly Consequence. (V. 19)***
 - ‘And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them,^[a] and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow.’
 - ***70 Israelite men died that day, but why?***
 - ****Word Study****
 - The english words ‘looked upon’ come from the Hebrew word ***‘Ra’ah’*** רָאָה ***which means to see.***
 - ***In the Hebrew text it is used with a preposition ‘in’ or ‘on’, and so this phrasal verb indicates more than just looking at something.***
 - ***The Hebrew seems to suggest that this would be an irreverent staring.***
 - ***Everyone in Beth-Shemesh saw the ark, but here they gazed.***
 - Other than that, we have no more of a description to know how they got themselves killed.
 - Whatever they did was obviously disrespectful towards God and we know that God does not tolerate that.
 - ***70 men were dead and the problem that Israel had just 7 months ago had not yet been solved.***
 - ***The Hebrew phrase that is translated to ‘great blow’ in verse 19 is the same phrase that was used as a great slaughter in 1st Samuel 4:10.***
 - These were certainly deadly consequences.
- ***A Desperate Call. (V. 20-7:2)***
 - ‘Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?” **21** So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to you.” And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD. **2** From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long

time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.’

- ***At the start of chapter 6, the Philistines were the ones who asked the perplexing question. Now, it’s God’s own people.***
 - ***They make a desperate call for those in Kiriath Jearim to come and take the ark which was 10 miles from Beth-Shemesh and 1,400 feet higher in elevation.***
 - ***The people of Kiriath-Jearim respond in a good way by having Eleazar (a common name for priest), come and take care of their Ark.***
- ***The ark will remain here until David takes it to his capital in 2nd Samuel 6:2-4.***

Conclusion:

- ***Tonight when you heard the sermon title ‘The Ark comes home!’ you may have thought that tonight’s message would have a happy ending.***
 - As we have seen in our scripture text tonight, that was not just the case.
- ***The israelites had been punished by God by not having His own presence in their possession through the ark of the Covenant.***
 - ***Yet even through this, they never truly learned their lesson.***
 - As sad as this ending is, may we not find ourselves in the same boat.
 - May we be sure today that our hearts are right and pure before almighty God. He already knows, and one day, He will expose.
- Tonight we have seen:
 - ***Point 1: An Experiment Planned. (V. 1-9)***
 - ***Point 2: An Exciting Path. (V. 10-18)***
 - ***Point 3: An Excruciating Pain. (V. 19-7:2)***

Sermon #12

'The Effect of an Ebenezer Epiphany!'

1st Samuel 7:3-17

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see the Effect of an Ebenezer Epiphany in these verses by looking at the Message of Repentance, a Meaningful Request, a Merciful Response, a Memorial that is Resurrected, and a Ministry of Restoration that unfolds through Samuel.

Intro:

- Have you ever had that moment that you look back to in your life where you say 'I did that!?'
 - *Maybe it was something that you didn't think you were able to do, but you did it.*
 - *Or maybe you were diagnosed with cancer and you were able to defeat it.*
 - *Or maybe someone told you that you couldn't graduate from that school or you couldn't get that job, and you did it.*
 - *All of these moments, are an Ebenezer Moment.*
- Samuel defined what this word Ebenezer means in the text that we are studying tonight.
 - *He (Samuel), set up a stone, and he called it Ebenezer. Which he defines as 'Till now the Lord has helped me.'*
 - *Whenever we achieve or do anything in life where the odds were supremely set against us, we must realize that it is Christ in us who is allowing us to overcome.*
- *Sadly though, we often focus on our own poor circumstances, or let the negative voices have too much priority in our lives.*
 - This is when satan gets his way in our lives. By feeding into our ears, and letting us know that things aren't great.
 - *Oftentimes we focus on these negative times, than the Ebenezer moments that God has allowed us to have over the course of our lifetime.*
- Tonight, 1st Samuel 7:3-17, is the break of a 20 year silence for Samuel.
 - *Robert D. Bergen says 'This section contrast the juridical ministry of Samuel with that of the house of Eli. Hophni and Phinehas had sought to bring victory to Israel by bringing the Lord's Ark against the Philistines. Samuel brought victory to Israel by bringing Israel back to the Lord.'*
 - *What we find in tonight's text, is what led up to and what the effects were of the Ebenezer Epiphany that Samuel led them to.*
 - Although it had been since 1st Samuel 4:1, 20 years, since we had heard from prophet and Judge, Samuel, here, is calling them back to the Lord for a moment that will hopefully be imprinted in their minds for years to come.
 - Truly this is a *'Look at what God did'* moment.

- Tonight as we go through this text carefully, I want you to think of ‘Look at what God did’ moments in your life. No matter when or what that may have been.
 - *At the end of our service tonight, we will have a special activity where you can truly have an Ebenezer moment with you and the Lord.*

Read 1st Samuel 7:3-17

Question to Ask:

What are the effects of Samuel’s solid leadership over Israel that we find in this text that led to the Ebenezer Epiphany that we find in Samuel 7?

Point 1: *A Message of Repentance. (V. 3-4)*

- ‘And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” 4 So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.’
 - ***For 20 years the Ark of the Covenant had remained at Kiriath Jearim. And for 20 years, the people had not heard from God through Samuel.***
 - 1st Samuel 7:2, tells us that Israel was lamenting after the Lord.
 - ***Even 20 years later, the Philistines are still a thorn in the side of the Israelites.***
 - It had been so long and nothing had changed. But why?
 - ***Because they had not repented and turned things over to the Lord.***
 - ***Instead of chasing after God, they had gone after false gods.***
 - So, the first message that Samuel gives after 20 years of silence is strong. But it also proved impactful due to the willingness of the Israelites to obey the Lord and repent.
 - ***The path to your Ebenezer Epiphany starts with YOU being willing to repent, follow, and obey God!***
 - I believe there are **2** things here that we see about the message of repentance that Samuel gives.
- ***The Necessities. (V. 3)***
 - ‘And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”’
 - ***In Samuel’s message, he clearly gives the things that are necessary for Repentance to be genuine.***
 - In Israel then and in our society today, people throw around the term ‘repent.’

- *Here's the thing, if you really and truly repent of your sin, it is going to cost you something.*
 - *If it doesn't cost you something, then what have you repented from?*
- Samuel starts off by posing the conditional question ***IF you are returning to the Lord with all your heart***
 - *Before we look at the Necessities to true repentance that Samuel gives, we must ask ourselves, Do I really want to return to the Lord?*
- I believe there are 3 necessities of repentance that Samuel gives Israel here:
 - ***#1: Put Away idols.***
 - 'then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you'
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word '**Ashtaroth**' is the plural form of Ashtoreth, which in Hebrew was also called Astarte which was the Canaanite goddess who was said to be the wife of baal.
 - Baal was also believed to be the son of dagon.
 - *The use of the Plural word in the Hebrew text, would indicate that the Israelites had various images of Astarte lying around. This was the canaanite god of storms and fertility.*
 - *John Woodhouse said **'It is probable that the worship of these deities involved various practices.'***
 - One of the necessities to true repentance, is handing over to God what you put in His place over Him.
 - ***#2: Give your heart to God.***
 - 'direct your heart to the LORD'
 - ***God wants your heart. He wants you. If you truly repent of your sin, you'll give Him your heart!***
 - What this means to the Israelites and what it means to us is exclusive, single-minded, wholehearted commitment solely to God. The Lord must be on the throne of our hearts.
 - ***#3: Serve only Him.***
 - 'serve him only,'
 - ***It's obvious that the Israelites greatly struggled with this one due to their struggles that are noted throughout the OT.***
 - *One reason that this was such a struggle for them, was the fact that most over ancient nations had a plurality of gods, while they had one, YAWHEH.*

- *These are the necessities that Samuel gives the people of Israel that they are to follow if they truly want to repent and for the Lord to deliver them.*
- **The Nation Responds. (V. 4)**
 - ‘So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.’
 - *Wow, the nation of Israel hears from Samuel for the first time in 20 years, and they respond.*
 - *It’s hard for us to really put the nation’s response in proper perspective, but when we put into account that Israel had been in 20+ years of apostasy, it was now over.*
 - The years of worshiping false gods and not serving the one true God, had ended, for now.
 - *This came about because God gave Samuel a message to speak on Repentance.*

Point 2: A Meaningful Request. (V. 5-9)

- The scripture does not give us any indication that Samuel was shocked or surprised, but I have to think that he was. At least a little bit.
 - *It seems clear that there was no pushback from the Israelites, they realized they were at their wits end, and decided to repent.*
- *Like good leaders do, I believe Samuel does the right thing by taking the nation's affairs and state, to the Lord.*
 - After all, this nation had turned it’s back on God, and was going to face the same enemy that they did years ago, where thousands died.
 - I believe there are **2** things that we see in this meaningful request that Samuel gives on behalf of Israel.
- **An Intercessor. (V. 5-6)**
 - ‘Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.” **6** So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.’
 - *The phrase ‘gather all israel’ probably didn’t literally mean every israelite, but probably meant representatives from all of the tribal territories.*
 - *Mizpah- This town was located 5 miles north of Jerusalem on the north south road through the central highlands.*
 - This was a town that geographically, would have been more difficult for the philistines to attempt to ambush.
 - According to **Judges 20:1**, this location was a center for tribal convocations and meeting in the period of the judges.

- ‘Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the LORD at Mizpah.’
 - ***Samuel is praying to God for the nation of Israel.***
 - It’s no secret that the relationship between God and Israel had been broken for sometime.
 - Israel had departed and gone after false gods.
 - ***After 20 years of this stagnant and backsliding relationship between God and Israel, God provided through Samuel. To intercede for His people.***
 - ***I believe that anytime there is an Ebenezer moment in someone’s life, it comes after a time of prayer.***
 - ***Verse 6 is also an indication of the kind of response that Israel was having to the leadership of Samuel.***
 - The water that was being poured out and the fasting were outward expressions of the Israelites inward repentance.
 - John Woodhouse stated ***‘The actions may be best seen not so much as symbolic rituals, but as real acts of self-denial as the people turned from their self-centered ways back to the Lord.’***
 - This accompanied by their verbal confession ‘we have sinned against the Lord’
 - ***When real repentance occurs among the people of God, there will be outward changes in their conduct and this will be backed up with their words.***
 - ***Robert D. Bergen also made an interesting observation on this ‘an action unparalleled in the Old Testament in an Israelite religious convocation, they evidently were denying themselves liquids as a symbolic confession that the Lord’s favor was more important to them than life-sustaining water.’***
 - All of this started, with their intercesor interceding on their behalf to the Lord.
- ***Their Identity. (V. 7-9)***
 - ‘Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. **8** And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” **9** So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.’
 - ***It’s truly incredible to see how the identity of the nation of Israel changed after their repentance to the Lord.***

- Instead of trying to manipulate God with the Ark of the Covenant, this time they go immediately to prayer, asking Samuel to intercede on their behalf.
- *Now verse 7, says that the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah*
 - Remember that the Philistines had defeated Israel nearly 20 years before at this point. So, the nation of Israel was under and subjected to the Philistines.
- Robert D. Bergen pointed out *‘In all likelihood the Philistines had forbidden the Israelites to hold public assemblies since such meetings could easily be used to mobilize the tribes for war.’*
 - *So this would indicate why the fighting even began.*
- The philistines didn’t want the tribes of Israel gathering in large groups in case they came up with a plan to come against them.
 - *In verse 7, ‘the lords of the philistines went up against Israel’ is to show that the philistines wanted to subdue whatever kind of gathering was taking place.*
- This is why the Israelites had asked Samuel to pray. Their identity was different now. Due to the revivals that had occurred in the land that we’ve read about tonight, they wanted to go to God first, instead of as a last resort.
- *Due to the request of the Israelites and their newfound identity (in the Lord), Samuel goes and offers a blood sacrifice, a suckling lamb unto the Lord.*
 - *An animal could be sacrificed once it was eight days old.*
 - According to Leviticus 1:4, the entire purpose of a whole burnt offering was to make atonement.
- *Verse 9 tells us that the Lord heard Samuel and that the Lord answered Samuel.*
 - I believe the Lord’s decision to answer Israel in their time of need is in direct correlation with their repentance and their leader encouraging them to follow the Lord.
- Tonight we’ve been able to see A Message of Repentance, and a Meaningful Request.

Point 3: *A Merciful Response. (V. 10-11)*

- *Verse 9 tells us that the Lord answered Him, and verses 10-11 explain the response that God had on the Philistines on behalf of the Israelite people.*
 - *As much as Israel had run from God over time, when they returned, God was ready and willing to welcome them back with open arms.*
 - Just like He does with us. God fights for us even when we don’t follow Him like we should.
 - *This is an example of His mercy and goodness to us.*

- There are **2** things to point out regarding God's merciful response on behalf of the nation of Israel:
- **God Sends Confusion. (V. 10)**
 - 'As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.'
 - **While Samuel is offering up the burnt offering to the Lord, the Ebenezer Epiphany occurs.**
 - A moment that only God could intervene in, He comes through.
 - **The israelites had been gathering in a religious renewal gathering and the Philistines come up and attack them.**
 - **Have you ever felt that way? Where something came out of nowhere and attacked you.**
 - Sneak attack.
 - These are the kinds of moments in our lives when only God can do for us what we can not do for ourselves.
 - **So, what does God do?**
 - He acts powerfully and supernaturally.
 - First, the Lord '**Thundered**' against the Philistines.
 - David E. Garland said '**In so doing he demonstrated that he, not the Philistine Dagon, not the Canaanite Baal son of Dagon, was truly the God of the storm, the only one able to control the elements whether for good or ill.**'
 - Some scholars believe this was an actual thunderstorm that the Lord sent and others believe a loud audible voice. Either way, The Lord sent them into confusion.
 - Both of these things are a fulfillment of Hannah's prayer, back in **1st Samuel 2:10.**
 - 'The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven.'
 - Secondly, the Lord threw them into '**Confusion**'.
 - This english word 'confusion' comes from the Hebrew word '**Haman**' **הָמָן** which is found 15 times in the OT and means '**to put in commotion, to disturbed, drive, destroy, break and route.**'
 - To help us understand this confusion, we can look at the first time this word occurs in the OT, which is in **Exodus 14:24.**
 - 'And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic,'

- *This is where God threw the army of Egypt into a panic.*
- **Israel Conquers. (V. 11)**
 - ‘And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.’
 - Because of what God did for them through the thunder and the confusion, they were able to defeat their enemies.
 - ***The battles that you are facing in this room tonight do not have to overtake you. When God gets involved, He takes it over. But you have to let Him.***
 - *You can experience an Ebenezer Epiphany and probably already have before in your life, just remember that it's God's power working in and through you. Not you, but the Lord.*
 - Tonight we have seen the Message of Repentance, a Meaningful Request, and a Merciful Response.

Point 4: *A Memorial is Resurrected. (V. 12-13)*

- ***Samuel knows and is well aware that what occurred that day was an act of God.***
 - In order to make future generations aware of exactly what occurred that day in that place, Samuel puts up a marker, a memorial.
 - ***So that when future generations saw that rock and that place, they would be reminded of how powerful God is. And what God did before He can certainly do again if He so chooses.***
 - *We must do the same thing in our lives for those that come behind us. We must speak and sing of God's faithfulness through different things that we have encountered.*
 - I believe there are **2** things that we need to consider concerning the memorial that was resurrected by Samuel that day.
- ***A Reminder. (V. 12)***
 - ‘Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen[a] and called its name Ebenezer;[b] for he said, “Till now the LORD has helped us.”
 - Now, don't get this Ebenezer location confused with the battlefield mentioned in 1st Samuel 4:1.
 - ***Most scholars believe that location would be too far north to be the one that is discussed here.***
 - ***But, I believe that Samuel does name this memorial 'Ebenezer' to be a strong reminder.***
 - ***It draws attention to what 'Ebenezer' means, as our text does define it, and it shows the reversal that had taken place.***
 - Scholar John Woodhouse said *'The earlier Ebenezer had a terribly ironic name. At 'stone of help' Israel had not been*

helped! Now, however, the new Ebenezer stood as a testimony to the Lord's help.

- **'Till now the Lord has helped us'** most likely means that from Mizpah to the location of this stone, the Lord had helped them.
 - What about you? In just a moment we are going to each come up and grab one of these stones. We're going to write our Ebenezer moment on them.
 - **What event in your life did God come through for you? What's your daily reminder that He will come through again?**
 - This stone was a reminder, but a reckoning for the Philistines would soon follow.
- **A Reckoning. (V. 13)**
 - 'So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.'
 - **Under Samuel's leadership, the Philistines would not be an issue for them.**
 - Later on in 1st Samuel they will become a problem again, but that will be under Saul's time as leader, not Samuel's.
 - **Samuel's strong spiritual leadership had led the nation to a spiritual revival that gave life to what had been a spiritual desert.**
 - **This moment would become the flagship of Samuel's ministry in Israel. One that he would be known for. Known for allowing God to use him to bring about a great revival in the land.**

Point 5: A Ministry of Restoration. (V. 14-17)

- **The narrative tonight does not just end with Israel subduing the Philistines, it ends with God restoring the land around them.**
 - A period of Peace was beginning for Israel, until they became restless and wanted a king like the other nations.
- Here's how God restored their lands according to the scriptures:
 - 'The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. **16** And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. **17** Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.'
- **The Lord had restored that which had been lost for many years.**
 - **There was also additional peace between Israel and the Amorites. (pre-Israelite Canaanites).**
 - **God had restored them, because they had repented and turned back to Him.**
 - **For generations to come, Israelites would look at the Ebenezer rock, and remember what God had done.**

- Truly, this was an Ebenezer Epiphany moment for them.
- And it can be for us here tonight.

Conclusion:

- Tonight as we close, I want us to close our service much differently than we normally do.
 - Down here at the altar I have two different buckets of rocks.
- ***While these aren't as big as the stone that Samuel placed there that day, they are small enough for you to write on and take home.***
 - ***I want you, during this time of invitation, to come up, grab a rock, and a sharpie, and write on that rock what your Ebenezer moment is.***
 - ***That moment that you can look back on and say 'God brought me through'***
 - It could be the death of a spouse, child, cancer diagnosis, loss of a job, divorce, anything like that.
 - Write it on that rock, and place it somewhere in your home where people will see it. So that when they ask about, you can say 'that was my Ebenezer Epiphany', the moment that God came through, when no one else would.

Sermon #13:

Sermon #14:

'Do we Really Know What's Best?'

1st Samuel 8:10-22

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see that the nation of Israel really didn't know what was best for their future when we consider the source, the crisis was told that it would be severe, and conformity spreads across the nation.

Intro:

- The simple answer to tonight's sermon title would be, 'of course not'.
 - *Hopefully, any believer in their right mind would not assume that we always know what's best for us.*
 - As much as we want to think we do, oftentimes we really and truly don't.
- *Oftentimes when we realize we aren't in control, we will say things like:*
 - God has got this.
 - Trust God's plan.
 - He will make a way.
 - *While these things are true, do we really live our lives as if this is true?*
 - *How many times in the last week have you steered from God's plans and His Word simply because it wasn't something that YOU wanted to do.*
 - We say that we trust God, but most of us just want our own way, anyway.
 - *Tonight in our text, I believe we will see that Samuel told the people what the Lord had told Him to say.*
 - They ignored God's response, and wanted to do what they wanted to do, anyway.
 - *You and I must be very careful to never think that we know what's best, and when we do, we make our lives so much harder.*
- 1st Samuel 8:9, gives us the orders that Samuel was given by God to follow in regards to Israel's demand for a King.
 - *'Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.'*
 - *Essentially, the Lord told Samuel to listen to them, to hear them out, but to then explain to them what their life was going to be like if they really wanted a King.*
 - *Samuel's mission was to spell out what was going to occur if they went through with this, and after giving them the details, see if that is really and truly what they wanted for their future.*
- Samuel is going to speak to the people of Israel, in what is the third longest recorded speech by Samuel in the Bible.
 - *In verses 11-18, we find 85 Hebrew words.*

- Robert D. Bergen said *‘Domiinating Samuel’s characterization of Israelite Kings is the portrayal of the oppressive control they would take of the Israelite lives, families, and possessions.’*
 - *In our text tonight, we are going to see that our own thoughts and ideas will lead us astray from time to time.*
 - You and I in our finite human wisdom, do not know it all.
- When we get to historical narratives like this one, I’m reminded of **Proverbs 3:5-6**.
 - ‘Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.’
 - ***Read Proverbs 3:5-6***

Question to Ask:

How does this passage show us that the Israelites really didn't know what was best for them based on their constant act of insisting for a king?

Point 1: Consider the Source. (V. 10)

- ‘So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him.’
 - *Before we start to think that we know what’s best, may we stop and consider the source.*
 - *In this case, the **direction** and **guidance** was coming directly from God through Samuel to the people of Israel.*
 - **Here’s the thing, God wants to speak to us so much that He already has. In His Word.**
 - The thing is that you and I often do not want to listen. We’d rather ‘hear’ what we **want** God to say instead of what He’s actually saying.
 - In verses 11-18, Samuel reveals God’s answer to them on their request of a King.
 - *The Lord, through Samuel, is going to tell them what it means for them and their future in what they are asking for.*
 - Prior to this, the nation was led by almighty God and through Judges, as Pastor Chris had mentioned last week.
 - W.W. hit the nail on the head on what life was like for the Israelites when they made this request:
 - *‘Under the Kingship of Jehovah GOD, the nation had security and sufficiency as long as they obeyed Him, and His demands were not unreasonable. To obey God’s covenant meant to live a happy life as the Lord gave you all that you needed and more.’*
 - I believe there are **2** concepts we need to consider when we are asking God for something, or wondering if we really know best or not?

- **Expect God to Respond.**
 - Sometimes, if we're being honest, you and I will pray to God and not expect Him to respond or wonder if He even hears us.
 - **When we make a request, we need to expect God to respond. But, we don't need to do so in a way where we are expecting Him to respond on our terms.**
 - In this case, the Israelites had disobeyed God and didn't want Him to rule over them anymore, which is why God said what He said to Samuel in 1st Samuel 8:7.
 - 'And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.'
 - **The israelites have not truly considered the source of the one they were talking to.**
 - Oh, how quickly they forgot what God had done for them in the past.
 - **Maybe they expected God to respond, maybe they didn't, but when you pray, make sure you realize that He can and will respond.**
 - Maybe not the way you want Him too. Maybe not on the timetable that you want Him too, but that's why it's so important that we consider the source of the Bible, God Himself.
- **Excellent Leaders tell all that God gives them to say.**
 - **From when Samuel was a young boy, He had told the truth of whatever it was that God had Him to share.**
 - Back in 1st Samuel 3, we saw that God gave Samuel a challenging word to speak to Samuel's boss, Eli.
 - Although Samuel was afraid, after Eli probed him, he did speak all that God had told him.
 - **Here, as we are going to see, it's no different.**
 - God has given Samuel a word to speak that more than likely, might not be their favorite to hear.
 - **While God is going to give the people what they've asked for to teach them a lesson and in the process show how Great He really is, He also told Samuel to tell them the consequences that this would bring.**
 - Most of us don't like consequences or being told about them.
 - But, Samuel is going to be honest and faithful to what God gave him to speak to the people.

Point 2: Crisis will be Severe. (V. 11-18)

- What blows my mind when we read these verses, is that what the Lord tells Israel through the prophet Samuel that is going to happen to their future generations if He grants their request, is alarming.

- ***This is another example of the Bible that I would consider rated R if it were to be made into a movie.***
 - *It's astonishing that in these verses I believe we see how strong the human will is and selfishness is when we are wrapped up in our flesh.*
- *The people are told of the heartache that they will have to endure if they get what they are asking for, yet, they do it anyway.*
 - *Satan wants to blind both you and I into thinking that we can't get through another day if we don't have what **WE** want the **WAY** that we want it.*
- Samuel wants the people to see that their way of life is going to have to vastly change with the installation of a monarchy.
 - Scholar Robert D. Bergen said *'the decision to have a permanent King meant much more than the addition of one person to the circle of power in Israel. It entailed the establishment of a permanent, multi tiered bureaucratic institution utilizing the services of thousands of individuals.'*
- ***And all of these consequences that unfold in the remaining pages of 1-2 Samuel are all because they 'wanted to fit in', as they state in verse 20.***
- What I find very significant in verses 11-18, is the use of the phrase ***'He will take'***
 - We find this phrase in verse 11, 13, 14, and 16. Is implied in verses 15 and 16.
 - *It would be the Kings (not just saul), who over the history of Israel will take away things from the people to further their own agendas.*
 - ****Word Study****
 - This comes from the Hebrew verb ***'Laqach'*** לָקַח *which means to take, fetch, or seize and is used frequently in the OT.*
 - Out of the 85 Hebrew words that Samuel uses here, this word is the most frequent one that appears.
 - ***I believe Samuel uses it to illustrate just how much the establishment of the monarchy is going to devastate the people for generations to come.***
 - I believe there are 4 things to point out concerning what Samuel said the King(s) of the future would take.
- ***Sons. (V. 11-12)***
 - 'He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. **12** And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.'
 - ***Through both of the genders, Samuel would tell them that they both would have two primary categories that they would be responsible for in working for the king.***

- There would be a permanent military, and there would then be administrative support.
 - ***This would include sons and daughters.***
 - The way that Samuel lists these things with ‘sons’ here in verse 11 becoming the verb that is attached to ***Laqach***, we see that one by one he is listing the things that they will lose if they still want a king.
 - ***Scholar John L. Mackay said ‘A typical canaanite King would consider everyone and everything within his realm to be his to ‘take’.***
 - Verse 11 and 12 reveal what the sons would be doing.
 - ***From the military perspective:***
 - The sons would be in the royal honor guard (V. 11).
 - The sons would be in the calvary (V. 11).
 - The sons would be in the officer corps (V. 12).
 - The sons will produce the weapons that will be used by the army (V. 12).
 - The sons will be responsible for producing a food supply (V. 12).
 - ***The kind of military operation that a King in the ancient world would aspire to have, would need all of these things and more, that the Sons of Israels could provide for him.***
 - Samuel tells them that it’s not only the sons that a king would take...
- ***Daughters. (V. 13)***
 - ‘He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.’
 - Remember that all of these things that God says through Samuel that are going to happen don’t all happen in just Samuel’s time or David’s time.
 - ***Many of these events and circumstances do come to pass though when Solomon is in charge.***
 - W.W. said ***‘the day came when the people cried out for relief from the heavy yoke Solomon had put on them just to maintain the Glory of His Kingdom.’***
 - ***Verse 13 shows us three roles that the women would have to do for the king.***
 - ***Perfumer.***
 - They would be responsible for making perfumes.
 - ***Cooks.***
 - They would be in charge of cooking the food for the king and his detail.
 - ***Bakers.***
 - They would be responsible for baking different items.
 - ***Although it is not explicitly stated here in Samuel’s 85 word speech, later on in scripture we see that women will be taken for sexual reasons and desires by the kings.***
 - ***1st Kings 11:3*** tells us that Solomon had 300 wives:

- ‘He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines.’
 - We know that David got into the trouble with Bathsheba and the killing of Uriah because of his sexual desires for her.
 - ***The main point, the sons and daughters of the Israelites would no longer be theirs, but they would belong to the king.***
 - Samuel told them their sons and daughters, would be taken, but also their...
 - ***Property. (V. 14-17)***
 - ‘He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. **15** He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. **16** He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men[a] and your donkeys, and put them to his work. **17** He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.’
 - ***Everyone in Israel will be affected due to this decision, because even their physical property will be taken.***
 - What is described here in verses 14-17, was a form of sharecropping.
 - ***Essentially, in the eyes of the king(s) to come, they would own it all and the people would simply just be working for them and have to give a percentage to him.***
 - This is exactly why Samuel says that they will become slaves to the king.
 - ***To be a slave to the kings of this world is far more detrimental than to be a slave to the most High King.***
 - ***When we think that we know what’s best over almighty God, we are essentially saying that we’d rather be a slave to the world, than a slave to Him.***
 - ***Their Voice. (V. 18)***
 - ‘And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.’
 - ***The people would lose their voice to the point where what they wanted no longer would mean anything to the king.***
 - Why would it? They were slaves who put themselves in this predicament.
 - ***1st Kings 12:1-4 is an example that their voice would no longer matter to the kings that would come.***
 - The reason that God would not hear their cry is not because He is not a merciful and compassionate God, but because they had their choice. They made this decision. They made this bed, and they had to lay down in it.
 - So far tonight I believe that we’ve been able to see that when we think we know what’s best, we should, consider the source, know that the crisis will be severe for going our own way, but we must also be aware that...

Point 3: *Conformity Spreads. (V. 19-22)*

- ‘But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, **20** that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” **21** And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. **22** And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”
- **Conformity among human beings is like a wildfire, when it catches, it usually goes up in flames.**
 - These verses really and truly do grieve my heart.
 - **To know that God told them directly what would happen years before it would happen, and yet they still disobeyed God.**
 - This is why you and I must be careful and not allow conformity to the culture and ways of this world catch fire in our Christian life and circles.
 - I’m reminded of the command that the apostle Paul gave in Romans 12:2.
 - ‘Do not be conformed to this world,[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.’
 - *W.W. accurately described the attitude of these people that was ultimately plagued by conformity...*
 - ***‘In spite of these warnings, the people insisted that God give them a king. Pleasing the Lord wasn’t the thing uppermost in their minds; what they wanted was guaranteed protection against their enemies. They wanted someone to judge them and fight their battles, someone they could see and follow. They found it too demanding to trust an invisible God and obey His wonderful commandments.’***
 - **Believe it or not, you and I are just as guilty as these same Israelites.**
 - We’d rather get what we want now, and how we want it. Because we can see it, touch it, and feel it.
 - ***Instead of trusting God with what’s truly best for our lives and the lives of those who come after us in future generations, we’d rather go on our own ‘gut’ feeling, and trust ourselves.***
 - I believe there are **2** important things here that we see when conformity spreads.
- **Coveting Clouds our Vision. (V. 19-20)**
 - ‘But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, **20** that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”
 - **The people of Israel were adamant that they were going to disobey God, and go their own way.**
 - As John Woodhouse said ***‘This warning fell on deaf ears.’***
 - They wanted a king like all the other nations. They wanted a king that would...

- *To Give the people status and influence across the ancient world.*
- *To judge them.*
- *To go out and be a war leader.*
 - When we covet what God has given to other people, it clouds our judgment on what He has already given us and what He wants to do in the future.
- ***Conforming Hardens our Hearts. (V. 21-22)***
 - ‘And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. **22** And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”
 - ***God is going to give the people what they asked for, simply because they rejected Him and would no longer listen to Him.***
 - At a point, it gets to a point where enough is enough. God has given us the free will to make our own decisions.
 - ***How are the decisions you are making in your life tonight going to cloud or clear up the path for future generations in your family?***

Conclusion:

- ***Tonight, I hope and pray that you’ve been able to see, that when you think you are the one who is the pilot of your life, and you think that you know best, it can and will create a disaster.***
 - Oftentimes, satan will blind us to the point that we can’t even see it.
 - ***So, tonight during our time of invitation, I feel led that we need to ask God to take our blinders off if we are driving through life with any of them on this evening.***
 - If you are wrestling with God concerning a decision or circumstance in your life, it’s best that you listen to Him.
- May we not forget when we may think that we know best...
 - **Point 1: *Consider the Source. (V. 10)***
 - **Point 2: *Crisis will be Severe. (V. 11-18)***
 - **Point 3: *Conformity Spreads. (V. 19-22)***

Sermon #15:

'A Survey of Saul!'

1st Samuel 9:1-2

Sermon in a Sentence:

In these verses we see a Survey of Saul by looking at how his descendents were listed, his distinct looks and double length were also mentioned by the author.

Intro:

- Tonight's message will be different from most of the sermons we've had in our 'Honing in on the Heart!' series so far.
 - *But, you may find it somewhat similar to the overview message we had to begin this series back on January 3rd.*
- In tonight's scripture text, we will see Saul mentioned for the first time.
 - *From now until chapter 31 of 1st Samuel, we will be studying Saul and his different actions as the first king to rule over Israel.*
 - *We are going to see that he rises up from an unlikely spot, starts out strong, but disobeys God time and time again, and will become bitter.*
- *Since Saul is such a major part of 1st Samuel (and the history of Israel), I felt it was appropriate to spend 1 sermon in this series looking at who he was, and where he came from, so that we might have a better understanding of his significance in scripture as we continue in 1st Samuel.*
 - Back in 1st Samuel 1:1, it opened up like this:
 - 'There was a certain man'
 - 1st Samuel 9:1 will start off with:
 - 'There was a man'
- *This gives you and I the impression that this is the start of a new story within the historical narrative of 1st Samuel.*
 - And in many ways, we will see the tide turn in 1st Samuel.
 - *Although Samuel will not die at this point, he will slowly move out of the picture as Israel's spiritual leader, and Saul will take center stage for a few chapters until He disobeys the Lord.*
- To have a good understanding of this book, we need to have a decent understanding of Paul.
 - *Scholar David E. Garland said '(He Saul), was a villain, tragic figure, flawed ruler, naive farm boy, degenerate madman, fate-driven pawn, and reluctant king.'*
 - *To me the side part about Saul is to see how progressively worse he allows his own sin to get in his life.*
 - As the story goes on, Saul gets farther and farther away from God.

- In David E. Garland’s commentary on 1-2 Samuel, he shares an interesting chart (seen below) that gives us solid insight into how the narrative of Saul will unfold in the chapters to come:

○

Act I, Scene 1.	Saul meets Samuel, Samuel then annoints him. (9:3-10:16)
Act II, Scene 1.	Saul meets Samuel, who now condemns him. (ch. 15)
Act III, Scene 1.	Saul meets Samuel, who now dooms him. (ch. 28)
Act I, Scene 2.	Success in battle, due to the power of the Lord. (ch. 11)
Act II, Scene 2.	Success in battle, due to the help of David. (Chs. 17-18)
Act III, Scene 2.	Saul commits suicide in battle. (ch. 31)
Act I, Scene 3.	Saul’s failure in front of Samuel and Jonathan (chs. 13-14)
Act II, Scene 3.	Saul’s Failure, in front of David. (chs. 19-26)

- *As you can probably already tell, Saul was quite the character.*
- **William P. Barker** in his book, ‘everyone in the Bible’, said this about Saul ‘*The moody benjaminite who was the first king of Israel, Saul was summoned to leadership against the Philistines by the prophet Samuel.*’
 - So, let’s begin our survey on Saul tonight as we look at the first two verses in 1st Samuel 9. The introduction for Saul.

Read 1st Samuel 9:1-2

Question to Ask:

How do these two verses introduce us to one of the main characters of the historical narrative, that is, 1st Samuel?

Point 1: Descendants Listed. (V. 1)

- ‘There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth.’
 - *Kish, Saul’s Father, is given a very similar introduction here that Elkanah received at the beginning of 1st Samuel.*

- ‘There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.’ 1st Samuel 1:1.
 - **Later in 1st Samuel 17:12, David will be given a formal introduction like these, just a little bit more abbreviated.**
 - To us, these might just look like a list of random names.
 - **But, to the original recipients of this historical narrative (the jews), this would have meant more to them than it does to us.**
 - I believe there are 2 things that we can pull from the text concerning these descendents that are listed.
- **The Pedigree of his Family. (V. 1a)**
 - ‘There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite,’
 - **One of the main reasons I believe the writer of 1st Samuel lists the descendants of Saul, is to show that Saul did not become King due to his genealogy.**
 - This was a common practice at the time.
 - John Woodhouse said **‘In terms of ancestry Kish was, like Elkanah, a nobody.’**
 - We aren’t dealing with Israelite royalty here, just a simple family.
 - **Kish, Saul’s Dad, is described here as a Benjaminite**
 - This family name (Benjaminite) was not a call to fame.
 - **The tribe of Benjamin was the smallest in Israel which is why Saul said this later on in this same chapter in verse 21:**
 - ‘Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?” 1 Samuel 9:21
 - The only names from verse 1 that are mentioned anywhere else in the Bible is Saul’s Grandfather, **‘Abiel’**. **In 1 Chronicles 11:32.**
 - ‘Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite,’ But, I don’t believe this is referring to Saul’s Grandfather, but rather a member of David’s 3rd elite crops of guards that are called ‘The Thirty’
 - **Either way, it’s important that we see the first King of Israel came from a very humble family and a humble background.**
 - Maybe this is why some people liked Saul so much in the beginning in addition to his outward appearance.
 - **There is only one another man of the Benjamin tribe that has been mentioned here in 1st Samuel.**
 - The man of Benjamin who brought the news of Israel’s defeat in battle and the capturing of the ark, in 1st Samuel 4:12.
- **The Prosperity of his Farm. (V. 1b)**
 - ‘a man of wealth.’

- Depending on which translation you have, the second part of verse 1 is probably translated differently than the ESV.
 - *We will break it down, but the writer is showing that although Saul came from the smallest tribe in Israel, it was a great family within that tribe.*
- ***Word Study***
 - The phrase *'A man of wealth'* comes from the Hebrew word(s) **Chayil** (*a force, men or means of resources; can be translated to an army, wealth, virtue, valor and strength*) **חַיִל** and **Gibbor** (*powerful, warrior, tyrant, strong man, mighty*) **גִּבּוֹר**.
 - These two words when put together essentially mean 'a man of standing' or 'brave man'.
 - Here's how the **NASB** translates it:
 - 'a mighty man of [a]valor'
 - Here's how the **NKJV** translates it:
 - 'a mighty man of [a]power'
 - Here's how the **CSB** translates it:
 - 'There was a prominent man'
 - *The CSB puts it at the beginning.*
- *In the Hebrew text it's at the end of the sentence, and however you translate it, Kish was a wealthy and prominent man in the community. A strong and brave man.*
 - *The key to looking at this phrase in the Hebrew, is that nowhere in 1st Samuel is this same phrase used to describe Saul.*
- *These same two Hebrew words are put together to describe Boaz in Ruth 2:1, and Jeroboam the first in 1st Kings 11:28.*
 - So, while Saul came from good stock, he did not follow his father's example.
 - This is a familiar theme we've seen in Samuel thus far.
- So far this evening, we've seen the descendants listed.
 - Next we see that Saul had distinct looks.

Point 2: Distinct Looks. (V. 2a)

- 'And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he.'
- *If you remember back in 1st Samuel 8, it's not God that decided they needed a king, it's the people who insisted that they wanted a King.*
 - *So, as we will see next week while God appointed them a King, it was not because God wanted to do so.*
 - Which is why God chose a king for them that would be grand in appearance and that they would boast in fleshly pride.

- Remember why they wanted one? 1st Samuel 8:20 shows us why: *‘that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’*
 - *Yet again, when you insist your way over God’s, you may get what you want, but it certainly won’t be what’s best for you.*
- *So, Saul was the people’s choice and desire, it’s important to know that it was God that selected Him and therefore, allowed this to happen.*
 - God was giving them something that they wanted.
- *So, what do we find in the first part of verse 2 that shows us why they would want someone like Saul to be their King?*
- **Name. (V. 2)**
 - ‘And he had a son whose name was Saul,’
 - ***In understanding Saul’s name, it’s important that we look to the Hebrew.***
 - ****Word Study****
 - The name ‘Saul’ comes from the Hebrew verb **‘Shaw-ool’** שָׁאַל which *is the passive participle of the Hebrew verb for asked.*
 - This verb is used all throughout 1st Samuel, especially in chapter 1 concerning Hannah’s request for a son.
 - *A potential foreshadowing that the nation of Israel would ask for a King.*
 - John Woodhouse points out *‘The exact form of the verb that corresponds to the name ‘Saul’ occurred at the end of chapter 1’*
 - **Also, I think that it’s important to see that the name Saul reminds us that the reason Saul is even becoming king, is because the people asked for it.**
 - ‘So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him.’ 1st Samuel 8:10
 - ***For generations to come his name would be a reminder to the people of Israel that they asked for something, God gave it to them, and it ended up not being what they wanted, needed or expected.***
 - All this the people of Israel did so that ‘they may be like other nations’.
- **Nature(s). (V. 2)**
 - ‘There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he.’
 - ***Obviously this verse is very descriptive when it comes to Saul’s physical nature. But, throughout the rest of Samuel we are going to see his emotional nature as well.***
 - *Saul is a great example that there are always two sides of a person. The side that you see, and the side that you cannot see.*
 - *Saul’s physical nature is mentioned here, so specifically, so that the reader can see what was really important to the people of Israel at this time. **We too are guilty of judging what we can see, as opposed to what we cannot see.***

○ **Word Study**

- Looking back at the beginning of verse 2, I think it's important to note that some of the Hebrew does get lost in translation. You may remember when we overviewed this series on January 3rd, that I mentioned that at times the original Hebrew is hard to read and interpret.
- The phrase '*a handsome young man*' comes from the Hebrew word **'Bahar'** בָּחַר *which can also mean 'chosen one' as well as young man.*

○ This particular word choice reminds us of Samuel's words in ***1st Samuel 8:18***.

- 'And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.'

○ *Saul was chosen by the people and God allowed for this to happen. Which shows us, based on what will happen later in 1st Samuel, that they asked for what they had received.*

○ As far as his outward nature, I believe the following verses that we will study later in this series will describe that more in depth. I'll mention just a few tonight.

■ ***Saul was a Killer.***

- 'And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself.' 1st Samuel 19:2

■ ***Saul was Jealous.***

- 'But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, **29** Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.' 1st Samuel 18:28-29

■ ***Saul sought evil spirits, through a witch, for guidance.***

- 'So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." 1st Samuel 28:8

■ ***Saul was a disappointment.***

- 'And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.' 1st Samuel 15:35

■ ***Saul caused damage to the land of Israel way beyond his time as king.***

- 'Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death." 2nd Samuel 21:1

○ *What Saul had inside, would show itself eventually to Samuel and to all the people of Israel soon enough.*

- Tonight we've seen the Descendants listed, the distinct looks, now we see the double length.

Point 3: *Double Length. (V. 2b)*

- 'From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.'
- *The fact that the writer of Samuel even mentions this, may seem odd to you and me. But, it must have been pretty important because it's repeated in 1st Samuel 10:23-24.*
 - 'Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"'
 - *Even at this time, it seems as if Samuel's vision is clouded. He joins in with the people in looking and admiring Saul's stature.*
 - *While human nature is very much still the same, it seems obvious that the people at this time cared more about physical appearance and stature of their King, than maybe we do today, which is astonishing to think.*
- *John L. Mackay said 'He is just the sort of person to impress those who have asked for a King.'*
 - Physically, He was, but what about his spiritual state?
 - I think it's important to note that even when we study chapter 9 next week, we have no evidence of the state of Saul's spiritual condition.
 - W.W made this observation *'Saul's home was in Gibeah, which was about five miles from Ramah where Samuel lived, and yet Saul didn't even know what all Israel knew, that a man of God named Samuel lived in Ramah.'*
 - *How could Saul live so close in proximity to Israel's spiritual leader and not even know about him?*
 - I think this gives us very early evidence that will play out in 1st Samuel. *Saul did not care about the things of God.*
 - The lack of spiritual life that Saul seems to suggest here, can be contrasted by what was said of Joseph in *Genesis 39:3*.
 - 'His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands.'
 - *Christians in America today spend way too much time worrying about if someone fits the 'physical' description, or has all the right 'experience' on the resume, or all the right 'degrees' and educational marks.*
 - *What we really need to be looking for, is this: is that person walking with the Lord and is it evident to fellow believers that God is using them.*
 - Out of the entire nation of Israel, you would think that someone, other than Samuel, would slow down and say 'hey guys, don't you think this isn't a good idea? It takes a whole lot more than looks and height to be a good king.'
 - *Out of all the nation, it seems that no one spoke up.*

- *When are we as a society going to wake up and realize that it's not about the amount of followers that someone has, but the faith that they hold to.*
- *When are we going to wake up and realize that it's not about the clicks you get on facebook, but that Christ that lives in you.*
- *When are we going to wake up and realize that it's not about the outside of our bodies but Omega God who created them.*
- *When are we gonna realize that it doesn't matter how someone performs in a ball game, but it does matter how they perform in God's army.*
- *When are we going to wake up and realize that's in not about how much money you have, but about the Messiah that you proclaim.*

Conclusion:

- Over the coming months and into the next year, we will dive so much deeper into who Saul is.
 - *Tonight we've briefly surveyed saul and scanned through his life, but maybe even tonight you've caught a glimpse that although Saul had the outward appearance all together and people loved him, his heart is not where it needed to be.*
 - Honing in on the Heart is the title and purpose of our sermon series.
 - *Tonight we are just touching the surface in Saul's story, how do you need to have a heart check before God?*
 - How do you need to ask God to make you not so concerned with your outward appearance, that you neglect your heart before Him.
 - *The people of Israel were blinded by Saul's looks and his physical length, that they didn't realize his heart would turn to bitterness before it was all said and done.*
 - We saw that tonight in our passage by looking at:
 - **Point 1: *Descendents Listed. (V. 1)***
 - **Point 2: *Distinct Looks. (V. 2a)***
 - **Point 3: *Double Length. (V. 2b)***

Sermon #16:

'From Donkeys Missing to a Divine Meeting!'

1st Samuel 9:3-27

Sermon in a Sentence:

What starts out as a mission to find lost donkeys turns into a divine meeting between Samuel and the first king of Israel, Saul. In this scripture text we see that Saul was sent on a working mission, specific words were mentioned, searching took place wholeheartedly for the Man of God, Supernatural words were uttered that matter, and there was a special wonderful meal to welcome Saul.

Intro:

- Tonight we've come to a pretty obscure passage in scripture.
 - *Tonight is one of those nights where we see God use something that we see as unusual and 'odd', and use it as a part of His overarching plan.*
- *Tonight we will see how God uses Kish's Donkeys going missing, to call Saul to the kingship of Israel.*
 - In this passage of scripture that we are studying tonight, I am reminded quite quickly of how God can use anything at any time to get our attention and also, change our circumstances for His Glory, and not our own.
- *Dale Ralph Davis wrote a great commentary of 1st Samuel, and when summarizing this passage we are going to read tonight, here's what he said:*
 - *'Providence is God's way of providing for the needs of His people. That's not all of it, but some of it. When I use 'providence' here I mean that wonderful, strange, mysterious, unguessable way Yahweh has of ruling His world and sustaining His people and His doing it, frequently, over, under, around, through, or in spite of the most common stuff of our lives or even the bias of our wills.'*
 - The providence of God is not something that we were meant to be able to figure out. It's when we see God do something, yet we have no clue or idea what He's doing.
 - I believe the great preacher of the 1800s, Alexander Maclaren, had a great thought on this passage and God's providence:
 - *'Think of the chain of ordinary events which brought Saul to the little city, -the wandering of a drove of donkeys, the failure to get on their tracks, the accident of being in the land of Zuph when he got tired of the search, the suggestion of the servant; and behind all these and working through them, the will and Hand of God, thrusting this man, all unconscious, along a path which he knew not.'*
 - The Hand of God is often in situations that we had no idea about, but it's His hand that has guided us and provided for us, time and time again.

- I hope that we all can have a Divine Meeting with God, even when the Donkeys go missing in our lives:

Read 1st Samuel 9:3-27

Question to Ask:

What circumstances arise in this passage that were brought about by God, to show Samuel that Saul was to be the next king of Israel?

Point 1: *Sent on a Working Mission. (V. 3-4)*

- ‘Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul’s father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, “Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys.” And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.’ 1st Samuel 9:3-27
- Saul’s Father, Kish, sends him on a trip, but this is a work trip to find the lost donkeys.
 - ***Donkeys at this time were extremely valuable due to the fact that they were as one scholar describes them ‘beasts of burden’.***
 - They did hard work and were essential for successful farming.
 - ***The fact that Kish sends his son and a servant, show how valuable these donkeys were.***
 - We don’t know how they were let out to roam, but somehow, God orchestrated the circumstance in a way where they were let out.
 - The phrase ‘Take one of the young men with you’, is important to look at in the Hebrew.
 - ****Word Study****
 - The phrase ‘young man’ comes from the Hebrew word **‘Na’ar’** נַעַר which means young man, but can also be translated as ‘the first of the servants’ or ‘the head servant.’
 - ***So, Kish sends essential workers on his farm, on a working mission.***
 - ***Because if the donkeys were missing, they would be limited anyway in the work that they would be able to do.***
 - As this search develops, Dr. David Garland shared an interesting thought concerning the irony that can be seen in this passage:
 - ***‘Just as Saul son of Kish was sent to ‘look for’ donkeys that temporarily could not be ‘found’, so also the people intent on making him king ‘looked for’ the bashful and reluctant Saul son of Kish, who temporarily could not be ‘found’***
- So, verse 4 indicates their journey through that mountainous region in search for the donkeys.

- *Saul and the servant went between the borderlands of Benjamin and Ephraim, but could not find the donkeys.*
 - The locations of Shalisha and Shaalim we are not sure of and seem to be obscure.
 - But, these names could be related to the names of the Asherite Clans in 1st Chronicles 7:30 and 1st Chronicles 36-37.
- *The name 'ZUPH' that is mentioned in verse 5 is worth mentioning.*
 - Zuph was the 3rd great grandfather of Samuel that was mentioned back in 1st Samuel 1:1.
 - This land was named after him and was the area of land that was near the hometown of Samuel, Ramathiam-Zophim.
 - **By God's providence, while searching for the donkeys, Saul had landed in the land of Samuel. Who he would meet shortly.**

Point 2: Specific Words Mentioned. (V. 5-10)

- 'When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant[a] who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." 6 But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." 7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" 8 The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel[b] of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) 10 And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.'
- *So, they arrive at the land of Samuel, and Saul wants to turn around.*
 - *Verse 5 shows us that while his father, Kish, certainly cares about the donkeys, we know he cared more about the well being of Saul and the servant, so Saul thinks they need to go ahead and turn around.* (Verse 20 reveals they were gone for 3 days on this quest)
- *These words that are mentioned here in verse 6 by the servant are evidence that God can and does use people as His mouthpiece and to guide us and direct us where we need to go.*
 - 'But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." 1st Samuel 9:6
 - *This verse shows us the magnitude of the impact we can have as believers to non-believers.*

- Odds are, this servant is not a Jew, but, he heard that there was a man of God in a nearby town.
 - ***It seems to me that the reason this servant wanted to talk to Samuel, is that they felt the Man of God would somehow have advice or guidance on how to find these donkeys.***
 - Oftentimes, those that have nothing to do with the Church or Christians, will look to the Church for guidance and support when needed most.
 - *We need to be ready to help when they do.*
 - The fact that the servant says ‘he is a man who is held in honor’, doesn’t mean he has a prior interaction with Samuel, but that the reputation of Samuel had spread to him, so that he knew to find him and hopefully, he could help with this situation concerning the donkeys.
 - ***John Woodhouse makes a strong observation on how Saul fits into all of this: ‘Saul was seeking lost donkeys. He had no idea where this journey would lead. His lack of awareness of Samuel was part of his general ignorance of what was going on.’***
- ***Then in verse 7, Saul doesn’t understand how they are going to be able to pay this ‘man of God’ when they get to him.***
 - ‘Then Saul said to his servant, “But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?”
 - ***This verse also shows that they had been on the hunt for the donkeys for quite some time.***
 - They were out of food, and they didn’t seem to bring any money.
 - ***Even these non-believers, so to speak, know that it was custom in ancient days that when you seek a prophet, it was common courtesy to bring a gift.***
 - Amos 7:12 gives us evidence of this
- ***In verse 8, the servant is one step ahead of Saul, because he has something that they can give to this highly reputable and respectable man of God that they have heard about.***
 - ‘The servant answered Saul again, “Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel^[b] of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.”
 - ***In the Hebrew, this verse literally reads ‘There is found in my hand a quarter of a shekel’***
 - ***In the Hebrew text, it alludes to the fact that the servant didn’t just have this shekel, but that it appeared.***
 - This is not an ordinary story. This is a story where God’s hand of providence is very much present.
 - ***Remember, that because God is in control, things don’t just ‘happen’.***

- **Verses 9 & 10 give us some added information from the narrator, and shows us an important fact about the man of God that is getting ready to come into the picture.**
 - (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer,” for today's “prophet” was formerly called a seer.) **10** And Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.’
 - **In this passage, we see the appearance of three terms that are all referring to the same prophetic office:**
 - ‘Seer’, ‘prophet’, and ‘man of God’.
 - **The narrator has done this for a reason to show that Samuel is often (and rightfully so), called ‘the last of the judges and first of the prophets.’**
 - **When it comes to the OT, verse 9 is extremely rare.**
 - According to many scholars, including Dr. David Garland, verse 9 is the only example in the OT of a Semantic change, which is by definition, explanatory substitution of one word for another.
 - **This is done by the narrator so that his audience knows what’s being discussed.**
 - A ‘seer’ in the Hebrew means one who sees, but with spiritual eyes.
 - The ‘prophet’ was one who was called by God to be His spokesman.
 - **At this point, Saul decides to go with his father’s servant to find this man. Little does Saul know what is getting ready to unfold, but God surely knows.**

Point 3: Searching Wholeheartedly for the Man. (V. 11-14)

- ‘As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?” 12 They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. 13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.” 14 So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.’
- **Saul and the servant are on the manhunt for the seer, the man of God, prophet, whatever you want to refer to who will undoubtedly be Samuel.**
 - John Woodhouse pointed out that these verses are very similar to other men in scripture that were on a search **‘Anyone familiar with Biblical history will recall that there have been a number of occasions when an encounter with young women at a well turned out to be significant. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Moses each include a scene like this that was a defining moment in their life.’**
- **Because the women were going out to draw water, it was in the evening that they arrived at ‘the hill city’, which was more than likely, Ramah.** (Ramah in the Hebrew means height)

- ‘And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water.’ Genesis 24:11
 - Robert D. Bergen brings out a good point concerning the conversation that was started with these young women in verse 11.
 - ***‘Timeless social customs in the Middle East prevented men from having much contact with women in public, but women were permitted to speak even with total strangers under the circumstances presented here.’***
- In verses 12-13, we see that the women give a detailed answer as to where the man of God that these two strangers were searching for, was.
 - ‘They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. 13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.”
 - ***We were told earlier in this book that Samuel was a traveling judge for the nation. So while his hometown was Ramah, doesn’t necessarily mean that he was always there.***
 - ‘And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. 17 Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.’ 1st Samuel 7:16-17
 - So, if Saul and the servant had been a day earlier, they would have missed this meeting with Samuel.
 - ***This is all part of God’s plan that He put together.***
 - Before the temple was built, it was acceptable for the people to offer sacrifices at high places.
 - ***Once the temple is built, this won’t be allowed anymore.***
 - ‘The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.’ 1 Kings 3:2
 - ***Remember, the place where they worshiped at Shiloh had been destroyed.***
- The urgency in the young women’s expressions, show that they had arrived at just the right time to be able to meet with the spiritual leader of Israel.
 - ***Since Samuel was a priest, He was offering sacrifices at the time Saul and the servant arrived.***
 - So, verse 14 shows us that Saul and the servant follow the instructions of these ladies at the well, and they find Samuel just where the ladies said that they would.

- ‘So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.’ 1 Samuel 9:14

○ ***They had found the man they were looking for, now we see that God had already told Samuel what was going to occur that day.***

- Tonight we’ve seen that Saul was sent on a working mission, specific words were mentioned, they searched wholeheartedly for the man, and now...

Point 4: *Supernatural Words that Matter. (V. 15-21)*

- ‘Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: **16** “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince[c] over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen[d] my people, because their cry has come to me.” **17** When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.” **18** Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?” **19** Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. **20** As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?” **21** Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”
- ***Just a day before this, God had prepared Samuel’s heart for what was going to happen in this moment.***
 - Always remember that God may be prepping and preparing you today, for something that might not happen until tomorrow. Always be ready.
- ***Though Samuel was not for the idea of a King for Israel, he is obeying the Lord in what God is directing Him to do.***
 - W.W. said ***‘Samuel couldn’t say he was happy about the changes going on in Israel, but he was obedient to the Lord.’***
 - I wonder if Saul was able to realize at this point, that the lost donkeys, failed search, had all led to this moment.
- ***Saul thought he would get a revelation from the seer (which he did), but the man of God was about to give Saul a revelation from God Himself.***
 - God is doing things in our lives right now that don’t make any sense. But one day it will. While you’re upset about the ‘lost’ donkeys in your life that you’re searching for, God may be preparing you for a Divine Meeting with Him.
- ***In verses 15 & 16, we are shown how the Hand of God has turned this all around.***

- In what God spoke to Samuel the day before, He revealed that Saul was the one who was to be anointed as the first King of Israel.
- So, Samuel was prepared and it shows in how he engages Saul in their first conversation.
- **Verse 17 shows us what God had in mind for Saul to do.**
 - ***Word Study***
 - The English word ‘restrain’ here in the ESV is quite interesting.
 - It comes from the Hebrew word **‘Atsar’** אָצַר *which is translated here as restrain, and in other translations, it’s translated as ‘govern’.*
 - This Hebrew verb occurs 46 times in the Hebrew OT and every time, except this time it has a negative connotation.
 - In 2 Kings 17:4 and Jeremiah 33:1 it suggests imprisonment.
 - In Job 4:2 it suggests silencing.
 - In 2 Kings 4:24 it suggests holding back.
 - Scholar Robert D. Bergen said **‘1 Samuel 9:17 is the only location in Scripture where the word can be taken to mean ‘rule’. By employing the verb here, the writer was suggesting that the Lord had determined to use Saul’s career as a means of punishing the nation.’**
 - As we will see in the rest of 1 Samuel, Saul will eventually fulfill all the meanings of this verb.
- **Verse 18 is one of the most telling verses in all of 1st Samuel when it comes to Saul’s Spiritual condition before becoming King.**
 - ‘Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?”’
 - **Samuel was not doubt one of the most recognizable figures in all of Israel at this time.**
 - He was the main spiritual leader in all the land. And Saul lived only 5 miles away from Samuel, yet he approached this man as a total stranger.
 - Asking Samuel where the seer was, not knowing that the seer was standing right in front of him.
 - **The contrast that the narrator paints here is striking.**
 - Samuel knows much about this tall young man.
 - Saul knows absolutely nothing, which truly shows us the spiritual blindness that Saul possessed.
 - **The spiritual blindness that Saul had would show itself even more when he wouldn’t be able to ready people properly.**
 - **Especially as it relates to the relationships Saul would have with Johnathan, David, and Ahimelech.**

- In the last verse of chapter 9, we see that Samuel says he wants to make the Word of God known to Saul, which further shows that Saul did not know it, or the Lord at this time.
- ***In verses 19 & 20, Saul gets more information than he was originally seeking.***
 - ‘Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. **20** As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?”
 - Samuel tells Saul that the Donkeys were taken care of, now there are going to be new things that Saul would have to set his mind to.
 - ***Like becoming the king of Israel.***
- ***In verse 21, we see Saul's response. I'm sure he was shocked and dumbfounded at what this older gentleman was saying to him.***
 - ‘Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”
 - ***Saul is a farm boy. At this point, he's a humble country boy. So he knew he had no hereditary pathways for greatness, and has no idea why Samuel is talking to him like this.***
 - I'm sure the servant was shocked as well, especially considering he had been an instrument that God used.
 - While Saul was reluctant, he was about to be led to a feast by the decisive Samuel.

Point 5: *Special and Wonderful Meal. (V. 22-27)*

- ‘Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. **23** And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’” **24** So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, “See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day. **25** And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep.[f] **26** Then at the break of dawn[g] Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.**27** As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.”
- ***Saul and the servant are made as guests of honor at this event.***
 - We do not know what event this was, but we do know that the people that were their were invited guests.

- *Verse 23 and 24 support the fact that this hour was appointed. This was something that God had put together so Samuel acted accordingly.*
 - This was so Saul could see that while he was looking for donkeys, God was making plans for you that you are seeing fulfilled now even as you eat.
- **Then verse 25-26 show us that Samuel had a conversation with Saul on the roof of his home.**
 - Verse 27 goes on to reveal that Samuel wanted to talk to Saul alone, about what all this was really about. We will see that next week in chapter 10 as the story continues.
- What is alluded to in verse 27, would become the anointing of Saul as king and communication from God would be received.
 - *How incredible it really is to read a passage such as this one and know that God is always working out the details. We've got to be like Samuel. Listen and follow in His instructions.*

Conclusion:

- Maybe tonight, the 'donkey's' in your life have gone missing.
 - *Maybe you don't know why.*
 - *The donkeys in your life could be your children, spouse, possessions, career, favorite hobbies, health, a variety of different things.*
 - But I believe we've seen tonight, that even when Donkeys go missing, there's a divine appointment that God may be working on.
 - **God may allow the donkeys in your life to go missing so that you find Him in the midst of pursuing the donkeys.**
 - Without this mission, it's likely Saul wouldn't have gotten to know Samuel and ultimately gotten to know God.
 - *When the Donkeys do go missing, it's an opportunity for God to show up and show out.*
 - Are the donkeys missing in your life tonight and you feel as if you're wandering in the wilderness?
- Don't forget:
 - **Point 1: *Sent on a Working Mission. (V. 3-4)***
 - **Point 2: *Specific Words Mentioned. (V. 5-10)***
 - **Point 3: *Searching Wholeheartedly for the Man. (V. 11-14)***
 - **Point 4: *Supernatural Words that Matter. (V. 15-21)***
 - **Point 5: *Special and Wonderful Meal. (V. 22-27)***

Sermon #17:

'The Private Plot!'

1st Samuel 10:1-16

Sermon in a Sentence:

The private plot that unfolds in this text, before Saul is introduced to the nation as king, unfolds as we look at the Anointing, the Affirmations, the Acquisition, the Appearance, and the Asking.

Intro:

- Tonight we will continue our study in 1st Samuel, as we look at how Saul was privately anointed by Samuel, before being publicly introduced as the King of Israel.
 - *I truly believe tonight that through our study of this text, we will be able to see how Saul reluctantly accepted this anointing.*
 - We will see that God does a work in Saul's life. Yet, over the course of Saul's life, we are going to see the tragic downfall that he took his eyes off of Jesus.
 - *In verses 1-8 of our text tonight, we find the longest recorded speech that Samuel ever gave to an individual.*
 - *147 words in the Hebrew text that Samuel said to Saul here, privately.*
 - *In what we find tonight, scholar Robert D. Bergen said that these 147 words accomplished these three main things:*
 - *'#1 he revealed that Saul was God's choice to be Israel's first King. #2 he laid out for Saul a series of Confirmatory signs. #3 Then intimated to Saul the proper relationship that was to exist between king and prophet in Israel.'*
- What I believe we find in the private plot that we will read of tonight, is that Saul started out on the right foot.
 - Samuel gave him the right foundation to be able to be a 'good' king for the nation of Israel.
 - *As we will soon find out, Saul started out as a very great king, but he did not stay that way. He did not continue to keep his eyes on the Lord, but focused more on himself and his own ego.*

Read 1st Samuel 10:1-16

Question to Ask:

What occurs privately and publicly in this text to show us the plot and the plan of Saul becoming the first King of Israel?

Point 1: *The Anointing. (V. 1)*

- 'Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince[a] over his people Israel? And you shall reign

over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince[b] over his heritage.’

- ***What we find here in verse 1, is that Samuel follows what the Lord told him to do, back in 1st Samuel 9:16.***
 - “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince[a] over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen[b] my people, because their cry has come to me.”
- ***So, Samuel puts into action what the Lord told him to do.***
 - Historically, anointing was reserved for sacred objects as is seen in Leviticus 8:10-11 and Numbers 7:1. It was also reserved for Aaronic priests according to Leviticus 8:30.
 - Scholar R.L. Harris said this concerning this anointing that Saul experienced:
 - ***‘The act of pouring a flask of specially prepared olive oil on Saul’s head apparently symbolized the staking of a divine claim on him, as well as the outpouring of the Lord’s enabling Spirit into the newly designated king’s life.’***
 - ***Remember, God is giving the people what they wanted and what they asked for.***
 - When looking at how Samuel words this in the Hebrew text, it is clear that Samuel wants Saul to know that this comes from God.
 - Saul was chosen for this.
- ****Word Study****
 - The word ‘anointed’ that occurs in verse 1, comes from the Hebrew word ***‘Mashach’ מָשַׁח*** which literally means here in the context of verse 1 as ***anointed.***
 - The term can also mean and will be later be translated as ‘the Lord’s anointed’ or ‘the Lord’s Messiah’.
 - ***Hebrew scholar Stephen J. Andrews notes ‘The familiar Hebrew term Messiah is derived from the same verb as ‘anointed’ here, Masach’***
 - ***This is significant because David would also be known as the Lord’s anointed, and Jesus, our Messiah, came from David’s lineage.***
 - Samuel tells Saul in this private meeting, that he is going to be the ‘prince’ of Israel, some translations say ‘leader’.
 - Either way, Saul doesn’t quite understand what all this means, yet, but in due time he will.
 - ***For now, we see that the anointing has occurred.***

Point 2: *The Affirmations. (V. 2-8)*

- ‘When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to

seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?”” **3** Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. **4** And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. **5** After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim,^[c] where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. **6** Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. **7** Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. **8** Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.”

- ***Samuel does not stop and explain what this anointing means and it's significance.***
 - Instead, Samuel sends Saul on a journey that we will encounter 4 specific signs that will affirm that God really has chosen Saul to be the first king of Israel.
 - ***We find these four affirmations straight from our text, in verses 2-8.***
- ***First Sign of Affirmation. (V. 2)***
 - ‘When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?”’” 1st Samuel 10:2
 - First, Samuel tells Saul to go to a direct location to men that would have connections to his family.
 - ***Remember, all of this started off with lost donkeys in the first place.***
 - ***So, these two men would have connections to his family, and let them know that his dad was worried about him, and the donkeys were fine.***
 - The words of these men affirm that it was God who was leading Samuel to accurately predict this. But it also shows that Saul’s dad was still in the dark on what all had been happening.
 - ***The words of these two strangers affirms that God was changing Saul's path.***
 - ***While his dad thought that he was still out looking for Donkeys, his son had just been anointed the first king of Israel.***
- ***Second Sign of Affirmation. (V. 3-4)***
 - ‘Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. **4** And

they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand.’

- ***Back in 1st Samuel 9:7 in the conversation between Saul and his servant, Saul had stated that they had no bread left in their sacks.***
 - ***Now we see that three men were on their way to Bethel and they would be giving him some bread.***
 - This shows that God is fulfilling Saul’s needs.
 - ***God will not call you to do something that He has also not equipped you for.***
- The meat, bread, and wine is significant because these men were headed for some sort of sacrificing ritual at Bethel.
 - ***John Woodhouse pointed out ‘The presentation of some of the bread to Saul suggests a recognition that Saul now had a special status in God’s presence.’***
- Nowhere else in the scriptures is the ‘Oak of Tabor’ mentioned except here in verse 3.
 - ***In Genesis 35, there is an oak that is mentioned that was below Bethel. It’s possible that this is the same one, although we can’t be certain.***
 - ‘And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel.’ Genesis 35:8
- ***Third Sign of Affirmation. (V. 5)***
 - ‘After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim,[c] where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.’
 - The third sign is quite interesting.
 - ***Here, Samuel says that Saul will return home at Gibeah and there will be a garrison of Philistines in his hometown.***
 - How alarming this might have been for Saul to here.
 - ***This garrison of philistines represented the problem that Saul was chosen to solve as the first king of Israel.***
 - Then, we see an interesting turn of events as Samuel tells Saul that a group of prophets will come down with different instruments and will be prophesying.
 - ***It is likely that this is the first time Saul ever encountered a group of prophets, because we know prior to this whole lost donkey chase, Saul was not interested in the things of God.***
 - While this surely alarmed Saul, I’m sure, God was still very much at work in the details of Saul’s story.
 - ***Just as He is at work in the details of each of our own individual lives.***

- **Fourth Sign of Affirmation. (V. 6)**
 - ‘Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.’ 1st Samuel 10:6
 - **Here in verse 6 of 1st Samuel 10, we have strong evidence that God is the only one that can change someone.**
 - As a youth Pastor, I remember hearing kids say that they would be able to ‘change’ someone once they started dating.
 - You can’t change anybody, but God certainly can.
 - **This is not the first time in scripture that we see the breath or Spirit of God rush over someone.**
 - Judges 14:6 tells us that the Spirit of God rushed over Saul.
 - **The guy who just a day before had no interest in God, had now been radically changed by God. Never underestimate how God can change someone.**
 - That’s why we should never stop praying for God to change people’s lives.
- **In verses 7 & 8, we see that Samuel tells Saul what he is to do after these signs were completed.**
 - Saul was now empowered and enlightened by God’s Spirit. So, what was he to do?
- **Samuel tells him in verse 7 ‘do what your hand finds to do’.**
 - **What makes this interesting is that this same idiom is found in Judges 9:33**
 - ‘Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and rush upon the city. And when he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may do to them as your hand finds to do.’”
 - **Based on this, the context in Judges 9:33 makes it clear that this idiom was to be a military action against a certain enemy.**
 - **I believe here that Samuel is telling Saul, that once the Spirit of God has rushed upon you, act against the enemies of Israel.**
- Remember the detail of the garrison of the Philistines that was there at Saul’s hometown?
 - It seems as if this was an obvious enemy and that Saul was to be the one to defeat them.
 - **If defeating the philistines is what God wanted Saul to do, verse 8 gives Saul further instructions.**
 - ‘Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.’”
 - **Now Saul was to go to Gilgal and wait for Samuel for 7 days.**
 - **This is an early lesson that Saul was to listen to Samuel and the prophets, because they were God’s mouthpiece.**
 - While Saul would not always adhere to this in his time as king, from the beginning he was taught that he was to be subordinate to the Prophets.

Point 3: *The Acquisition.* (V. 9)

- ‘When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day.’ 1st Samuel 10:9
- First, God changed Saul’s heart, and then these signs came to pass.
 - **Before you can see the incredible things that God does on our behalf each and everyday, you have to have that time in your life where God changed your heart.**
 - *This country boy who had anxiety over his dad’s lost donkeys just 24 hours before, was changed by God totally and completely.*
 - The acquisition that Saul had here is that His heart was changed totally and completely by God.
 - *Have you had this acquisition in your life?*
 - ***Word Study***
 - The ESV says ‘God gave him another heart’, other translations say God changed his heart.
 - *What is translated here in the ESV as ‘gave’ comes from the Hebrew verb ‘Hapak’ פָּקַד which literally means to turn something upside down.*
 - **God is the only one who can turn someone upside down.**
 - Instead of resisting the change that God can do in our own lives, we need to embrace it.
 - Through Him, we can have the acquisition of a new heart before Him.
- So far tonight in this private plot we’ve seen the Anointing, the Affirmations, the Acquisition, next we see...

Point 4: *The Appearance.* (V. 10-13)

- ‘When they came to Gibeah, [d]behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” 12 And a man of the place answered, “And who is their father?” Therefore it became a proverb, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” 13 When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.’
- **The outward appearance and actions of Saul changed.**
 - So much that people said ‘What has come over the son of kish?’
 - *If God has really turned your heart upside down, then people should be asking, ‘wow, what made them change?’*
- **People shouldn’t have to LOOK to see if God has changed you or not, they should be able to SEE it.**
 - **The emphasis in these verses is in the fact that God really and truly changed Saul. Which makes the rest of 1st Samuel that more interesting.**

- *The scriptures make it clear here that God did change Saul, but Saul decided to change himself later on, and go against God.*
 - *God is the only one who can truly change us, but we make the decision whether or not to live and walk in that change that He has made in us everyday.*
 - Saul's story will end up becoming very sad. But it's very similar to our story today. God has saved us and changed us. Yet we'd rather not live the changed life but the estranged life that looks and seems more fun in the here and now.
 - This proverb that is first mentioned here, will not be the last time it is mentioned in 1st Samuel.
 - *It occurs again in **1 Samuel 19:24**:*
 - 'And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"
 - *The next time that this proverb occurs, will be at the time that Saul loses His ability to be able to lead Israel anymore.*
- *Verse 13 is important:*
 - 'When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.'
 - *Instead of making a move against the Philistine garrison, Saul goes to the high place.*
 - So, Samuel told Saul to 'Do what your hands find to do, for God is with you' which alludes to military action.
 - *But Saul does not do this. Interestingly enough Saul and the narrator are ignoring the elephant in the room, the Philistines!*
 - We've seen the anointing, affirmations, acquisition, and appearance. Lastly tonight, we see a family member comes asking Saul some questions.

Point 5: *The Asking. (V. 14-16)*

- 'Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel." 15 And Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you." 16 And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.'
- Saul's Uncle ask him 'where did you go?'
 - *I don't think the uncle is asking for a geographic location of where Saul was in searching for donkeys, but rather, 'what happened to you?'*
 - *Perhaps the uncle had noticed the change in Saul that everyone else in town had seen in him.*
 - *Saul chooses his words very carefully. He did not lie to his uncle, he just didn't tell him all the things that God had done in he and Samuel's interaction.*

- As soon as Saul tells his uncle that he had gone to Samuel, the uncle seems more interested. Almost like the uncle put two and two together.
 - *It's possible that Saul's uncle was more aware and involved in the nation's crisis that was mentioned in 1st Samuel 8.*
 - ***As soon as the uncle heard Samuel's name, the uncle wants to know.***
 - Why did Saul not tell his uncle what all had happened to him?
 - We can not be certain as to why Saul was silent about this matter.
 - Robert D. Bergen pointed this out concerning this question: ***'David's Kingship likewise would have a two-stage beginning. Both were selected as kings by the Lord, yet the kingship of both was hidden from their family members for a period of time.'***
 - This would all come out in God's timing, but for now, it was still a private plot and pruning, for Saul.

Conclusion:

- ***What we saw tonight occurred in private.***
 - ***But very soon, God would allow this to become a public proclamation. The whole nation would soon know that Saul was to be the first king of Israel.***
- ***Notice, that before Saul is publicly announced as the King, he is first privately changed by God.***
 - ***Before Moses became the leader of Israel God used a burning bush and His very presence to change Him.***
 - ***Before the Apostle Paul became the greatest evangelist apart from Jesus, that the world has ever seen, God met Him privately on the road to damascus and changed Him.***
- God has to have that 'Private Plot' moment with you, before you can be publicly used for His Glory.
 - Has God changed you? Have you had that moment in your life where He changed your heart for good?
- ***Maybe tonight it's been a really long time since that change occurred. Maybe tonight you know you're saved, but you just need the Lord to refine and revive you in this place tonight.***
 - ***God wants to change you privately (sanctification), before He can use you publicly for His Glory.***
- Tonight we saw this private plot unfold by looking at:
 - ***Point 1: The Anointing. (V. 1)***
 - ***Point 2: The Affirmations. (V. 2-8)***
 - ***Point 3: The Acquisition. (V. 9)***
 - ***Point 4: The Appearance. (V. 10-13)***
 - ***Point 5: The Asking. (V. 14-16)***

- What kind of Private Plot is God working on in you, that will soon be brought to the light?

Sermon #18:

‘The Public Proclamation!’

1st Samuel 10:17-27

Sermon in a Sentence:

The Public Proclamation of Saul as the first king of Israel unfolds as there is a Reminder of the Past, a Remarkable Process that takes place, and then the Rights of the Kingship are Presented by Samuel.

Intro:

- Tonight’s scripture text is a culmination of what had been transpiring in Israel for quite some time.
 - ***Back in 1st Samuel 8, the nation of Israel came to Samuel and said that they wanted a King.***
 - “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” 1st Samuel 8:5
 - ***Then they explained why they went to Samuel asking for a King.***
 - ‘that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’ 1st Samuel 8:20
 - ***Then, the Lord revealed to Samuel that Saul was going to be His chosen choice to be the King of Israel.***
 - We saw last week how the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon Saul, he was given instructions to do something about the Philistines, and did not do it.
 - ***What we saw unfold last week was private, now the nation of Israel is going to be introduced to the man that will be their first king.***
- ***I think it’s important to point out that there was probably a period of time between 1st Samuel 10:16 and 1st Samuel 10:17.***
 - One reason this public proclamation by Samuel takes place is because Saul had not made any moves or actions on the royal warrant that he was given to be able to do so.
- So, Samuel was going to give the people what they had previously asked for.
 - Robert D. Bergen said ***‘Samuel knew it was God’s will to select Saul as king, but he also understood that the day’s events were motivated by Israel’s rejection of God as King.’***
- ***We must not forget that all this is happening because the people of Israel weren’t satisfied with God being their King.***
 - They desired an earthly king and to look like the other nations.

- *What we find tonight is the people of Israel meet again for an assembly.*
 - The last time they met at Mizpah was in 1st Samuel 7:5, where Samuel prayed on their behalf.
- *Now, they were going to be introduced to what they had previously asked for.*
Read 1st Samuel 10:17-27

Question to Ask:

What unfolds during this public presentation and proclamation of a king that shows us the people had rejected God as their King and wanted their own earthly king?

Point 1: *The Reminder of the Past. (V. 17-19)*

- Verse 17 shows us that the nation of Israel once again gathered together and they did so at Mizpah.
 - *At this particular public convocation, it was not Samuel's job to act as Judge, but to act as Prophet.*
 - During this meeting, Samuel was going to tell the people what God had said concerning their request and was going to be the Lord's mouthpiece.
 - *Notice that unlike other nations at this time, the assembly doesn't begin with the entrance of the new King and an immediate celebration and shouting.*
 - *Verses 18 & 19 show us that it begins with Samuel revealing the Lord's prophetic judgements.*
 - This is seen by what the beginning of verse 18 will state '*Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel*'
 - What differed from the nation of Israel, is that God was truly King and that God was truly in control.
 - *Even if that's not what the people wanted.*
 - In these verses, before the King is going to be publicly announced for the first time, there are two reminders of the past that are given here to the Israelites.
 - *The Actions of God. (V. 18)*
 - 'And he said to the people of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'
 - *Immediately here they are reminded by God, through Samuel, what had been done for them in the past. Specifically with the Exodus out of Egypt.*
 - *These words were said so that maybe, just maybe, Israel would be able to see that God had done so much for them. He had been so faithful, and that He had protected Him.*
 - Maybe just maybe, while they were being reminded they would see that they are better off with God in control instead of man.

- Verse 19 will show us in a moment that they did not come to that realization.
 - *In the way the Hebrew is worded, it seems that the word choice makes subtle yet deliberate links to the Sinai covenant from Exodus 20:2.*
 - *Verses 18 & 19 when interpreted together seem to signify that because Israel got away from God's laws and the Sinai covenant, they had created this for themselves.*
 - *Oftentimes you and I are so similar to the Israelites. We don't want to look at what God has given us in the past, we just want to let Him know what we don't have right now.*
 - David Garland said *'The Israelites continued to insist in no uncertain terms that they wanted a king- a demand not outside of God's will but one sinfully motivated.'*
 - Before you put demands at the feet of the Lord, make sure you are reminded of the actions of God on your behalf that have occurred in the past.
- ***The Audacity of the Israelites. (V. 19)***
 - 'But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, 'Set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.'
 - *The people want what they want, over what God has given and offered them for so long.*
 - He's asked them for obedience, and even by their rejection here, they continue to disobey Him.
 - *The Lord was the one who had proven Himself and had helped them through their calamities and distresses. But the Israelites had done the opposite.*
 - *They responded to God's protection and safety by demanding essentially, a 'replacement' over the Lord.*
 - *While you and I might not necessarily ask God for a King, we do become replacements over God when we put our own will and agenda over His.*
 - Scholar John Woodhouse said *'There was a certain madness in Israel's heart. What they had done made no sense at all. To reject God was to reject their savior.'*
 - 'Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.'
 - The people don't yet know what is going to occur. Samuel didn't give a hint of what was going to happen.
 - *To the nation of Israel, this could have been alarming and frightening words.*

- The last time all of Israel was summoned and something like this occurred, was back in Joshua 7:14-16, when Israel had just gotten to the promised land and they were faced with punishment due to Achan's disobedience.
 - 'In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man. **15** And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.'" So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken.'
- *The 'old timers' in Israel at this time would have been trembling when Samuel called the people to assemble together.*
 - They probably think they are going to be punished, but that's not what happens and that's part of the reason what is getting ready to happen is truly remarkable.

Point 2: *The Remarkable Process. (V. 20-24)*

- *Part of the purpose of these verses is to show that yes, God is giving the people what they want.*
 - *It has a slice of humor in it even due to the fact that Saul's name in the Hebrew literally means 'you asked for it'.*
 - The process is going to be remarkable because God wants the people to see that the way they go about this, still has the Lord's Hand on it.
 - *It's not Samuel's choice on who is to be king or even the people's choice, this is God's decision and that's how this will unfold.*
 - *What we see here is what Robert D. Bergan referred to as 'Divine Prerogative'*
 - God wanted His people to know that they were not getting a King on the basis of human manipulation, which was how other nations at this time operated.
 - *While He was giving them what they wanted, He wanted them to know they weren't getting to choose who was to be king or how it was to be done.*
 - There are **three** remarkable things I want to point out concerning the remarkable process that God designed for Saul to be chosen as King.
- *Divine Choosing. (V. 20-21a)*
 - 'Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. **21** He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot;[a] and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot.'
 - *In the OT it was a common practice for 'lots' to occur to determine what God's will was for a particular situation.*

- Lots were taken in Jonah’s case to see who was responsible for the storm and who would be thrown overboard.
 - ‘And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.’ Jonah 1:7
 - Lots were also taken with the incident to isolate Achan as the thief of Israel’s plunder in Joshua 7:14-18.
 - ***In OT times, Lots were often used so that God’s choice on a particular matter could be discerned by people.***
 - ‘The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.’ Proverbs 16:33
 - The use of lots was used so that the people would know God did this. Stephen J. Andrews said ***‘Samuel knew that the leaders who coveted the kingship would not be satisfied with his testimony alone. God would have to do the choosing.’***
 - But, the man that was chosen by God, which was Saul, was nowhere to be found.
- ***Desperate Searching. (V. 21b-23a)***
 - ‘But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 So they inquired again of the LORD, “Is there a man still to come?” and the LORD said, “Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.” 23 Then they ran and took him from there.’
 - ***As we’ve unpacked these verses, maybe you were wondering what Saul was thinking or what Saul’s reaction would be to this public display of announcing him as God’s choice for King.***
 - In fact, in 1 Samuel 10:16 we saw that Saul did not want to tell his own uncle what had happened, and now everyone will know.
 - ***I wonder if the people were frustrated that God had chosen a man who hadn’t even shown up yet?***
 - So the people are searching, they don’t know what this man looks like yet or who he is. Just his name.
 - ***So, the people go to God and say, ‘Is there a man still to come?’-despite their desperate searching they were not able to find Him.***
 - God reveals to the people that Saul is hiding in the baggage.
 - ****Word Study****
 - Now ‘baggage’ is a vague and interesting word that is found here.
 - This word in the Hebrew is ***‘Kelay’ כֵּלַי*** which is a Hebrew term that can literally refer to any general object.
 - So, we can affirm that Saul was hiding behind some kind of physical object. Whether that was weapons, instruments, furniture, we don’t know. But it would have had to of been something big enough that a tall man could hide behind.

- *The importance of this word is not WHERE Saul is hiding, it's the fact that Saul is HIDING.*
 - **Word Study**
 - The Hebrew word for hidden is **'Chaba'** חָבַא which literally at the root of the word, means to keep secretly.
 - *Saul didn't want everyone to know he was to be king. Perhaps he was ashamed that he had failed in his first task of defeating the philistines, or he just didn't want it.*
- Robert D. Bergen points out the foreshadowing that exists in these verses **'Saul's vacancy at his own coronation suitably foreshadows a reign that would vacate responsibilities associated with the exercise of a Godly rule and perhaps suggests the lack of wisdom of those who preferred such a king to Yahweh.'**
- An interesting application that we can draw from this is that many people are hiding from the public what God has given you privately.
 - *God may want to do INCREDIBLE things through you. Things only that He can accomplish and enable you to do but He wants to use you to do it!*
 - *But how can God use what He's given you privately if you don't allow yourself to be used by Him publicly.*
- *Distinct Choice. (V. 23b-24)*
 - 'And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"
 - Now that they get Saul out from his hiding spot, everyone can see that this was a tall and handsome man.
 - *For now, the people are happy with this choice. But God was going to use Saul to cast judgment on the people for their disobedience to Him.*
 - *It seems as if the king that they wanted, one like all the other nations, would be Saul. He fit the descriptions and desires that they had for what their king would look like.*
 - *This is a strong reminder for us. Just because something looks pleasing to the eye, doesn't mean that it's good for your soul.*
 - *Just because what someone else has may work for them, doesn't guarantee that it will work for you and your benefit.*
 - If only the Israelites could see how strong their safety and protection was when they hailed God as their King.
 - The people's response shows us what they thought of their new 'king'.
 - *They shouted 'long live the king!'*

- *Everything is fine and dandy and we are so happy when we get what we think we want. But the tide changes when we realize that wasn't what we had to have in order to have the happiness we thought we were getting...*

- Tonight we've seen the Reminder of the Past, the Remarkable Process, and now we need to see that Samuel presents the rights of this new king.

Point 3: *The Rights Presented. (V. 25-27)*

- *This entire passage that we've studied tonight is extremely important because it shows what a huge turning point this was in the life of Israel. It's a turning point that will affect the course of the nation that we will see play itself out in 1st Samuel and into 2nd Samuel.*

- Samuel is going to formally present the new king, Saul, with the rights that he was to have.

- *The main thing to take away from these verses is that God is still very much in control, even though He chose and allowed Saul to be the King.*

- There are **two** things we need to look at considering the rights that were presented.

- *Difference from other Nations. (V. 25)*

- 'Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home.'

- We do not know what the exact content of this document was. The scripture tells us here that it was given to the Lord.

- *It is possible that these rights and duties of the kingship was a section of Mosaic legal materials, or it could've been an expansion of what is shared throughout deuteronomy.*

- *To be certain, we cannot.*

- *The important thing to note here is that this was totally different than what other nations did.*

- *Although Saul won't follow them fully, he and the people are given guardrails and guidelines that they are to follow regarding this new kingship.*

- In other ancient nations, the king was free to do what He wanted to do and what He pleased.

- *But the fact we are told that this document existed, shows us that God wanted them to know that it was still Him who was in control and in charge.*

- *Distractors are always Present. (V. 26-27)*

- 'Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man

save us?" And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace.'

- ***Saul goes home, but not without some folks that have negative comments that are aimed at being distractions to the new king.***
 - Anytime you are in ANY kind of leadership position (Pastor/Teacher, SS teacher, staff, deacon, etc), you will face complaints from others that satan intends to use as a distraction to your ministry.
- ***Despite the fact that God clearly gave strong evidence that Saul was chosen by God, some people didn't like it and spoke against it.***
 - But, in the beginning, Saul didn't let these distractors cause him to lose his cool.
 - *He kept his peace.*
- ***Know that when God chooses you for a task and has His hand on you, those who are seeking to distract and derail you are signs that you are following the Lord in obedience, because distractors and derailers are evidence that satan doesn't like it.***

Conclusion:

- ***What had developed in private circles was now in the open.***
 - Now we are going to see Saul's time as King commence. As it unfolds, we will most likely see that it is not all that the Israelite people thought and hoped that it would be.
- ***Tonight, be careful. Be very careful what you ask God for. He may give it to you in order to teach you an important lesson.***
 - This isn't even something saul wanted which was why he hid away from everyone.
 - ***But, satan would use this and grow an ego in Saul that would be stronger than his personal will to obey God.***
 - Maybe tonight you're like the nation of Israel and you are running, rebelling, and rejecting God at an alarming rate.
 - ***Maybe you are here, and you need for God to remind you of what He's done for you in the past, so that you realize He's in control!***
 - ***Maybe tonight you haven't verbally asked God for a new King to be placed in your life, but you may be living your life as if you are King, instead of letting Him be the King.***
 - These are all things that must be repented of this evening, if we're going to truly see a move of God in our life and in our Church.
- We saw the Public Proclamation tonight in the:
 - **Point 1: *The Reminder of the Past. (V. 17-19)***
 - **Point 2: *The Remarkable Process. (V. 20-24)***
 - **Point 3: *The Rights Presented. (V. 25-27)***

Sermon #19:

'How to Properly Handle Praise!'
1st Samuel 11:1-15

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can properly handle praise when we know that Problems will Always Arise, Preparation Anchors All, and Praise will Await from others.

Intro:

- This evening, we are going to read a text of scripture where we see Saul engage in his first military actions as the King of Israel.
 - ***In the eyes of the people, Saul had not yet done anything to cement his place as the new King of Israel.***
- When chapter 10 ends, it becomes evident that Saul had not yet done anything as the new King of Israel, due to what the nation says in ***1st Samuel 10:27***:
 - “How can this man save us?” 1st Samuel 10:27
 - Of course, these were the negative naysayers, but it doesn't take away the fact that not everyone in Israel thought this man was fit to be King.
- ***Samuel had told everyone to go home (1st Samuel 10:25), and everyone did go home, including Saul.***
 - ***We do not know how much time has passed between 1st Samuel 10 and 1st Samuel 11.***
 - ***What is clear based on how chapter 11 is written in the Hebrew text, is that there was little to know activity from Saul.***
 - In other words, he is very passive.
 - ***And, the Philistines are still a presence in the territory of Israel and Saul had done nothing up to this point.***
- Already in 1st Samuel we've seen the private anointing of Saul (1st Samuel 9:1-10:16), and then we saw the public proclamation (1st Samuel 10:17-27), and now we will see that the third step in his inauguration is the battle that he will experience and have to lead through.
 - ***As far as we know, this is Saul's first military combat experience.***
 - ***I feel it's important to note that the enemy came to Saul and the people of Israel.***
 - The problem came, and he had to deal with it.
- ***The reason I've entitled tonight's message 'How to Properly Handle Praise!' is because this is the first military action Saul faces, and he does really well.***
 - In fact, in verses 12-15 of our text tonight we are going to see that high praises come from the people.

- *But, if you have read through 1st Samuel before and studied it at all, you know that pride will get the best of Saul, and he will fail his people and God, miserably.*
 - Tonight, I want us to see that there are three ways, straight from the text, that we can apply to our lives to ensure that we are properly handling the praises we receive.
 - *Meaning, we don't let it get to our head, and allow the praise we receive to convince us that we don't need the Lord and His divine help.*

Read 1st Samuel 11:1-15

Question to Ask:

How does Saul's first encounter in Military combat show us how we should properly handle praise that may come from other people?

Point 1: Problems will Always Arise. (V. 1-4)

- Not long after Saul became King, a problem arises.
 - But is this not what the people of Israel wanted a King for? They wanted a King so that when they ran into military strife they could call on a man, a King, to go and fight their battles.
- *The problem that arises here is that Nahash the Ammonite decides to attack the new king of Israel.*
 - It is possible that Nahash knows Israel has a new king, and he wants to test Saul.
 - *He wants to see if Saul has the resolve and stamina to be a strong king and strong nation.*
 - *While we don't know for sure, it's possible that Nahash viewed Jabesh Gilead as an easy win and city to plunder.*
 - Either way, I believe there are 5 things we need to look at in this text concerning the problems that arise early for Saul.
- *The Looming Threat. (V. 1a)*
 - 'Then Nahash the Ammonite went up'
 - As we dive deeper into this text, we need to ask ourselves, who is **Nahash, King of the Ammonites**?
 - *Sidenote:*(There are 2 Nahash's mentioned in scripture, the other one is in 2nd Samuel 17:25 and she was the Grandmother of Amasa, who was the man that Absalom chose to lead his rebel army instead of Joab.)
 - The Ammonites were a rugged ancient tribal nation that inhabited the northeast area of the Jordan River.
 - Scholar, Dale Ralph Davis said *'(Jabesh-Gilead) was 20 miles south of the Sea of Galilee and 2 miles east of the Jordan.'*
 - Nahash is mostly well known due to the besieging of Jabesh-Gilead and his threat to gouge out the eyes of Israel.

- *This threat shows us that they were a very ruthless bunch, which was common in the ancient world at this time.*
- *In fact, information found in some of the Dead sea scrolls, say this about Nahash:*
 - ‘Now Nahash, the king of the ammonites, had been oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites grievously, gouging out the right eye of each of them and allowing Israel no deliverer. No men of the Israelites who were across the Jordan remained whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But seven thousand men had escaped from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh-gilead.’
 - *Most scholars believe that this part was lost in the original text due to transmission issues, but we do not know this for sure.*
 - Either way, Nahash was a big problem for the Israelites, and other nations, at this time.
- *What I find interesting is that this passage in 1st Samuel is not the last we hear of this Nahash, king of the Ammonites.*
 - Nahash would later assist David when they both are fighting against Saul. Because of this, David decided to overlook the insult of one of Nahash’s sons, Hanun. Another son of Nahash, Shobi, helped David during Absalom’s revolt. (2nd Samuel 10:2, 2nd Samuel 17:27 and 1st Chronicles 19:1-2)
- *While this is not the last time we will hear of Nahash in our study of 1-2 Samuel, this is the first time and this time brought trouble and problems to Israel as well as Saul.*
 - The threat is important, but also the...
- *The Lineage of the Location. (V. 1b)*
 - ‘and besieged Jabesh-gilead,’
 - Jabesh-Gilead would have been an Israelite town that was to the east of the Jordan river.
 - *This town was originally from the tribal allotment of Manasseh.*
 - This town would have been the closest Israelite town to the Ammonites.
 - *Judges chapters 19-21 provide critical information about the history of the Jabesh-Gilead.*
 - In that text, the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were attacked by the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 21:8), due to a crime that was committed in Gibeah (Judges 19:22-30). Because of this, Judges 21:14 tells us that 400 virgins from Jabesh were given as wives to the tribe of Benjamin.

■ ***Because Saul was a Benjaminite and this event happened years earlier, it is possibly and rather likely, that Saul had relatives and family connections in the land of Jabesh-Gilead.***

- This is not the only connection of lineage that Jabesh-Gilead has in the history of Israel.
 - Jabesh-Gilead was the most exposed Israelite town to the Ammonites, and the Ammonites came from a man named ***Ben-Ammi*** who was a son of Abrahma's nephew, lot.
- 'So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. **36** Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. **37** The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab.^[b] He is the father of the Moabites to this day. **38** The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi.^[c] He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.' Genesis 19:35-38

■ ***Although it's distant, relatives are fighting relatives when it comes to the Ammonites and Israelites fighting.***

- ***The Israelites also faced the Ammonites as an enemy on their way to the promised land in Deuteronomy 23:3-6.***
 - Other dealings between the Israelites and Ammonites can be found in Judges 11:1-33.
- We see the Looming Threat, the Lineage of the Location but also in verse 1...

● ***The Lame Negotiating. (V. 1c)***

- 'and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you."
- The people of Jabesh have a very lame negotiating tactic, simply because they've given up...
- ***John Woodhouse stated By offering to make a treaty with Nahash, they were in effect asking Nahash to become their King.'***
 - It wasn't long ago that the people of Israel asked for a King. Instead of immediately calling on Saul right from the jump, causes us to ask how they viewed Saul's kingship.

● ***Were these the naysayers of 1st Samuel 11:27?***

- In affect, the people of Jabesh-Gilead would become the servants and slaves of Nahash, and in effect, serve the Ammonites.
 - ***So, one of the problems Saul had is not everyone in Israel trusted him to protect them...***

● ***The Ludicrous Evil. (V. 2)***

- 'But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel."

- *Nahash reveals how evil he really is.*
 - David Garland is a scholar who said his name in ancient Hebrew was literally *'Snake'*
- Nahash does not want to negotiate, He wants to humiliate and abuse the israelites.
 - *Perhaps Nahash was trying to get revenge on how the Isrealites had defeated the Ammonites by Jephthah back in Judges 11:32-33.*
 - The word choice for the english word 'make' here is interesting...
- **Word Study**
 - The word 'make' comes from a Hebrew word **'Karat' כָּרַת** which occurs 289 times and literally means to cut off, cut down and to be broken off.
 - *In most of the times this word is used in the OT, it would involve sacrificing animals.*
 - *But, Nahash wants to enact this treaty with the cutting of human eyeballs.*
- We see this as a common OT theme of degradation that would be put on an enemy in the following OT texts:
 - 'And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.' Judges 16:21
 - 'They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon.' 2nd Kings 25:7
- *Nahash has revenge and evil in his heart towards all of Israel.*
- *Looking for Help. (V. 3-4)*
 - 'The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you." 4 When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people wept aloud.'
 - The number one thing here that sticks out to me, is that the people did not cry out to God, they first reached out to man.
 - *Problems are surely inevitable in this life. How you deal with them and WHO you ask to help you and to save you, says what you truly believe.*
 - Samuel the prophet already voiced how the people of Israel were acting...
 - 'But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses,' 1st Samuel 10:19
 - *When you are looking for help with the problems that you are facing, make sure you call out to God, not man.*
 - Not even Saul came to their minds. He only gets involved when he hears of the news.

- *The actions of the Israelites here are pathetic, just as we are when we expect man to be able to save us instead of God...*

- Problems will always arise, who do you cling to when they come?

Point 2: *Preparation Anchors All. (V. 5-11)*

- What we find in verses 5-11, is the time in scripture where Saul cements himself as the King of Israel.
 - *What's interesting, is that in verse 5 Saul is working in the fields behind the Oxen. Similar to when we were first introduced to him in 1st Samuel 9.*
 - This shows us that not much has changed for Saul, because he was still doing what he did before he was king.
 - *But this event because of the Lord's strength and Saul's proactive preparation, will put him in the limelight of Israel as a King who can handle military combat.*
 - There are several attributes I see in these verses of how Preparation is an Anchor to all who are willing to prepare for what God has placed in front of you:
- *The Reaction of Saul. (V. 5-7)*
 - 'Now, behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen. And Saul said, "What is wrong with the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the news of the men of Jabesh. **6** And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the Lord fell upon the people, and they came out as one man.'
 - ***When problems come up in your life, the follower of Christ will either run to the problem or run away from the problem.***
 - Once Saul finds out what is going on, he has two reactions to this news:
 - ***#1: The Spirit of God rushed upon him.***
 - Saul cannot conquer this enemy without the Lord's strength.
 - You and I cannot attack our problems until we realize our need for God and His strength.
 - ***#2: He burned with Anger.***
 - This is an OT example of what righteous anger is.
 - Do you burn with righteous anger over your own sin?
 - *Then in verse 7, we see that Saul's righteous anger causes him to butcher animals and call Israel to war in doing so.*
 - What Saul does here is similar to what a Levite did in ***Judges 19:29.***

- ‘And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and taking hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.’
 - ***So Saul sends these same messengers back out with the pieces of the animals so that the people of Israel would know if they didn’t respond in this call of help, the same thing will be done to their oxen (necessary for successful farming.)***
 - ***Part of the righteous anger Saul has here is that the people in danger sent out messengers to all of Israel.***
 - They didn’t trust God to call out to Him, or to go and get the man who God had put forth as the king that they had asked for.
 - ***So, Saul uses Samuel’s authority as well and calls for the people to come as he makes preparations for battle.***
- ***The Recruitment of Soldiers. (V. 8)***
 - ‘When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.’
 - ***This might very well be one of the best recruitment classes of all time.***
 - 330,000 men followed Saul’s strict orders to come and to fight.
 - ***Based on the Hebrew text, it’s possible that this number was lower than 330,000, either way, Saul recruited troops and was preparing to enter the battle.***
 - Bezek was chosen carefully by Saul, further showing his preparation and planning for this attack.
 - ***Bezek was 10 miles west of Jabesh-Gilead.***
 - ***Saul would have chosen this location to be able to quickly make the attack.***
 - I want you to also notice that the troops from Israel are mentioned separately from the troops of Judah.
 - ***Scholar Robert D. Bergen***, gives telling insight into what this means ‘*The separate counts provided for Israel and Judah suggest that the tribal schism first hinted at in the book of Joshua (11:21) was growing. It also sets the stage for difficulties that would plague David’s rise to national kingship (2nd Samuel 2:10-11) and ultimately split the country (1st Kings 12:19-20).*’
 - Before we look at what Saul said to the messengers in getting ready for this battle, I really want you to see the preparation that Saul puts forth.
 - ***Of course, we know Saul is going to eventually take his eyes off of God and fail miserably, but for now, He allows the Lord and his righteous anger to lead him.***
 - ***The scriptures tell us that ‘Saul’s anger was greatly kindled’, it would be easy for Saul to be angry that he just gets whoever he can find and runs up to Jabesh-Gilead without any preparation.***

- Preparation is supposed to be used by God’s people. Preparation can be an anchor to the ministries that we serve in and lead.
 - *In fact, when we are working for the Lord I believe that the Lord wants us to plan and prepare and not do things ‘on a whim’, when it comes to the Lord and our work for Him.*
 - ‘The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.’ Proverbs 21:5
 - ‘Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.’ Proverbs 6:6-8
 - *So, we see the reaction of Saul and recruitment of Soldiers...*
- *The Result of Serious Preparation. (V. 9-11)*
 - ‘And they said to the messengers who had come, “Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have salvation.’” When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. **10** Therefore the men of Jabesh said, “Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you.” **11** And the next day Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.’
 - *These same messengers that had already been used twice, were going to be sent out with a third message to deliver.*
 - *This time, one of salvation and deliverance for the people of Jabesh-Gilead.*
 - We are not told so, but the way these verses are written it seems as if Saul tells the men of Jabesh-Gilead, through the messengers, that they are to surrender, then the men of Israel will enact their sneak attack.
 - *I can’t help but point out that Saul shows great skill as a military strategist here.*
 - Which I do believe is a quick result of his planning and preparation.
 - *Saul then plans a sneak attack during the ‘morning watch’.*
 - This would have been between 2-6 AM.
 - *The Israelite troops were able to execute Saul’s strategy with great precision and they scattered the survivors.*
 - God was with Saul.
 - Saul had good intentions.
 - Saul saw the need to plan and prepare properly.

- So far this evening we've seen that Problems will Always Arise, Preparation Anchors All, and lastly we see...

Point 3: *Praise Awaits. (V. 12-15)*

- The Lord is the one who enabled Saul to do what he did, but Saul did so with preparation, planning, and did not worry about what others (Negative Naysayers), had said about him.
 - ***Remember that even the people of Jabesh-Gilead hadn't trusted in God or Saul, which is why they sent messengers throughout the whole kingdom, instead of just to Saul at Gibeah.***
 - The people Praise Saul, and I believe that Saul gives us a really good example on how to handle the praise that we receive.
 - ***He handled the Problems well, he prepared, and now he is going to handle the praise maturely, like a good levelheaded king!***
 - I believe there are __ to point out in these verses...
- ***People are Wishy Washy. (V. 12)***
 - 'Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is it that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death.'"
 - ***Now that Saul has stepped up and brought a victory to Israel, people all of a sudden remember and acknowledge the ones who doubted Saul back in 1st Samuel 10.***
 - It's important for anyone in leadership to be consistent and steadfast.
 - ***People will change their opinions of you as a leader quicker than you can imagine.***
 - These people were willing to kill people because of one battle in victory.
 - ***I believe an important lesson can be derived here, that we shouldn't be so wishy washy. Yet, remain secure and steadfast in the Lord.***
- ***Proper Response and Recognition given. (V. 13)***
 - 'But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel.'"
 - Saul could have fed into his ego right here, and had those people that spoke badly against him put to death. But, he does not do so.
 - ***On this day, it was the Lord who brought salvation to Israel, so this day would not be one of mourning and sadness.***
 - Saul's response gives us insight into the theological insight that young Saul had.
 - ***Based on Saul's response, we see that he understood it wasn't because of Saul that Jabesh-Gilead was saved, but because of the Lord.***
 - I love what Stephen J. Andrews said '*No matter how good our leadership is, no matter how skillful we are, it is the Lord who builds and blesses the Church.*'
 - The last thing we see about this praise that awaited Saul after the battle is...
- ***Packing Up and Moving on. (V. 14-15)***

- ‘Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom.” **15** So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.’
- ***The way that the scripture is written, makes it seem as if Samuel was standing next to Saul during this conversation.***
 - According to Joshua 5:2-10, Joshua 14:6, and 1st Samuel 7:16, Gilgal had served as both an administrative and religious center.
- It was also a border town that would link the southern and northern tribes in the future according to Joshua 15:7.
 - ***While Saul will mess up (as we all do), the events of 1st Samuel 11 are important. It’s a high point in Saul’s tenure as king, whether he realized it or not.***

Conclusion:

- As Human beings, our lives are full of ups and downs.
 - ***As the rest of 1st Samuel will show us, Saul is going to face a lot more downs than he will ups.***
 - But, for the passage of scripture that we have looked at tonight, it’s important to know that Saul handled this praise well. He properly handled the praise he received for winning this battle.
 - ***Lots to unpack tonight, but how do you need to respond to the Lord?***
 - ***Do you need to submit your personal problems to Him knowing that problems will always arise?***
 - ***Do you need to work more on preparation so that God can use you?***
 - ***Are you ready to handle praise adequately and be a strong leader?***

Sermon #20:

'Integrity is Invaluable!'

1st Samuel 12:1-5

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see that Integrity is an Invaluable quality of someone who follows the Lord. Samuel shows us four specific attributes of Godly integrity in this text, which are faithfulness, longevity, blamelessness, and being respected by those whom you lead.

Intro:

- **Integrity** can be defined *as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.*
 - Integrity matters.
 - *We may often think and feel that integrity is hard to come by in our evil, and fallen world.*
 - While I believe that to be an accurate assessment, I also believe that Israel was very evil in their day.
 - *Although Samuel had been brought up in His ministry by someone who did not have integrity, I do believe that Samuel was a leader for the Lord who showed great integrity.*
 - *Which shows us that integrity doesn't have as much to do with who we are 'raised' or 'taught' by, but has more to do with how closely aligned we are to God and the Holy Spirit.*
- 1st Samuel 12 is the farewell address that Samuel gives to the nation of Israel.
 - *This address symbolizes the transition in Israel from judges, to the age of Kingship.*
 - This speech that Samuel gives here, occurs in Gilgal, directly after Saul had just defeated the Ammorites and in 1st Samuel 11:14, Samuel told the people to go up to Gilgal.
 - Robert D. Bergen described verses 1-5 of 1st Samuel 12, in this way *'Now that Israel's new national leader had been duly confirmed and celebrated, Samuel closed the books on his own lengthy tenure of service as a leader for all Israel. He began by reminding the people that he had cooperated with them in the transition to a new system of leadership.'*
 - I want to be clear as we study these 5 verses tonight, I don't believe that Samuel is being boastful or arrogant in what he says about himself and his personal ministry.
 - *I truly believe that Samuel is seeking to show the people of Israel that he tried to serve them well, with all he had, and with upmost integrity.*
 - You and I, should seek to do the same.

■ **Next week we will study verses 6-25 as we study the farewell address of Samuel, and the dialogue that ensues with the people of Israel.**

- *I feel it's important we slow down, and just look at these first 5 verses, to see how God can use a normal man, for His Glory, and that integrity flowed from him, just as it should and can, flow from us tonight.*
- ***In fact, worldly and secular leaders have agreed that integrity is important.***
 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower said 'The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible'
 - C.S. Lewis said 'Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.'
 - Albert Einstein said 'Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.'

■ **Obviously, Integrity is Invaluable and so important.**

- Tonight we get to look at it first hand, from the Bible, God's Word, from a man who led God's people with Integrity.

Read 1st Samuel 12:1-5

Question to Ask:

What are the Attributes of Invaluable Integrity that Samuel shows us at the beginning of his farewell speech to Israel?

Attribute #1: Faithfulness. (V. 1)

- 'And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you.'
 - ***The first attribute of integrity that I can see at the forefront of Samuel's speech, is faithfulness.***
 - Let's not forget, that Samuel has given to God by his mother, Hannah.
 - Samuel had lived in the temple since he was old enough and had been serving the Lord.
 - ***He did not have the opportunity to live life as a normal Israelite boy, instead he served in the temple, and was also brought up in a tumultuous time in Israel's history.***
 - Let's not forget that in his formative years he witnessed the sin filled ministries of Hophni and Phineas.
 - He saw up close and personal, how Eli seemingly turned a blind eye to their sin, but as a man, God would and did use Samuel mightly.
 - I find **2** things to point out about Samuel's Faithfulness to God and Country.
- ***Audience. (V. 1a)***
 - 'And Samuel said to all Israel,'
 - I believe the importance of this speech is shown in the audience that was listening ***'All Israel'***

- ***For the nation of Israel, this word ‘all’, symbolizes national significance in the nation.***
 - A high water mark, because Saul had just proved himself as their new national leader.
- *‘All Israel’* had been threatened by Nahash and the Ammonites (1st Samuel 11).
- *‘All Israel’* was gathered by Samuel to return and repent to the Lord at Mizpah (1st Samuel 7).
- *‘All Israel’* gave a loud shout when the Ark of the Covenant returned to the camp (1st Samuel 4).
- *‘All Israel’* had listened to Samuel in 1st Samuel 3.
- *‘All Israel’* had undergone the pain and suffering experienced by Hopni and Phineas (Eli’s sons), in 1st Samuel 2.
 - ***Now, All of Israel was gathering for the last time with Samuel as their judge.***
 - Although he won’t pass until later, this is his last speech and the resigning/retiring of his ministry.
- ***The audience their at gilgal shows the importance of this speech.***
- ***Alluding to Previous Requests. (V. 1b)***
 - “Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you.”
 - Samuel’s speech here clearly begins by alluding to what occurred at Ramah, in 1st Samuel 8, when the elders had first come to him (Samuel), asking for a king.
 - W.W. said ***In asking for a king, the people had rejected the kingship of Jehovah and the leadership of Samuel, the last of the judges.***
 - ***I’m sure that Samuel had to feel sad and maybe even some pain.***
 - ***There had to be pain present in Samuel because his sons would not be able to succeed him because they were not worthy. It’s like in a way, Samuel fell into the similar pitfall that Eli did with his son’s. Israel didn’t want a repeat of this...***
 - ‘When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. **2** The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. **3** Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.’ 1st Samuel 8:1-3
 - ***He was handing over the leadership of Israel to a kingship, under Saul, which he was not a fan of in the beginning anyway.***
 - ***Samuel gave a strong warning in 1st Samuel 8:10-18, and this was the response he got from Israel:***
 - ‘But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, **20** that we also may be like all the

nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” **21** And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. **22** And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.” 1st Samuel 8:19-22

○ ***God gave them what they wanted.***

- Notice here, Samuel was faithful even when he wanted to do what the people wanted, he did so because God told Him to.

○ ***Faithfulness is an attribute of integrity because we are to be faithful to the call of God even if we don't like or agree with what He's commanded and told us to do.***

- If God tells you to do it, you do it. We are to be His paintbrushes, not the other way around like we often act like.
 - *We don't tell God what to do with our prayers, He directs us what to do with His Word.*

○ ***Samuel's family would have lost a lot of power and prestige with this handing over of power, but it was necessary because the Lord did tell him to go ahead and do it.***

○ Samuel's faithfulness is the first attribute of his integrity...

Attribute #2: *Longevity. (V. 2)*

- ‘And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day.’
- ***I truly believe that when a leader walks with the Lord, is honest, and shows integrity, I believe that the Lord gives that person longevity in ministry.***
 - Because if we become a hindrance to the souls of others, God can easily take us out.
- Those who have served the Lord with longevity and steadfastness are to be respected, Israel had judges over them for nearly 500 years..
 - ***Many of the people that were present that day all they had known was Sameul as their leader.***
 - ***Whether we realize it or not, people need stable leaders. Leaders who are not seeking to climb a ladder, but are willing to stay planted, dig roots, and let God be responsible for the fruits.***
 - I believe there are 2 things to be pointed out regarding the Longevity that Samuel had in ministry.
- ***The Commencement of a New Day. (V. 2a)***
 - ‘And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with you.’
 - It's almost like Samuel is saying, here's your new king, Tall, Handsome, and I am old and gray.

- I'm just an old guy!
 - *John Woodhouse said 'It was as though Israel's future and past were represented by these two figures.'*
 - *Samuel also clarifies the predicament of his sons. By saying 'my sons are with you', shows that they are with the people and are no longer over them.*
 - Scholar Robert D. Bergen said '*Samuel's sons had failed to uphold the tradition of leadership established by their father and so had driven the final nail in the coffin of the judgeship system prescribed in the Torah.*'
 - While Samuel was a great man and leader of integrity, his predecessor would not prove to be that way.
 - Saul would end up causing the nation of Israel a lot of pain over the coming years.
 - *So, Samuel commences a new day for the nation of Israel by showing that the new king is here, and he is an old man.*
 - We see the commencement of a new day in Samuel's longevity, but also we see...
- *The Closing of a Previous Day. (V. 2b)*
 - 'I have walked before you from my youth until this day.'
 - The fact that Samuel uses the words, 'from my youth', points us to the story that we have been through so far in this narrative.
 - *In the very beginning we saw that Hannah prayed for a son, and God gave her Samuel.*
 - Hannah then dedicated Him to the Lord, and from the time of his youth, he served the Lord.
 - *I know that not everyone here has had a personal relationship with Christ since they were a child or younger, but if you have, have you been walking with Him since your youth?*
 - When I see what Samuel says here, that He has been walking before them in service since his youth, I can't help but think what the apostle Paul would say later on in the NT.
 - 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.' 2nd Timothy 4:7
 - *Now, he wanted to put the ball in the court of the people and have them answer some questions about his character.*

Attribute #3: Blamelessness. (V. 3)

- 'Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me[a] and I will restore it to you.'

- Now Samuel is going to turn to the people, and he wants them to be able to give evidence that his service was pleasing to the nation of Israel as well as the Lord.
 - *If anyone had a grievance or problem with him and his leadership in Israel, now would be the time for them to mention it.*
- **What Samuel pivots and asks them here, reminds us of what Jesus said in John 8:46:**
 - ‘Which one of you convicts me of sin?’ John 8:46
 - Now, this is not to say that Samuel was perfect, but it is to say that he was blameless before the people where he did not do wrong by them, and if he did, we don’t have record of it and he didn’t make a habit of it.
 - *Many of the priests (Eli and Samuel’s sons), had all done things against the people and made their lives harder.*
- *The language that Samuel uses here indicates a court setting. In other words, Samuel is putting himself on trial.*
 - **Word Study**
 - The phrase ‘Here I am’ in the english, can be translate to mean ‘Behold me’
 - *Which shows that he wants their attention.*
 - There are **2** to point out about what Samuel does here concerning his own blamelessness.
- **An Invitation. (V. 3a)**
 - ‘Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed.’
 - **The ‘anointed’ phrase is referring to Saul in this case.**
 - The new king.
 - So, Samuel invites the people to bring accusations against him before the Lord (the judge), and before a key witness, which is Saul (the King).
 - **Good leaders seek to be blameless when it comes to those that they lead.**
 - Samuel wants to finish his ministry purely and cleanly.
 - Samuel doesn’t want a scandal to come out years after his ministry career is over. He doesn’t want anyone to seek to defame him, his ministry, or his God, if they have anything to say, the ball is in their court.
 - **Clearly Samuel is giving the invitation.**
- **A Desire to Make Things Right. (V. 3a)**
 - ‘Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me[a] and I will restore it to you.’
 - Obviously we know Samuel was not perfect, he was not without sin.
 - *So, if Samuel has wronged anyone, he has the desire to make things right with that person.*
 - **A person of integrity will be convicted by God if they wrong someone, and will seek to make it right with that person, extend the olive branch so to speak.**

- I find it very hard to believe a person has Biblical integrity when they know they've wronged someone, and they think that person deserves it, so they never desire to make it right with that person.
 - *And notice that Samuel is doing this publicly.*
 - If someone were to come forward, everyone in the nation, (not just community) is going to know and be aware.
 - *But Samuel does it anyway because he cares about his reputation and making things right, because He knows his ministry is a reflection of his relationship with God to the people.*
 - Why don't you and I treat our own reputation as a reflection of our relationship with God.
 - Shouldn't we want to desire to be blameless in front of our peers and those we serve?
 - *Instead of saying things like:*
 - *Well they deserve it.*
 - *They got what's coming to them.*
 - *Shouldn't we as believers understand that if we got what was coming to us, we'd be in hell without chance for forgiveness?*
 - *But God stepped in and enacted His redemption plan that we might have a relationship with Him, if we accept Him, and He did so by sending His Son.*
- John Woodhouse described verse 3 and the questions that Samuel asked the people as 'Had samuel's power been exercised in an exploitative or oppressive manner? Had he abused his position to 'take' from those he was supposed to be serving?'
 - We've seen the attributes of integrity in Samuel's life by his faithfulness, longevity, blamelessness, and lastly...

Attribute #4: Respected. (V. 4-5)

- 'They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." 5 And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."
 - *Verses 4-5 are still considered the opening portion of this farewell address, but it is the response of the people.*
 - To follow the court analogy that the Hebrew wording alludes to in the original manuscript, the Jury was about to hand their verdict over to Samuel.
 - There's just **1** important thing to point out in this text.
- **The Response. (V. 4-5)**
 - 'They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." 5 And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and

his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.”
And they said, “He is witness.”

- ***If a person truly has integrity, other people will be able to see it.***
 - The people of Israel respond to Samuel by saying that they have not found any fault in him.
 - ***In other words, he has not used his human power against them.***
- In verse 5, Samuel lets them know that the Lord will be witness against them, since it was not against him.
 - ***We will see this mor and dive into it more next week when we look at the entirety of Samuel’s farewell address.***
- ***Samuel’s point?***
 - The old style of leadership had served Israel well.
 - No one could deny this, it’s also truly that Israel was not going to like and would have a hard time handling what was to come in the future.

Conclusion:

- ***Integrity is Invaluable and it is important.***
 - I truly believe tonight that you can’t put a price tag on the integrity of an individual.
- ***I’m sure that once Saul took over and the people of Israel began to see his ways and character, that they longed for the integrity of the man that they had, in Samuel.***
 - You and I often long for things to be better in our own country.
 - Whether that’s because of the presence of poverty or the turmoil in our political climate.
- ***If you want the situation and status the world to change, then are you allowing God to change you?***
 - Samuel wasn’t a great God fearing man because he was born that way.
 - ***He was born into the curse of sin just like you and I.***
 - Samuel wasn’t a great God fearing man because he grew up in the temple.
 - Samuel wasn’t a great God fearing man because he spent time under a priest, such as Eli.
- ***Samuel was a great God fearing man, of integrity, because He allowed God almighty to change and transform His Heart.***
 - Like David the psalmist would later write, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right[b] spirit within me.’ Psalms 51:10
- ***Would others describe you as a man or woman of integrity?***
 - I began our sermon tonight by defining the word ‘integrity’ from our dictionaries...
 - ***Integrity*** can be defined ***as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.***
- ***In our scripture text, we were able to see integrity lived out by Samuel.***

- During this time of invitation I want to invite you to spend time focusing on whether or not these attributes of Integrity are found in you:
 - **Attribute #1: Faithfulness. (V. 1)**
 - **Attribute #2: Longevity. (V. 2)**
 - **Attribute #3: Blamelessness. (V. 3)**
 - **Attribute #4: Respected. (V. 4-5)**

Sermon #21:

*‘Last Words of an Exceptional Leader!’
1st Samuel 12:6-25*

Sermon in a Sentence:

The Last words of Samuel, to Israel, can be summarized in three ways. Samuel gives them a History Lesson, Habits are listed that they are to follow, and the Holy Lord is to be their rock and foundation.

Intro:

- In 1st Samuel 12:1-5, Samuel focused on his own personal character and conduct.
 - *As Samuel’s farewell speech continues in 1st Samuel 12:6-25, we see that Samuel is going to focus more on the relationship between the Lord and the people of Israel.*
- As Samuel is getting ready to step aside and Saul will become the King, he has a few things he wants them to think about, exhort them with, and then encourage them that God is faithful, even when they are not.
 - W.W. said this about this portion of Samuel’s farewell speech *‘He reviewed Israel’s history from Moses to his own day and emphasized what the Lord in His grace had done for them.’*
 - *Our scripture text tonight, is the longest recorded single quotation in the Hebrew Bible that is attributed to Samuel.*
 - *As we mentioned last week, the tone and wording of the speech that Samuel delivers has a court room mold and feel, and is where Samuel is symbolically putting Israel on trial.*
 - While they may not fully understand the magnitude of Samuel’s words now, they will understand it when the events of Saul’s tenure as king start to unfold.
- Samuel was an exceptional Leader, and now we get to see what Samuel’s last words to them were:

Read 1st Samuel 12:6-25

Question to Ask:

What last words does Samuel leave with Israel?

Point 1: *The History Lesson. (V. 6-12)*

- Samuel's farewell speech here, is very similar to what Joshua said to Israel, years ago, when he was 110 years old.
 - *Joshua died shortly after speaking to Israel but what you find in **Joshua 24:2-15**, has strong parallels to what we read here.*
 - Joshua's speech differed slightly in the fact that it's context was during the covenant renewal. So, Joshua summarized the history of God's people with the times of Abraham, to the conquest of Canaan.
 - **Joshua, as Samuel will, stressed the strong leaders that God had given them even when the people did not remain loyal to God.**
 - *I believe it's important that we, as God's people, have times where we look at the History of what God has done for us in the past.*
 - So that we may be reminded He was faithful then, and He will be faithful now.
 - *Most scholars agree that it was most likely 1041 BC (or about that time), when Samuel gave this speech.*
 - Which means it had been almost 400 years since Joshua had given a similar speech.
 - Later on in Israel's history, King Solomon would give a similar speech, that is found in 1st Kings 8:12-61.
 - **Sadly, God's people often forget what He did for us yesterday because we're too busy on whether or not He'll come through tomorrow.**
 - We saw Samuel stand on trial before Israel in verses 1-5, now, it was time for Israel to be confronted with the acts that the Lord did on their behalf.
 - *This time, the people are the defendants.*
- **Verse 6:**
 - 'And Samuel said to the people, "The LORD is witness,[b] who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.'
 - *Samuel uses the phrase 'The Lord is witness', to show them that now they are the ones who are on trial.*
 - *Samuel is clear to give credit that Moses and Aaron were appointed by God, and they were the ones that led them out of Egypt.*
 - I think Samuel's purpose in saying this is that Samuel is reminding them that the covenant He made with Abraham, was historically grounded and that He divinely allowed the exodus from Egypt to occur due to the leaders He chose.
 - *These leaders were great, but it was what God did through them that really matters.*
- **Verse 7:**

- ‘Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous deeds of the LORD that he performed for you and for your fathers.’
- **God had done so much more for the people than they were willing to admit or even acknowledge.**
 - Just a few months before, they asked for an earthly King because they weren’t trusting their Heavenly King.
- The phrase **‘Now Therefore’** in the Hebrew text represents the same Hebrew expression that we saw last week in verse 2 with the phrase **‘And now’**.
 - The purpose of this phrase according to scholar John Woodhouse *‘Having mentioned the Lord’s provision of Moses and Aaron and the redemption from Egypt, it was time for all Israel to consider all the wonderful things that the Lord had done for them and their ancestors.’*
- He wanted them to listen up, and hear what he had to say...
- ***Word Study***
 - The english word ‘plead’ here comes from a Hebrew word **Shafat שָׁפַט** which literally means to judge, decide, and lead.
 - Other times in the **204** occurrences of this word in the OT, it is translated to judge (1st Samuel 4:18, 7:6, 15-17, 8:5-6, 20 are examples of this.)
 - **The importance of this word choice in the Hebrew text was that Sameul was making a case before the Lord.**
- The righteous deeds that the Lord had performed over their history was a sign that He had been with them and that He cared deeply for them.
 - *Samuel wants them to know that God has dealt well with Israel, despite their consistent disobedience.*
- **Now, in verses 8-12, Samuel is going to confront them with the justice of God’s dealings with them over the years as he (Samuel) continues in this history lesson.**
- **Verses 8-12:**
 - ‘When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them,[c] then your fathers cried out to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. **9** But they forgot the LORD their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor,[d] and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. **10** And they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.’ **11** And the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Barak[e] and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every

side, and you lived in safety. **12** And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ when the LORD your God was your king.’

- *The historical events that are listed here might not be the ones we remember the most when we read through the Bible, but they stuck out to Samuel, and would've also stuck out to the people.*
 - When looking at these words that Samuel spoke to get Israel to look back at what God had done in the past, I think we can view in **5** specific ways.
- **#1: Rescue. (V. 8)**
 - ‘When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them,^[c] then your fathers cried out to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place.’
1st Samuel 12:8
 - *Jacob is referring to Israel as a whole, not just the patriarch named Jacob.*
 - *Israel became oppressed by Egypt after the days of Joseph being in charge, when they stayed in the land.*
 - *But the people cried out to God, and He rescued them.*
- **#2: Rebellion. (V. 9)**
 - ‘But they forgot the LORD their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor,^[d] and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them.’
 - *Samuel reminds the people of the rebellious ways of their ancestors.*
 - *The text says they ‘forgot’ the Lord their God, Yahweh.*
 - *How often do we forget God and what He’s done or is doing in our own personal lives?*
 - The phrase ‘he sold them’ means that God Himself was responsible for handing the people over to their enemies.
 - Their rebellion caused God to give them to their enemies. The people of Israel had not listened to what Moses had told them in **Deuteronomy 8:11**
 - ‘Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,’
 - *When we forget God and His Word, it us, as humans, actively rebelling against Him.*
- **#3: Repentance. (V. 10)**
 - ‘And they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.’

- Samuel goes on to show them that the people did not like the fact that they were prisoners to the other nations, and because of this, abandoned the God of Israel, and pursued idols.
- **Verse 10, is a parallel and summarization of Judges 10:15-16.**
 - ‘And the people of Israel said to the LORD, “We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day.”
 - 16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel.’
- **While the people of Israel were wrong to chase idols, they did finally see their falt in the matter, and God, in His grace, sent them good leaders.**
- #4: **Restoration. (V. 11)**
 - ‘And the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Barak^[e] and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety.’
 - **Samuel came from a long line of Judges (over a 400+ year period), he was just the last of these judges.**
 - John Woodhouse points out **Under these leaders they had enjoyed real security.’**
 - The judges that Samuel mentions are just a few, but the importance is that Israel was doing well. God was protecting them and the system that God had set up was working, and was working well.
 - **But, then Israel started comparing with other nations, and they began to rethink...**
- #5: **Rethinking. (V. 12)**
 - ‘And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ when the LORD your God was your king.’
 - Verse 12 is a new piece of information that we did not have previously...
 - **Here we are told that the aggression and threat of Nahash begins in the ancient world around 1st Samuel 8, although we don’t hear about it until 1st Samuel 11.**
 - It’s possible that word had already reached the Israelites, and that they wanted a king to be able to defeat this Nahash and the Ammonites.
 - **They let what they could see with their physical eyes, cloud their vision and memory, of what God had done not that long ago...**
- We see the History lesson that Samuel gives them, now Samuel gives them some habits they need to follow in the future.

Point 2: The Habits Listed. (V. 13-18)

- **Samuel’s speech is the point in Israel’s timeline where he steps away, and the system of the Judges will cease.**

- Although it will be a little bit of time until Samuel passes away, he wants to exhort them to do things that will hopefully be passed down through the generations.
- ‘And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you. **14** If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. **15** But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.[f] **16** Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. **17** Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king.” **18** So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.’
 - **Verse 13 is Samuel reminding the people that this was not his personal idea, this is what they asked God for, and God gave them what they wanted.**
 - Samuel lists several *habits* that the people of Israel need to put into practice. There are **2** things that I see here in the text.
- **Obedience of the People and King are Key. (V. 14-15)**
 - ‘If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. **15** But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.’
 - **Just as we discussed this past Sunday, when it comes to having a relationship with God, obedience is key.**
 - Samuel isn’t just saying that they need to obey God, He is clearly alluding to the blessings and curses of the sinai covenant.
 - ***This indeed is a conditional statement, IF Israel and their NEW king (Saul), will fear, serve, and obey, and not rebel, then they will continue to walk with the Lord.***
 - The key instructions to following in obedience?
 - *Fear.*
 - *Serve.*
 - *Obey.*
 - *Don’t Rebel.*
 - **J. Vernon McGee said ‘If the people will serve God, He will bless them. If they do not serve Him, judgment will come.’**
 - Obedience is one of the key habits Samuel lists here...
- **Omnipotence of the Lord must be Admired. (V. 16-18)**

- ‘Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes.’
- *To show the overwhelming power of God, Samuel was about to call upon the Lord and show them of His might and power.*
 - The Lord’s omnipotence must be respected and revered...
- *John L. Mackay said ‘Samuel knows that neither the forcefulness of his logic nor the import of his history lesson will convince his audience, and so he calls for a dramatic display to attest that they have heard not the ramblings of a resentful old man but rather God’s assessment of their situation.’*
 - So, Samuel is going to call upon the Lord to show the people of Israel the power and Glory of almighty God.
- ‘Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king.’ **18** So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.’
 - *‘Is it not wheat harvest today?’*
 - *Samuel asked this rhetorical question to show us and the people that it would have been mid-may/mid-june (late spring/early summer), which are when conditions were usually very dry.*
 - ‘Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.’ Proverbs 26:1
 - *Samuel then informs the people that he is going to ask the Lord to send thunder and rain.*
 - *Why was Samuel doing this?*
 - *This weather would be the opposite of the regular rhythms of nature, and its timing would attest to God’s power and would also show the validity of Samuel’s warnings.*
 - *Samuel didn’t just want the people to hear what He was saying, but to show that the God who gave him what to say was all powerful and was to be feared.*
 - This miracle that occurs here may not seem as incredible as the crossing of the red sea in Exodus 14, but still, it is a miracle from God to show His omnipotence and power.
 - John Woodhouse said *‘The wheat harvest was early summer, when no rain falls. A thunderstorm in this season would have been an unknown occurrence.’*
 - The goal of God in doing these great acts and miracles are not to give Samuel or any person credit, but for the people to see WHO He is and His glory on display.

- *In this case, the purpose of the rain falling in the driest season, was to show the people the desperateness of their wickedness to try and get rid of God, by having a king.*
 - So far tonight, we've had a history lesson, we've seen healthy habits listed, lastly, Samuel shows us how Holy and steadfast, the Lord really is.
- Verse 18 says the people feared the Lord.
 - *We shouldn't have to 'wait' for God to do something 'out of the ordinary', for God to be able to get our attention and for us to fear Him.*
 - If we truly love Him and have a relationship with Him, we will fear Him.

Point 3: *The Holy Lord. (V. 19-25)*

- We just sang a few moments ago 'Holy, Holy, Holy' is the Lord our God.
 - *Just as the people were mesmerized of the rain coming from the sky, they realized in verse 19 that they had messed up.*
 - The beauty of our God, is that even when we mess up, He welcomes us back into His loving arms.
 - 'And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king."
 - *The people realize now that the rain has fallen, and that they have messed up.*
 - To an extent on this side of Heaven, they are able to see and understand the Lord's Holiness and their Heatheness.
 - We need to also remember that rain would have damaged the heads of the ripe grain, which would have caused the harvest to be less.
 - *God's display of His Glory, caused them to confess of sin.*
 - In verses 20-25, we see Samuel's response to their confession, and in his response, He highlights the Lord's Holiness and steadfastness (despite what they do or don't do).
 - There are **3** that I see here in these verses.
- *A Confusing Statement. (V. 20-21)*
 - 'And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. **21** And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty.'
 - *Until we get to verse 22, verses 20 and 21 can seem confusing and somewhat out of place.*

- Samuel tells them that they shouldn't be afraid in verse 20 (even though they have been sternly warned and just saw God perform a miracle), and also tells them that what they did, in asking for a King, was indeed evil.
 - *Just because the people confessed their sin and wanted God to forgive them, did not mean that Samuel was going to just simply brush their sin aside and act like it didn't happen.*
 - It happened, but in verse 21 Samuel encourages them to not go against the Lord again.
 - *But to serve Him wholeheartedly.*
 - This makes much more sense when we see what Samuel says about the Lord in verse 22.
- ***A Caring God. (V. 22)***
 - 'For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.'
 - ***Praise the Lord that God is much more caring and considerate than you and I are.***
 - Samuel says that the Lord is not going to forsake His people because of their wicked deeds, but is going to show mercy on them.
 - ***God is showing mercy because He wants His name to get maximum glory and they can be forgiven and restored to be able to give God maximum Glory.***
 - ***Verse 22 shows us that there is something much bigger at stake than the 'Nation's well being', the Lord had made a commitment to these people for the Glory of His name.***
 - God's sovereignty, grace and mercy are all seen and noticeable in this verse.
 - ***This is why the nation of Israel had to be renewed and restored, because the name of God needed to continue to go further into the dark world.***
- ***A Consistent Prayer Warrior. (V. 23-25)***
 - 'Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. **24** Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. **25** But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.'
 - While Samuel disapproved and did not like their decision to go against God and ask for a King, that doesn't mean Samuel is not going to stop praying for them.
 - ***Just because we don't like what someone does or doesn't do, doesn't mean we are ever justified in choosing not to pray for them.***
 - ***In addition to the promise of his personal prayers, Samuel gives more advice in verse 24.***

- That they fear the Lord and consider these things (some of which Samuel verbally told them in this speech), that God had done for them.
 - *The only reason some of us are here tonight is because a prayer warrior consistently prayed for us.*
- The Holy Lord is shown in these verses even with a confusing statement, a Caring God, and a consistent prayer warrior.

Conclusion:

- As we close this evening, I know that Samuel's farewell speech was not originally written or spoken to us.
 - *You and I may not have been the original recipients of the speech, but we certainly can learn much from it.*
- **Point 1: *The History Lesson. (V. 6-12)***
 - We can learn from the history of God's people and what He brought them through.
 - In realizing this we can know that the same God that parted the red sea, swallowed up Korah and his rebellion, and defeated the Ammonites, is the same God that lives in us.
 - *We can also learn, even through this upcoming month of homecoming celebrations, what God has done in those who came before us in this Church.*
 - A History lesson on what God has done is important to remember what He can do and that He is in control.
- **Point 2: *The Habits Listed. (V. 13-18)***
 - Samuel wanted the people of Israel to practice healthy habits that would honor the Lord.
 - *Such as obeying Him (fear, serve, obey, not rebelling).*
 - *Samuel also showed the omnipotence of God by asking God to make it rain in one of the driest months of the year.*
 - *We must realize that obeying God and admiring His Omnipotence are healthy Habit for us to practice today.*
- **Point 3: *The Holy Lord. (V. 19-25)***
 - We saw this evening that the Lord is Holy.
 - The closer you and I get to the Holiness of the Lord, the more we should seek to start acting and living in Heathen ways.

Sermon #22:

'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands!'

1st Samuel 13:1-23

Sermon in a Sentence:

In 1st Samuel 13 we see that Saul begins to take Matters into his own hands with a puffed up ego, a pushy exchange, and persistent military engagements.

Intro:

- Taking Matters into our own hands is something that we tend to do when we feel that no one else can accomplish a certain task but us.
 - *Tonight as we get into 1st Samuel 13, we are able to see a small glimpse of the downfall that will begin in Saul's heart, gradually over time.*
 - 1st Samuel chapters 13-15, focus on Saul's early time as King.
- ***Over the course of these chapters in the next few weeks, we will see that Saul is going to make some foolish decisions, but he won't own up to them.***
 - He will cover his tracks with lies and shift blame.
 - ***For the rest of 1st Samuel, we will have a front row seat as to how Saul literally self-destructed.***
 - Tonight we get to see the first step in Saul's self destructing journey.
 - ***If you and I are not careful, we can fall into the same boat.***
 - Tonight we are going to see how Saul took matters into his own hands, and left God out of the equation.
 - ***This is a dangerous thing when we think that we can do it all and that we don't need God.***
 - Just as Saul got into this situation and his heart condition became focused on self, we can fall into the same trap.
 - ***In tonight's text, it is my prayer that we see what occurred in Saul's life and hopefully learn how we can avoid falling into the same pitfalls.***

****Read 1st Samuel 13:1-23****

Question to Ask:

How does Saul show us the devastation that can come with taking matters into our own hands?

Point 1: *Puffed Up Ego. (V. 1-7)*

- We were told earlier in the book of 1st Samuel (in 1st Samuel 8:20), that the entire reason the people wanted a King was so that he could fight their military battles for them.
 - ***In these verses, this is what happens. Saul gets to do what they wanted him to do, but pride walks into his heart and seems to never leave Saul.***
- Before we get into the military actions that happen in verses 2-7, we need to look at verse 1, as it can cause us to have some questions...

- ‘Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel,’
- *Depending on what translation you have, this verse is weird and reads very funny.*
 - **When it comes to translation, this is one of the boldest and most courageous translations that those who translated the original manuscripts made.**
- *Most scholars agree that something happened to the Hebrew Text of 1st Samuel 13:1, meaning it was lost somewhere in the transmission of the text.*
 - Because of this, we can only estimate how long Saul’s reign was in Israel.
 - The reason we have the translation we do today, is because those who translated the King James Bible in 1611, did their best to make due with a bad situation.
 - *We need to know that in ancient times it was not irregular to have dates omitted.*
- *The scholars who translated the NIV Bible, estimate that Saul was around 30 years old when he became king, and in connecting with what Paul says in Acts 13:21, they estimate that the length of Saul’s reign as king was 42 years.*
 - ‘Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.’ Acts 13:21
- Either way, what is clear is that Saul’s true character begins to be revealed, and the fact that he had a puffed up ego is evident.
 - I believe there are **3** things we need to point out concerning Saul’s Puffed Up Ego.
- **Lingering Problem. (V. 2)**
 - ‘Saul chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent.’
 - *The Philistines were still a problem to Israel at this time, so in order to combat this problem, one of Saul’s first acts as King, is to put an army in place.*
 - We were told back in 1st Samuel 11:8 that 300,000 men volunteered but Saul only enlisted 3,000.
 - *To try and do away with this lingering problem, Saul put 2,000 troops under his command at Micmash, which was 4.5 Miles northeast of the capital city (at that time) of Gibeah.*
 - Jonathan had 1,000 troops in the capital city.
 - **Jonathan is going to play a big role in the remaining narrative of 1st Samuel, but this is the first mention of him. He is Saul’s son.**
 - Robert D. Bergen mentions an interesting perspective as to WHY Saul had put the troops strategically where he did:

- *I believe Saul is taking credit for something that he did not do, which is a lie that he had spread all throughout Israel.*
 - *Based on what unravels in the rest of the 1st Samuel narrative, this is a glimpse into the real character and nature of Saul.*
 - John Woodhouse said *'Jonathan's action was heard as Saul's action. It seems that this is how Saul wanted the story told. After all, as we have seen, it was what he was supposed to do some time earlier.'*
 - This small military skirmish was going to wake up a sleeping giant that would cause literal panic in Israel.
- **Literal Panic. (V. 5-7)**
 - 'And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns, 7 and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.'
 - *Israel had to know that there would be repercussions for their actions and that this military action would not come without consequences.*
 - While it's possible that Israel did anticipate some sort of comeback from the Philistines, they probably did not anticipate the size of this counter attack.
 - *The Philistines had 10x as many chariots as Saul had men, and twice as many horseman and troops.*
 - *Because of the sheer strength of the Philistine army, we can see why they react the way that they do in verses 6-7.*
 - We are told that once the people of Israel saw trouble on the horizon, they fall into a literal panic and started deserting the army.
 - *The scripture says that they hid in caves, holes, rocks, tombs (graves of the dead), and in other places.*
 - The Hebrew people even crossed the river to get away, meaning they left the promised land entirely.
 - *Notice here that Saul did not join in on the dissertation, he remained at Gilgal just as Samuel had earlier told him to do.*
 - Saul's Puffed Up Ego, had gotten the entire nation in big trouble, which leads us to a Pushy Exchange...

Point 2: Pushy Exchange. (V. 8-14)

- *Saul found himself with his back against the wall.*
 - The Philistines were threatening the Israelites and Saul undoubtedly faced some pressure.

- But, he remembered what Samuel had told him back in 1st Samuel 10:8.
 - ‘Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.’
 - *Samuel was clear that Saul was to wait 7 days for him to arrive so that he could offer Sacrifices to prepare Israel’s army to go out.*
 - *The reason for this was so that Israel’s army could have the blessings of the Lord on them as they went out to fight.*
 - There are **3** things to point out regarding the Pushy Exchange that we find in these verses.
- *Impatience. (V. 8-9)*
 - ‘He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, “Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.” And he offered the burnt offering.’
 - *Saul took the direction that was given to him seriously, but he allowed himself to grow impatient.*
 - While Saul was placed by God as Israel’s king, the importance of sacrifices before the battle was to show God’s role in the battle that would be fought. Acknowledging His power and hand in the fight was important.
 - *Before we over critique Saul and his impatience, we need to look at what he was dealing with.*
 - Time would have been so precious to Saul in this situation.
 - Each day the Philistines would have been creeping closer and they would have made everyone quite uncomfortable.
 - *But, Saul did wait the 7 days.*
 - *It was good that Saul waited 7 days for Samuel to arrive, but the key to understanding this is that Saul was guilty of partial obedience, which is still disobedience.*
 - *It’s not okay to just obey part of God’s commands and Words, and then grow impatient on what we do not like.*
 - Saul is most likely facing pressure from the people, they want to try and get troops together to defend their land and their families.
 - *When our backs are against the wall is usually when we need God the most, but we often look to ourselves in impatience and panic.*
 - *Saul does that here, his army is scattering and dwindling by the day, and he offers the offerings.*
 - W.W. said ‘*Saul didn’t want to go into the battle without first offering a sacrifice to the Lord, which in itself may have been a subtle form of superstition, like carrying the ark into the battle. Later Samuel would remind Saul that God seeks obedience and not sacrifice.*’

- ***When we get impatient with God and what He's doing or not doing in our lives, we take matters into our own hands, which is a very dangerous thing to do.***
 - Numbers 18:7 was also clear that a priest was the only one that could offer sacrifices under the Old Covenant.
 - 'And you and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift,[a] and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.'" Numbers 18:7
- Saul knew that he did wrong though, based on what he says when Samuel arrives...
- ***Inevitable Excuses. (V. 10-12)***
 - 'As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. **11** Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, **12** I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."
 - Just as Saul took the matter into his own hands, look who shows up, Samuel.
 - ***Samuel immediately confronts Saul, and then the excuses start to roll off of Saul's tongue.***
 - ***When you and I are wrong against God, and we are caught in sin, excuses will immediately come out of our lips which further reveal that we were wrong in the first place, and we know it.***
 - The excuses that Saul comes up with are this:
 - ***#1: The Army was deserting him.***
 - ***#2: Samuel, you were late.***
 - ***#3: The Philistines will come down and destroy me and I won't have the Lord on my side because no offering had been sacrificed.***
 - ***Several things about Saul's excuse relate to us.***
 - ***When we are caught in sin and maybe even embarrassed by our sin, how often do we shift the blame on someone else.***
 - Saul says he disobeyed because the people left him and because Samuel was late.
- ***The next time you sin and God convicts you, pay careful attention to who you blame.***
 - ***This is why some reason will leave a Church for a particular reason. They know they've done wrong and they feel guilty.***
 - Instead of asking God to forgive them and moving on with fellow believers they would rather blame their fellow believers, their

Pastor, staff, leadership, etc. because they don't want to face God with the consequences of what they've done.

- *If your first thought when you are confronted with sin is to blame others, you need to look inside at yourself.*
 - *There comes a time in each person's life where it's not everyone else that is always the problem, sometimes it is you.*
- *In verse 12, Saul says that he 'forced' himself to offer the burnt offering.*
 - **Word Study**
 - This word 'forced' in the English comes from the Hebrew word **אָפַק** *which is only found 7 times in the OT and literally means compelled or forced, is interesting here.*
 - *Within the context of the situation going on, Saul feels that he has no choice but to disobey Samuel (hence disobeying God), because of the threat of the Philistines.*
 - *In Saul's situation and in our situation, we ALWAYS have a choice on whether or not we are going to obey God.*
 - No matter what the enemies look like that are on your battlefield, we never have an excuse for sinning and willfully sinning against God.
 - Now, Samuel will respond to the excuses that Saul has given.
- *Insubordination caused dire Consequences. (V. 13-14)*
 - 'And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince[b] over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."
 - *Saul's disobedience in the face of danger comes with severe consequences due to the fact that Saul shows that he thinks he is over Samuel.*
 - *Saul's line would not continue as the King of Israel because the Kingdom of Israel was under God's authority (1st Samuel 12:20-25).*
 - Saul fails to acknowledge and that the prophet's role was higher than his as the divine messenger to God's people.
 - *Saul disobeyed God because he refused to trust God that God could deliver him and his people.*
 - One scholar said this of Saul's actions *'a failure to submit to Yahweh's word through is prophet.'*
 - *While I am not a priest and we are not under the Old Covenant, I do feel that it's important to respect and revere the spiritual leaders that God puts before us.*
 - *I was brought up in a Church culture where the man of God was respected.*

- I was brought up in a time where you didn't bad mouth the Pastor if he didn't visit you, you didn't dare call him by his first name, and you didn't go around spreading lies about him. Simply because God had called Him and God will deal with His messengers.
 - *We live in a present culture that has even crept into our Church, where people no longer honor and respect the Pastor.*
 - They'd rather have fried Pastor for lunch, then to respect him.
 - I understand that some Pastors are not worthy of respect but it's not your job to run them off, you let God deal with His undershepherds.
 - ***Because when Saul undermined Samuel, he showed the whole nation of Israel that it was okay to do so.***
 - Older folks, watch the example you set for the younger folks in our Church.
 - 'Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.' 1st Timothy 5:17
 - ***I'm not a great Pastor, preacher, leader, teacher, and I don't think I'm worthy of double honor.***
 - ***But I do think for the sake of future generations and how they view the pulpit and the office of Pastor, that we must listen to our spiritual leaders and respect them even if we don't always agree.***
 - Insubordination of God's leaders will cause consequences in our lives.
- Tonight we've been able to see a puffed up ego, a pushy exchange by Saul, and now the writer of Samuel gives us a general overview of information.

Point 3: *Persistent Engagements. (V. 15-23)*

- ***Verses 15-23 are a collection of general information about what continued to happen based on the initial decision earlier in our text to attack the Philistine garrison in the first place.***
 - These verses will prove to be helpful for understanding the context of what occurs when we study 1st Samuel 14 next Wednesday.
- 'And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army; they went up from Gilgal[c] to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. **16** And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. **17** And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual; **18** another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. **19** Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears." **20** But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle,[d] **21**

and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel[e] for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel[f] for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.[g] **22** So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them. **23** And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.’

- **Only 600 men stayed with Saul to fight the philistines.**
 - From 300,000, to 3,000 and now to only 600 who were willingly to stick it out and fight.
- **The Philistines sent raiding parties all across Israel, and it was obvious that Saul and his 600 soldiers were not able to do anything about it.**
 - To make matters worth, we are told beginning in verse 19, that the Israelites had no blacksmith that would make weapons for them and they were dependent on the Philistines to sharpen and keep up their farming equipments.
- **We are told that Saul and Jonathan have metal weapons (go figure) but the rest of Israel had weapons made of wood or stone, arrows, slings, and clubs, that would not have been as effective.**
 - Especially against the raiding parties of the Philistines.
- **While the situation seemed quite hopeless, it was as a result of Saul wanting to take matters into his own hands instead of trusting God with an impossible situation.**
 - Next week, we will find that the tide will change when we get into 1st Samuel 14, but until we get there, we are left to ponder the hopeless situation of the Israelites.

Conclusion:

- When we cover large narrative portions of scripture like we did tonight, we will hit all kinds of topics and subjects, simply because that is what expository preaching is.
 - **The important thing tonight is that you see the danger that we invite into our lives when we take matters into our own hands instead of trusting God.**
- If you are wondering if you are guilty tonight of taking a certain situation into your own hands, then check your heart to see if you have a:
 - **Point 1: Puffed Up Ego. (V. 1-7)**
 - **Point 2: Pushy Exchange. (V. 8-14)**
 - **Point 3: Persistent Engagements. (V. 15-23)**
- While Saul faced the Philistines in battle and them coming so close to his people, he made the decision to disobey God.
 - **I do not know who the philistines are in your life.**
- **No matter who, or what they are, you will not do well to take the situation in your own hands.**
 - Instead, Trust God.
 - Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.
- You respond how He leads you to tonight.

Sermon #23:

'Children, Learn from Your Parents' Mistakes!'

1st Samuel 14:1-23

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this passage we see Jonathan learn from his father's mistakes, when we see his drive to fight, the decision to have faith, the dedication to follow through, and the deliverance that came directly from the Lord.

Intro:

- Last week we were introduced to Jonathan (Saul's son), for the first time.
 - *Tonight we are told more about him and his great victory that he will achieve.*
- ***As we study and get to know Johnathan more tonight, I want us to see how Children can learn from the mistakes and mishaps of their parents.***
 - ***For years, we've heard the phrase 'generational curses', while this is a very real thing, it can be defeated. These generational habits (a better term for it), can be broken.***
 - In other words, just because your mother or father may have made a bad decision or chose a lifestyle that does not honor the Lord, does not mean that you have to do the same thing.
 - *While we get so much from our parents and we should honor them, be respectful, love and take care of them, we don't have to do everything that they did.*
 - ***See, it's incredible that the caliber of man such as Johnathan, was actually Saul's son.***
 - Growing up, Jonathan did not have a great example of what a good leader, father, and warrior looked like.
 - *Yet in this chapter tonight, we will find that Jonathan became a great man and warrior for Israel.*
 - Unlike his dad, Jonathan became a man of faith, one who depended on the Lord.
 - ***Saul was able to have a great son simply because his son sought the Lord and allowed the Lord to shape his heart and his mind.***
 - I'm sure that there were days when Jonathan looked at the decisions that his dad made and thought to himself 'when I grow up, I don't want to do that'.
 - Sure enough, he learned from his Dad's mistakes, and we get to see this portion of 1st Samuel unfold tonight.
- W.W. said this about Jonathan ***'It's a remarkable blessing of the grace of God that a man like Saul should have a son so magnificent as Jonathan. He was a courageous***

warrior, a born leader, and a man of faith who sought to do the will of God. As the account progresses, it becomes clear that Saul is jealous of Jonathan and his popularity, and this jealousy increases when Jonathan and David become devoted friends.'

Read 1st Samuel 14:1-23

Question to Ask:

How does this passage show us that Jonathan learned from the mistakes that his dad had already made as a man and as king of Israel?

Point 1: *The Drive to Fight. (V. 1-5)*

- Here in the first five verses of chapter 14, we have the first use of a common pattern that will be used by the writer of 1st Samuel for the remainder of the book.
 - *Here in these verses, the narrator draws a very sharp contrast between Jonathan and his father.*
 - This will continue throughout the book.
 - *From the time that we were introduced to Saul earlier in 1st Samuel, we have seen instances where Saul did not want to fight the enemy (Philistines).*
 - *Several times in this series we've discussed just how passive Saul really seemed to be.*
 - Which is why it's so interesting that Jonathan wants to go out and fight the enemy.
 - *Jonathan got his first taste of battle in 1st Samuel 13. While Jonathan did defeat a garrison, he also woke up a sleeping giant and caused more fighting for the Israelites.*
 - But, what we see in these verses, is that Jonathan has the drive and willingness to fight.
 - *Saul would fight battles because he had to do so. Not because he wanted to do so to protect the Israelite people.*
 - I believe there are **3** things to point out concerning the drive Jonathan had to fight.
 - *The Relationship between Father and Son. (V. 1)*
 - 'One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father.'
 - *This is the first hint that we get in the scriptures that all may have not been well between father and son.*
 - Do you remember where we left off last week in our study?
 - *From a human standpoint, Israel is at a hopeless point in their nation's history.*

- The army had disbanded, they were outnumbered and they didn't even have the proper weapons to be able to put up a fight.
 - *In order for the tides to turn on Israel's situation, they need an Exodus 14 situation to happen.*
 - *But Jonathan looked at his armor bearer, and wanted to go out to the garrison and fight.*
 - Sidenote: What is an armor bearer?
 - *Armor-bearers accompanied the military leaders to bring along extra weapons and defensive equipment that would be expended during a battle (arrows, javelins, shields). They sometimes aided the soldiers and positioned shields for them.*
 - While everyone is hiding and staying away from the garrison (including Saul), Jonathan wants to go and fight the enemy.
 - *It's possible that Jonathan saw his father's cowardness or his lack of drive and initiative, and wanted to go and take care of the enemy.*
 - But I also don't think you can deny the fact Jonathan had a fearless faith.
 - *Perhaps what was on Jonathan's mind is one of the promises in the Torah, found in [Deuteronomy 28:7](#).*
 - 'The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.'
 - *As we see the scriptures unfold tonight before our eyes, we see that God took the faith of this one man (who didn't have a good example), and would rescue His people.*
- *The Rest that Saul was having. (V. 2-3)*
 - 'Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave[[a](#)] at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, 3 including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.'
 - *The narrator takes a quick break from Jonathan, and focuses in on what his dad is up to.*
 - *Verse 4 tells us that Saul was further away from the enemy and would have been back up in the hills.*
 - Saul was on the outskirts of Gibeah.
 - *This would have been further south.*
 - It is more likely that Saul was sitting under a pomegranate tree, rather than in a pomegranate cave, John Woodhouse said '*Staying could be translate 'sitting,' probably under a pomegranate tree rather than in a cave.*'

- ***Notice here that the writer of 1st Samuel is creating a very stark contrast.***
 - The father (who is militarily responsible for all of this), is sitting under a tree, probably sulking.
 - While his son is scaling rocks and trees to go and defeat the enemy...
 - ***While Jonathan has his armor bearer, Saul has with him an ephod bearer. We see this in the names that are mentioned with the people that were with Saul.***
 - An Ephod was a priestly garment that contained Urim and Thummim. Urim means 'lights' Thummim meant 'perfection.'
 - ***These terms are strange to us today, but according to Exodus 28:6-30, these devices were used in ancient Israel to obtain divine guidance in a situation.***
 - ***While we are tempted to think that it's a good thing that Saul went and got the priests, notice that Icabod's nephew, is with him.***
 - Remember that Ichabod means 'where is the glory?' from 1st Samuel 4:21-22.
 - ***We are also reminded that Icabod's father was Phineas, who was the evil priest who was son of Eli.***
 - God punished them and they fell under judgment.
 - ***And with just 600 measly and miserable soldiers Saul seems hopeless as the situation brought up bad memories in a bad situation.***
- ***The Rocky Path Jonathan took. (V. 4-5)***
 - 'Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.'
 - ***Crag can be defined as a steep or rugged cliff or rock face in the english.***
 - ****Word Study****
 - 'Crag' is translated from a Hebrew word '**Sela**' סֶלַע which literally means 'the teeth of rocks'.
 - While Jonathan took a rocky path, in this part of the world there really would not have been any other path that wouldn't have been rocky.
 - ***The use of the Hebrew word 'Sela' is important though, because it gives the connotation in the Hebrew text that Jonathan and the armor bearer were able to have protection of the 'teeth' of the rocks.***
 - ***The terms 'Bozez' and 'Seneh' were believed to have been terms that would have been familiar to the locals of that region.***
 - Scholar Robert D. Bergen points out ***'the site was well known to the locals who had given names for the rock formations.'***
 - Bozez means 'the gleaming one' and Seneh means 'the thorny one'.

- *Perhaps with the protection of the teeth of the rocks, and the two rock formations, Jonathan and the armor bearer could get into the garrison pretty much unprotected...*

Point 2: *The Decision to have Faith. (V. 6)*

- ‘Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.”
 - *Verse 6 is an astounding piece of evidence that shows the faith that Jonathan possessed.*
 - *His father had broken the covenant of the Lord when it came to the sacrificing laws just a chapter earlier, and he would break the laws even more.*
 - *Due to the consequences, Jonathan would not be king of Israel because of his dad’s poor choices.*
 - Yet he still decides to try and do the right thing, he puts his faith in the Lord.
 - *It can be tempting to look at this situation and think this is just a teenage boy trying to make a name for himself.*
 - To me, this is the opposite. Jonathan had a dad that didn’t follow God like he should have, but Jonathan did not let that stop him from following God like he should have.
 - *Just because you may have not had Godly parents, Godly raising or a Godly home does not give anyone an excuse for not following God themselves.*
 - There are **2** strong implications that verse 6 reveals to us...
- ***Jonathan Recognizes what an Unbeliever is. (V. 6a)***
 - ‘Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.’
 - *The Hebrew word that ‘uncircumcised’ is translated from has religious connotations.*
 - The fact that Jonathan says this, shows that he knew the Philistines were not believers of the one true God.
 - *This may not seem like a big deal, but it really is because many of the Israelite people would mix in with other nations throughout their history and worship false gods.*
 - *Jonathan recognizes that they are not in the covenant of Yahweh, and not in the faith.*
 - The philistines were not a part of God’s people as is prescribed in Genesis 17:10-14.
- ***Jonathan Rests in the Power of the Lord. (V. 6b)***

- ‘It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.’
- ***It is obvious that Jonathan is resting in the power of the Lord. Completely unlike his father, who would rather do things himself, than trust in God.***
 - We need to realize that Jonathan is not resting in God’s power in a time of milk and honey.
- ***There is no reason for optimism due to the beating the Israelites just took and the fact that the King and only 600 soldiers are hanging out by a pomegranate tree far from the enemy...***
 - Jonathan is not showing optimism, instead, he is showing real and raw faith in God.
- ***When we show faith in God in the most dire of circumstances, it allows Him to be seen more than when we try to get in the way.***
 - Dale Ralph Davis said ***‘But faith can arise even when no reason for optimism exists.’***
- Rest in God no matter what circumstances rage in front of you.
 - So far tonight we’ve seen the drive to fight, the decision to have faith, next we see...

Point 3: *The Dedication to Follow Through. (V. 7-15)*

- ***Now that Jonathan and the armor bearer have arrived to the Philistine garrison, they are going to come up with a plan.***
 - Several things to consider here, is that it’s just Jonathan and the armor bearer.
 - ***They don’t know how many people are in the camp, yet they go in, and they fight this battle.***
 - It’s one thing to travel through the gorge and get into the camp, but it’s a whole different think to actually be dedicated to following through.
 - I believe there are **3** things to point out concerning their dedication to follow through.
- ***The Planning. (V. 8-12)***
 - ‘Then Jonathan said, “Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. **9** If they say to us, ‘Wait until we come to you,’ then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. **10** But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us.” **11** So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.” **12** And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.” And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel.”
 - ***Jonathan comes up with a plan, and here it is:***

- At a certain distance, Jonathan and the armor bearer would come walking through the valley and see what kind of reaction they would get from the Philistines.
 - *Based on the reaction of the Philistines, that would dictate how they would respond.*
 - *The english really doesn't do verses 11-12 justice, in the Hebrew text, this is the sense we get from what is written:*
 - *The Philistines can't believe the Hebrews would just walk up to them like this.*
 - The word 'hailed' here has a condescending meaning, not a happy welcome.
 - *When the text says in verse 11 'look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves' is actually the Philistines comparing them to animals.*
 - Demeaning them.
 - *This is a taunting session. What people in our culture today would call a 'roast' session.*
 - The Philistines invited Jonathan and the armor bearer to come up to them, and 'we will show you a thing'.
 - *In the Hebrew text, this meant they would punish them and more than likely, kill them.*
 - *Jonathan interprets this invitation as a divine confirmation from God that he was to attack and that God would supply the victory.*
 - One of the biggest differences that we see early on between Jonathan and Saul, is that Jonathan depends on the Lord to fight his battles, while Saul depends on human armies and might.
 - *Jonathan's response reveals where he stand with God in his heart.*
 - 'Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.'
 - *The Lord was about to use Jonathan's faith as a catalyst to save the entire nation.*
 - When we put faith in God, He can use it far beyond what we can.
- *The Power. (V. 13-14)*
 - 'Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. **14** And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre[c] of land.'
 - While it was Jonathan and the Armor Bearer who climbed up on their hands and knees, it was God who allowed them to kill 20 Philistines that day.
 - *All of this started because of the faith that Jonathan had in his God.*

- ***Jonathan and the Armor Bearer had to climb up top because the Philistine garrison would have been on top of a mountain.***
 - Robert D. Bergen pointed out ***‘Perhaps the task was made even more challenging by stones and arrows rained down on them from the Philistines.’***
 - We can’t humanly explain why two men were able to defeat 20, but when we add God into this equation, it is entirely possible and likely, because there’s nothing He can’t do.
 - The phrase in verse 14 ***‘killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow’s length in an acre of land’***, this simply means that it would have been an half acre of land that the 20 dead men laid in.
- ***The Providence of God caused Panic. (V. 15)***
 - ‘And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.’
 - ***Naturally, the fact that two men were able to successfully kill 20, caused panic among the Philistine people.***
 - All across the Philistine army and nation, panic rang out in the land.
 - The phrase ‘the earth quaked’ is important for us to understand.
 - ***Most scholars agree that this is a reference to an earthquake.***
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word ‘quaked’ in the english comes from the Hebrew word ***‘Ragaz’*** רָגַז which literally means to cause a shake, make tremble, and to quake.’
 - ***Within the context of this in the Hebrew text it gives the idea and allusion that someone or something, made the earth quake.***
 - Of course, we know that God caused the earth quake.
 - ***This was done to send the Philistines into a panic and for them to see, that it was the God of Israel who was in charge.***
 - Even if Saul didn’t like battle and was a coward, God showed the nation that it was He (God Himself), who was really in charge, no matter who’s on the throne. We need to remember that in regards to our own nation, don’t we?

Point 4: *The Deliverance From the Lord. (V. 16-23)*

- Verses 16-23 describe the reaction of Saul and his 600 soldiers from the heroic acts of Jonathan and the Amor Bearer.
 - ‘And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there.[e] **17** Then Saul said to the people who were with him, “Count and see who has gone from us.” And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. **18** So Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God here.” For the ark of God went at that time with the people[f] of Israel. **19** Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the

camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.” **20** Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. **21** Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. **22** Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. **23** So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.’

- *There are so many incredible little details to point out and expound upon regarding the Deliverance that the Lord did that day for Israel.*
 - Verse 23 really and truly, describes it all.
 - ‘So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.’ 1 Samuel 14:23
 - But, let’s look at how it happened...
- **The Realization. (V. 16-17)**
 - ‘And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there.[e] **17** Then Saul said to the people who were with him, “Count and see who has gone from us.” And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.’
 - *Notice that Saul doesn’t realize himself that the battle is going on, he has a watchman that seemingly works for him and the watchmen notifies him.*
 - Saul notices that a battle is going on and he wants to see who in his 600 person army is not accounted for to see who stirred the enemy up.
 - ***Word Study***
 - The word ‘dispersing’ in the english is extremely important to look at in the Hebrew and creates an incredible metaphor of how God can take what we think is solid, and melt it.
 - ‘Dispersing’ comes from the Hebrew word **‘Mug’ מִגַּ** *which literally means to melt and waste away. To soften and to be tossed about.*
 - *The metaphor here that should give every believer in this room confidence, is that God melts away the ‘solid’ and ‘undefeatable’ force of the Philistines and they had ‘melted’, turned to water and dispersed.*
 - We also need to point out that the fact Saul had to count and see who of his soldiers were not accounted for, tells me that Saul is really beginning to lose his grip and command of his army.
- **The Reaction. (V. 18-19)**
 - ‘So Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God here.” For the ark of God went at that time with the people[f] of Israel. **19** Now while Saul was talking to the priest,

the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”

- ***In the world of Hebrew/Samuel Scholarship, these verses bring up a lot of debate.***
 - On one side, according to the Torah (Deuteronomy 20:4-5), before Israel could go into battle they had to have a priestly address.
 - Some will say that is why Saul gets the priests Ahijah and when Saul realizes that he is about to lose his opportunity to pounce and attack the Philistines he tells the priest ‘never mind’ and goes and fights the battle.
 - ***Those same scholars tell us that it is a foreshadowing of Saul’s spiritually apathy and insensitivity to the Lord’s Ways and dealings.***
- ***On the other hand, some say that since he realized his son was missing (remembering the earlier altercation that occurred in 1st Samuel 13:3), he got the priest so that he could seek God’s Guidance on how to get his son back.*** (See Judges 20:27) for an example of this.
 - ***Either way, he told the priest ‘nevermind’ and went to go and fight the battle as he saw his opportunity gradually slipping away.***
- ***The Reckoning. (V. 20-22)***
 - ‘Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine’s sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. **21** Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. **22** Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle.’
 - ***Now that the Philistines were in terror and confusion, Israel attacks and fights.***
 - It obviously went very well because the Philistines started fighting themselves.
 - ***In the previous battle of 1st Samuel 13, some of the Israelites had retreated to the enemy side. Verse 21 of 1st Samuel 14 shows us that the Philistines had allowed some Hebrew men to infiltrate their ranks, so that’s why they ended up fighting man against man. Great confusion.***
 - ***The Philistines ran westward to Beth Aven which would have been to their homeland.***
 - As they did, the rest of the Israelites who had previously fled, joined them once again.
- ***The Reality. (V. 23)***
 - ‘So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.’
 - ***The reality of all of this, is that without God, we can do nothing.***

- Jonathan did what we did with God at the forefront of His mind.
 - Obviously, saul rarely thought of the Lord and didn't listen to Him.
- Children, learn from your parents mistakes!

Conclusion:

- Whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, remember that little eyes are always watching.
 - *Whether it's something good that we do or something bad, little one's are watching.*
- *In our case tonight, Jonathan saw what his father did and was doing, and decided to do the exact opposite.*
 - *He decided to have faith in God when his father decided to do things his own way.*
- *What about us tonight?*
 - Do we look more like Jonathan or Saul in our daily lives?
 - The real question, is do our children and those we are older than or lead, think we are more like Saul or Jonathan?
 - *What does God need to change in your heart and life tonight to make you more like Himself, and less like you?*
 - **Point 1: *The Drive to Fight. (V. 1-5)***
 - **Point 2: *The Decision to have Faith. (V. 6)***
 - **Point 3: *The Dedication to Follow Through. (V. 7-15)***
 - **Point 4: *The Deliverance From the Lord. (V. 16-23)***

Sermon #24:

'Our Own Words and Actions can Wreck Our Own Family!'

1st Samuel 14:24-35

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see in this passage that our own words and actions can potentially wreck our own family when we see Saul's Own Selfishness, Saul's Son has a Situation, and Saul's Selfishness led the Soldiers to sin.

Intro:

- I personally think that as a person gets older, the more they are able to see the weight that their actions carry.
 - *As we often say, hindsight in 20/20.*
- ***But, how much better would you and I be as adults, if we were able to withhold certain words and actions than to wreck our biological family or our Church family.***
 - Yes, Hindsight is 20/20, but when God is in control of our lives, we can avoid certain pitfalls and problems if we walk with the spirit of God that is in us as believers.
- ***In our scripture text this evening, we get to see up close and personal, what words and actions of one individual, can do to an entire nation and even, his own son.***
 - What we find in this story is a person who wants to control everything and show that he is boss, even above almighty God.
 - A person who is rash and does not seek the face of God on very many things. When he does, he is often too late.
- ***So, what causes you and I to be culprits of wrecking our own biological and church families from time to time with the words we say and actions that we do?***
 - ***When we don't have a right heart with God.***
 - I've entitled our study of 1-2 Samuel 'Honing in on the Heart!' because much of both of these books focus in on the heart placement of mankind with God.
- W.W. said this concerning this situation with Saul, ***'Saul's heart was not right with God and he foolishly forced his army to agree to a vow of fasting until evening.'***
 - We will study in just a few moments as to why Saul did this.
 - ***But I want you to focus on yourself tonight as we look at the example of Saul.***
 - ***You'll be tempted tonight to think about other Saul's Own Selfishness. (V. 24) people in your life that have sad mean things to you or done you wrong.***
 - As we examine and study this passage, satan will tempt you with that...
 - ***But, I encourage you to not think about others, but to think about yourself and ask this simple question... are my own words and actions destroying my family?***

****Read 1st Samuel 14:24-35****

Question to Ask:

How does Saul's own words and actions show us how easy it can be to wreck our own family's when we prioritize our own agenda over God's will?

Point 1: *Saul's Own Selfishness. (V. 24)*

- ‘And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.” So none of the people had tasted food.’
 - Before we can look at Saul's Selfishness, we need to look at what the narrator of 1st Samuel (writer), strategically does here.
 - ***Within the entire scope of scripture, it is common that Bible writers insert into the story what we know as a flashback.***
 - ***I believe that is what is happening here in this passage tonight.***
 - I believe that the writer is taking us to the time in this narrative that would have been simultaneous with the opposition Saul had to the priests, and the battle description that is given that we studied two weeks ago.
 - ‘Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.” **20** Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. **21** Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. **22** Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. **23** So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.’
 - ***So, I do believe that these verses took place before the battle (the rash vow), and during it.***
 - I believe there are **2** things we need to look at concerning Saul's own selfishness...
- ***Soldiers are Tired. (V. 24a)***
 - ‘And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day,’ 1st Samuel 14:24a
 - ***This is now the second time that the writer of 1st Samuel has used this term, ‘hard pressed’.***
 - ***The first was back in 1st Samuel 13:6, when the Philistines attacked Israel with their 30,000 chariots and a calvary of 6,000.***
 - ‘When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed)’ 1st Samuel 13:6

- This is when the Israelites hid in caves, holes, graves, went to the other army and even left the promised land.
 - *So, why does this phrase in the english occur again and what does it mean?*
- **Word Study**
 - The phrase ‘hard pressed’ in the english comes from the Hebrew word **‘Nagas’ נָגַס** which literally means to drive someone in a military sense to exhaustion. This term is found 23 times in the OT and usually means to be driven and oppressed by an enemy.
 - **In this context, it means to drive someone to the point of extreme exhaustion, here, the philistines were the ones doing that to the Israelites in battle.**
 - Remember this is looking back to the situation before 1st Samuel 14:20, which is before Israel started winning the battle.
 - *They had been exhausted from the battle, and probably didn’t feel like continuing to fight, but the job wasn’t done yet, so Saul came up with an idea...*
- **Saul Tyrannizes. (V. 24b)**
 - ‘so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.” So none of the people had tasted food.’
 - *The last time that the narrator of Samuel told us that the people were ‘hard pressed’, they deserted the army.*
 - *So it seems that Saul lays this oath on the people to keep them from deserting again.*
 - Samuel scholar John Woodhouse said *‘Once again we see Saul in desperate circumstances, taking desperate measures.’*
 - The way that the writer of Samuel words this verse in the greek, gives us a big contrast between Saul and Johnathan.
 - **Back in 1st Samuel 14:6, Jonathan showed faith by saying that the Lord will work for them.**
 - **Here in verse 24, look closely at what Saul said ‘Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.’**
 - *Notice that Saul uses the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘my’, while Jonathan pointed to God and His strength.*
 - *We are much more likely to self destruct and also destroy those closest to us when we value the ‘I’ and ‘My’ instead of ‘Your will be done Father!’.*
 - Also, we must notice the slippery slope that Saul is on here...
 - Back in 1st Samuel 13, Saul did not obey God but he still made reference to Him.

- *Here in 1st Samuel 14, Saul makes a decision that would have gone against God, and there is no reference to Him in the Hebrew text.*
 - Robert D. Bergen said ‘The Torah did not require soldiers to refrain from eating during battle; it was a command conceived of by Saul in an apparent effort to gain the Lord’s favor.’
 - *I believe Saul wanted to the right things, but he depended solely on himself to go about them instead of the Lord.*
 - *Saul didn’t tyrannize his troops with this fast because God told Him to do so (if so the text would’ve made that clear), instead I personally believe that Saul wanted his soldiers to think he was wholly and fully dedicated to God.*
 - *He wants them to think something of him that he is not and that will continue to be a character flaw of Saul that we see all throughout 1st Samuel.*
 - But, you and I often have this same character flaw as well.
 - We want to do ‘Holy’ and ‘Christian’ things so that others will see as Holy and righteous, whether God has directed and led us in that way or not, that’s how we want others to view us.
 - W.W. said ‘*He (saul) thought that their fasting plus the presence of the ark would impress the Lord and He would give them victory. But Jonathan and his armor-bearer were already enjoying victory without either the ark or the fast.*’
 - *Because Saul wanted his soldiers to view him as ‘more spiritual’ he deprived them of what they really needed in the middle of battle...*
 - *Calories! Certainly being in battle they were exerting many calories and it wasn’t being replenished with food.*
 - *If God was responsible for directing this fast, then God would have sustained them, but it was Saul’s idea and not God’s leading.*
 - This would be like telling a runner that they can’t have water while running a marathon.
 - Saul’s own selfishness was going to develop into a bigger problem for his son and the soldiers...

Point 2: *Saul’s Son has a Situation. (V. 25-30)*

- ‘Now when all the people[a] came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. **26** And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. **27** But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright. **28** Then one of the people said, “Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food this day.’” And the people were faint. **29** Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become

bright because I tasted a little of this honey. **30** How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great.” 1st Samuel 14:25-30

- ***In verse 25 the forest area would have been the hill country of Ephraim, now the flashback is over and these verses pick up chronologically with where we left off in 1st Samuel 14:23.***
 - ‘So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.’
 - ***At this time, the battle would have moved into the woods, and it’s obvious that Jonathan and the armor bearer met up with the main army.***
 - I believe there are **4** to look at this situation that Saul’s own selfishness created.
- ***Fearful People. (V. 26)***
 - ‘Now when all the people[a] came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground.’
 - ***There’s a well known quote from the movie band of brothers that states, ‘It’s better to be respected than to be feared.’***
 - Obviously, Saul used a religiously known tool, to invoke fear into his men.
 - ***The honey was most likely on the ground throughout the forest from the philistines who had retreated through the forest and likely stirred up the hives.***
 - ***Their stomachs are telling them to eat of the honey to nourish their bodies, but the fear that they have of king Saul and the oath he made has kept them from doing this.***
 - ***Again I want to be clear, if it was God who ordered this fast, than God would have sustained and provided for them.***
 - But it was not motivated by God but by Saul.
 - When we follow the commands of God, we are walking by faith in Him, but when we follow the man manufactured regulations, we are only tempting God Himself.
 - ***If the soldiers would have had some of the honey, it would have given them more strength to finish the battle.***
 - Remember, God does give us things that we as mankind have dominion over to help us accomplish His will.
- ***Food for the Body. (V. 27)***
 - ‘But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.’
 - ***The phrase ‘his eyes became bright’ is a hebrew idiom here.***
 - What it means in this context is that although Jonathan didn’t know about the oath that his father gave, the honey that hit his lips perked him up and gave him nourishment after much physical exertion that he would have used on the battlefield.

- Ezra also used this idiom in ***Ezra 9:8***
 - ‘But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold[a] within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery.’
 - ***In the context of Ezra’s day, this was a spiritual reviving, not a physical nourishment. But, the idiom is used elsewhere.***
- The phrase ‘his eyes became bright’ literally means in the Hebrew, to ***light up***.
 - ***This is important because it is a contrast from Saul’s dark curse not to eat.***
- So, we see that Jonathan had food for the body and next we see the soldiers reactions.
- ***Faint at the Sight. (V. 28)***
 - ‘Then one of the people said, “Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food this day.’” And the people were faint.’
 - ***The one soldier couldn’t believe what Jonathan had done and probably feared for his life or a great punishment that his fellow soldier, the king’s son, may receive.***
 - The best way to examine the overall health of the army at this time due to Saul’s deadly decree, is to look at one specific word.
 - ****Word Study****
 - The english word ‘faint’ comes from a hebrew word ***‘Uwph’ עָוַף*** ***which literally means weary, but can also mean to fly away.***
 - In this context, I take this to mean that their bodily strength had flown away from them causing them to be weary.
 - ***Especially after seeing 1 man, Jonathan, put honey in his lips while they knew that they could not.***
 - ***There are scholars out there who will make the argument that the soldiers didn’t tell Jonathan sooner, because it could have been Saul’s intention for his son to die.***
 - While I’m not sure if that’s true or not, the response that Jonathan has certainly reveals the escalation building up between Jonathan and Saul.
- ***Foolishness of the father was revealed to the son. (V. 29-30)***
 - ‘Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey. **30** How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great.”

- In verse 1 of 1st Samuel 14, we see that Jonathan didn't tell his dad of the attack he was planning on the philistines which gave us the first clue that there was tension.
 - **Jonathan is essentially saying that he felt like his dad was foolish by giving this oath.**
- **Based on what Jonathan says here, you can tell that with his military mind and vision, he feels that the Israelites could have had an even greater and stronger victory had the men been able to eat.**
 - **Jonathan boldly declares that his father's leadership had brought 'trouble' on the land.**
 - I'm sure these words that Jonathan uttered would eventually get back to his dad. And this would intensify the rift in their relationship.
- Colossians 3:12 reminds those of us who are leaders in God's Kingdom that we are to clothe ourselves with compassion and not competition.
 - 'Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,' Colossians 3:12
- **Tonight we've seen Saul's Own Selfishness, and the Situation he put his son in, but now Saul's own decisions would lead his soldiers to sin.**

Point 3: Saul's Selfishness led the Soldiers to Sin. (V. 31-35)

- 'They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint. **32** The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood. **33** Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here."^[b] **34** And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and slaughter them here and eat, and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. **35** And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.'
- **Not only did saul's rash and foolish vow cause the soldiers to be physically weak, but it also created an abnormal craving for food.**
 - **The fighting continued, but the hunger did not stop.**
- Remember, that Saul's rash vow was only for that day, so as the fighting continued into the next day, the men could eat, and boy did they...
 - There are **3** things we need to see here concerning the situation of sin that Saul put his soldiers in.
- **Desperation. (V. 32)**
 - 'The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood.'

- Once they won the battle, they now had food that they could pounce on and that's exactly what they did.
 - *We must remember that the Jews were required by the Old Covenant law to drain out the blood of the animals before preparing the meat.*
 - *According to Leviticus 3:17, Leviticus 7:26, Leviticus 17:10-14, Deuteronomy 12:23-24 and Genesis 9:4, blood was not to be eaten.*
- *I personally believe that the soldiers did know better and that they were to drain the blood out, but their appetite took the place of putting the animals on the altar.*
 - They were desperate, they were hungry, and Saul was the one who put them in that spot.
- **Disobedience. (V. 33)**
 - 'Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here.'
 - *Although we don't know for sure, I assume that the 'they' here are the priests.*
 - *Now, Saul cares. Saul care when it is too late.*
 - Is this not what you and I do so often? We care whenever it's convenient. We care whenever it's too late instead of doing the right things ahead of time to prevent such disobedience in one's life.
 - *In all reality, you and I are often the guilty ones when it comes to leading others astray, although we often don't admit it.*
 - 'Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.' Romans 14:13
 - Saul gets upset at them for sinning without admitting and realizing that he is the one who led them to sin in the first place and put them in this situation.
 - *Don't be so selfish and self-conceited that you put those that you love and lead, where they feel that sin is their only option.*
 - (No matter what it's never the only option, but don't put them in a predicament where they have to even make that decision.)
 - *The phrase 'roll a great stone' meant that they could butcher animals with height and room to be able to drain the blood properly.*
- **Duty. (V. 34-35)**
 - 'And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and slaughter them here and eat, and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'"' So every one of the people

brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. 35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.’

- ***Saul tried to make things right by bringing an altar quickly and having Israel sacrifice properly.***

- It was his duty and the duty of the people to get back to God’s law, but it doesn’t take away the fact that saul led them astray in the first place.

- ***It’s never okay to blame others and not take accountability for our own actions.***

Conclusion:

- ***No one in this sanctuary tonight is perfect. No one is without sin. Including me, I view myself as chief of sinners as the apostle Paul himself did.***

- While we aren’t perfect, we should strive for perfection in the way that we live for Christ Jesus.

- Some of us tonight need to be reminded that our tongue leads to actions, and that our tongue is the most deadliest weapon in the history of humanity.

- ‘And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life,[a] and set on fire by hell.[b]’ James 3:6

- ***Sometimes we don’t realize just how destructive our words and actions are and can be, till they destroy those we love the most.***

- ***By looking at this text tonight it is my prayer that you don’t have to do damage control after you’ve said or done something to hurt those you love, but that you can prevent it before it ever occurs.***

- The Apostle Paul gives us one way we can do this...

- ‘We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,’ 2nd Corinthians 10:5

- Before you leave tonight, I want you to speak with the Lord.

- ***Maybe there are circumstances or situations in your life that you need to ask God to forgive you of things you may have done to hurt others like Saul did here, simply because your heart was not right with God.***

- ***Or tonight, you want to make sure that the Saul inside of each one of us doesn’t come out...***

- ***Point 1: Saul’s Own Selfishness. (V. 24)***

- ***Point 2: Saul’s Son has a Situation. (V. 25-30)***

- ***Point 3: Saul’s Selfishness led the Soldiers to Sin. (V. 31-35)***

Sermon #25:

'Sin in the Camp!' *1st Samuel 14:36-46*

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can find Sin in the Camp in the life of King Saul as we see the Lord is Silent, the Leaders are Summoned, the Lots are Started, Saul is Livid, and Loyalty is Shown.

Intro:

- When a person is willing to see and have their own son killed, it can be quite revealing into the heart of that particular parent.
 - *This is the case of what we find of Saul this evening.*
- *I've entitled tonight's sermon, 'Sin in the Camp!'.*
 - Just 2 weeks ago we looked at the oath that King Saul made how his son (Jonathan), broke that Oath by eating honey in the forrest while chasing the enemy (not knowing the oath existed).
 - *While It's possible to think that the title of my message is alluding to the 'sin' of Johnathan, I mean it as the sin in Saul's heart.*
 - When there is sin in the camp of our lives (even in our families), it's hard for God to be able to move, because He cannot tolerate sin.
 - *Which is why it's important that we spend time with Him each day, confessing and repenting of our sin, asking Him to forgive us.*
- What we find this evening is that Saul was so much more focused on the 'sin' that his son committed based on the foolish oath that Saul himself enacted.
 - *Being fully aware that his son was not aware of the oath...*
- So, what I believe we find here in this text this evening is that Saul seeks to shift the blame of sin in the camp on his son, so that no one will see the boiling selfishness and seeking of self advancement that Saul is obviously guilty of.
 - *Doesn't Saul sound so much like us in our fleshly human nature?*
 - *Oftentimes when we've done wrong, it's easier for us to personally shift the blame onto others, than to personally admit what we have done wrong in a particular situation.*
 - So as we study this text tonight following the oath and eating of the honey that occurred in 1st Samuel 14:24-35, let's make sure that we don't fall into the temptation of looking into the camp of others.
 - *Focus in on your camp, asking the Lord if there's any sin in your camp tonight...*

Read 1st Samuel 14:36-46

Question to Ask:

What occurs in the passage to show us that there was sin present in the camp of Israel?

Point 1: *The Lord is Silent. (V. 36-37)*

- ‘Then Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them.” And they said, “Do whatever seems good to you.” But the priest said, “Let us draw near to God here.” 37 And Saul inquired of God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?” But he did not answer him that day.’ 1st Samuel 14:36-37
 - ***These verses follow what Jonathan had already said about his father and Saul and his decision to make an oath about fasting during the heat of battle.***
 - ‘Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great.” 1 Samuel 14:29-30
 - ***Johnathan had pointed out the fact that Israel had missed out on military advancement and the spoils of war, because Saul had enacted this oath.***
 - As I mentioned two weeks ago, I do believe that Saul did this on purpose to personally destroy his son.
 - ***Saul never sent anyone else out to inform his son, and knew his son would not be aware of the oath.***
 - ***But, even with that being said, while Saul was a very ungodly man, the oath that Saul made in the name of the Lord, was technically scripturally legitimate.***
 - And because it was legitimate, Jonathan would technically be killed for violating the oath that his father made.
 - ***So yes, in a way, Jonathan has sin in the camp, but he was set up. The real sin here is Saul’s concealment and attempt to trap and ultimately terminate his son.***
 - But even in this, we are going to see the Lord fight for Johnathan with the people backing him up.
 - ***In these verses, we see that the Lord is silent after Saul’s request to go and fight the Philistines again...***
 - I believe we find **2** things to point out concerning the Lord’s Silence.
- ***Attempt at Amending a Mistake. (V. 36a)***
 - ‘Then Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them.” And they said, “Do whatever seems good to you.” But the priest said, “Let us draw near to God here.” 1st Samuel 14:36
 - ***Johnathan had pointed out the fact that the Oath Saul had created limited the amount of spoils the Israelites could get from the Philistines because they couldn’t eat. No food, no energy.***

- ‘And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.’ 1st Samuel 8:18
 - Here, the Lord is not answering them because of sin in the camp.
 - *There’s much debate on what this silence from God meant.*
 - *It could be silence because Jonathan broke the oath, but I personally believe it has more to do with the fact that Saul is sinning in his heart with all this in trying to manipulate his people (and using God in the process) to kill his son. God sees. God knows.*
 - *Is this the sole reason God was silent that day, I’m not sure, but I definitely think it was a contributing factor, all though Saul is going to deflect the blame elsewhere.*

Point 2: *The Leaders are Summoned. (V. 38-39)*

- ‘And Saul said, “Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today. 39 For as the LORD lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.” But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.’
- *What is so interesting here, is that Saul does not connect the dots that in 1st Samuel 13:14, Samuel had just announced that Saul’s Royal line will not continue and think that they may have a part to do with God’s silence to him.*
 - Instead, he thinks it’s due to ‘sin in the camp’, but notice, not his own sin, but that of his son.
 - *See that’s exactly what sin can do to you and I if we are not careful.*
 - It can blind us to the point that we think and feel there is no wrong that we can do, and that it is always someone else’s fault.
 - May we remember what Jesus Himself said in the NT concerning this very thing:
 - *‘You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.’*
Matthew 7:5
 - So, Saul calls the leaders of Israel, which were probably non-Levites and military leaders of the army. Similar to what occurs in [Nehemiah 11:1](#).
 - There are two things that we need to look at that occurs when the Leaders of Israel are summoned.
- *The Terms of a Trial are Set. (V. 38-39a)*
 - ‘And Saul said, “Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today. 39 For as the LORD lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.”

- **Saul reveals here that he believes God is not answering Him because their is sin within the camp.**
 - Notice that the text does not say anything about Saul taking time to reflect, seeing if he was an issue, but that the issue was elsewhere.
 - *One of the tell tall signs that sin is in your camp, is the reality that you don't think you're the issue.*
- **So Saul lets the people know that they are going to have a 'trial' of sorts, and this will go down in verses 40-42, where for the second time in this text, lots are used to determine a matter.**
 - We've discussed the use of lots in the Bible before, and [Proverbs 16:33](#) backs this idea up that was used in OT times...
 - 'The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.'
 - *Lots were used to figure out the Lord's will...*
- Saul makes it clear that whoever is guilty of this sin in the camp, will be put to death, even if it is his own son, Johnathan.
 - **Keep in mind I feel that this is what Saul wanted from the beginning.**
 - I think (though the scriptures don't come out and say it), that he wanted his son dead because Johnathan had been outspoken against his dad and was loved and respected (as we will see).
- **John L. Mackay said 'Perhaps his mention of Jonathan indicates existing tension between them.'**
 - While Saul doesn't know yet that his son ate the honey, he does know that his son wasn't aware of the Oath.
 - *Common sense would indicate that Saul had a good hunch his son had disobeyed the oath, and he's going to try to go after him...*
- **The Terms are Met with Silence. (V. 39b)**
 - 'But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.'
 - Perhaps the soldiers of the army are feeling this tension and realize the potential for what's about to go down...
 - **God was silent, and now Saul's people are silent...**
 - Scholar John Woodhouse said *'The very thing that his oath had been designed to avoid, namely, the desertion of his people, had happened—perhaps not literally, but he had certainly lost their hearts.'*
 - I would even add that Saul lost their respect.
 - Silence speaks volumes, and I sure Saul realizes that they might not actually be 'with him', anymore.

Point 3: *The Lots are Started. (V. 40-42)*

- ‘Then he said to all Israel, “You shall be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side.” And the people said to Saul, “Do what seems good to you.” 41 Therefore Saul said, “O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim.”^[i] And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. 42 Then Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan.” And Jonathan was taken.’
- *Now, the process of the lots being casted have been started.*
 - *Now we see in verse 40, that Jonathan has been brought into the picture...*
- The process begins in verse 40 with Saul separating himself and Jonathan from the leaders of the army...
 - They are placed on one side, while the army of Israel is on the other.
 - *What’s happening here?*
 - *Saul wants to figure out whether the issues going on in Israel are on himself or Johnathan, or on the soldiers.*
 - Scholar Robert D. Bergen does point out that what Saul is doing here is normal to tradition in Israel (ancient cultures) at this time:
 - *‘Initially a trial by lot was conducted to see if the sin lay with the royal family or the army of Israel.’*
 - *While this might have been ‘protocol’, I think Saul thinks he knows where this is going, he is clearly targeting his son.*
 - Part of me thinks that deep down, Saul may know that his heart and actions are wrong. To reflect on someone other than himself, he’s willing to have his son killed.
 - *This is truly an example of the effect that sin can have in our lives if we are not careful.*
 - Saul’s words that he utters here, show me 2 specific things about what sin can do to you and I, if we aren’t careful...
- *Sin can make us Pushy and Expectational. (V. 41)*
 - ‘Therefore Saul said, “O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim.”^[i] And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.’
 - This verse in the Hebrew Masoretic Text can be quite tricky.
 - *The ESV version that we are reading from tonight, follows the traditional Septuagint (OT in Greek), which has Saul saying ‘why have you not answered your servant this day?’*
 - While I don’t always agree on the NIV’s translation, when reading verse 41 in Hebrew, I think they got it as accurate as we can:

- *'Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Give me the right answer.'*
 - *Saul wants God to give him the answer that he wants to hear.*
 - Which to Saul, would be the 'right' answer.
 - While verse 41 is very hard to translate with the Hebrew text we find there, I think we see that Saul is pushy and expectational on HOW he wants God to answer.
 - *In our study so far in 1st Samuel, Saul doesn't voluntarily go to God and worship and serve Him voluntarily.*
 - No, Saul goes to God when he needs something. Like many of us are.
 - *The end of verse 41 shows us that Saul and Johnathan were taken because the lot fell on them...*
 - The people/soldiers of Israel may be in the clear, but they are still tense and nervous.
- *Sin makes us think someone else is the Problem, not us. (V. 42)*
 - 'Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken.'
 - The way this scene develops is tragic due to the effect sin has...
 - *Back in 1st Samuel 10:20-24, Saul was affirmed as Israel's king by this same process of casting lots, and the same process was also used in Joshua 7:16-18 where Achan was identified as the thief.*
 - *Now this same process is being used against the King's Son for a crime that he committed without even knowing or realizing he was committing a crime.*
 - Jonathan is identified as Israel's problem, and it's all shaking out the way Saul intended it to, for now...

Point 4: *The Livid Saul. (V. 43-44)*

- 'Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die." 44 And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."
- *Now, in studying for this sermon I've asked myself the question, why did God not bring the truth out and let the lot fall on Saul for creating such a manipulating oath to target his son in the first place?*
 - I agree with what W.W. said when he answered this difficult question:
 - *'He (God) wanted to bring the whole thing out in the open and humiliate King Saul, whose pride had caused the problem to begin with. The people praised Jonathan, not Saul, as the man who had brought the great victory to Israel, and if the Lord had used Jonathan in such a wonderful way, why should he be executed?'*

- *While Jonathan was probably wondering why God wouldn't just expose the selfish and evil ways of his father with the lots, God was going to do so by showing all the people and bringing the whole thing in the open...*
 - I believe that Saul is livid here in anger, because he is trying to convenience those in Israel that it was not him but it was Jonhathan.
- This conversation between Saul and Jonathan shows us two things...
- **The Interrogation. (V. 43)**
 - 'Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die."
 - With force, Saul interrogates his son.
 - Jonathan's response to his father's forcefulness, is quite telling.
 - **Jonathan is ready to accept the punishment that his father has for him.**
 - Just to reiterate, Saul did go against his dad's curse, but he did so unknowingly.
 - Some scholars think that Jonathan's response shows sarcasm that his dad would have him killed for this, others think he accepted the punishment 100%.
 - **Either way, the fact remains that Saul interrogated him, and in verse 44, we see Saul's intentions...**
 - **While Jonathan 'may' have attempted to make this a joking matter, Saul, by no means was treating this as a joke.**
- **The Intentions. (V. 44)**
 - 'And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."
 - **When saul says 'God do so to me and more also;' means that if Saul does not kill Jonathan for breaking the oath, He's asking God to kill him if he doesn't kill Jonathan.**
 - **Yet again, Saul is excusing his own behavior of the past, and focusing it on Jonathan.**
 - He doesn't mention God punishing him for what he's done in the past, just what he wants God to do if he doesn't kill Jonathan.
 - **What a warped mind and way of thinking.**
 - **Now, there is something very important about the oath that Saul made back in 1st Samuel 14:24-35:**
 - Saul (obviously), was Israel's King.
 - Because of this, Saul as King had the power to curse.
 - **But, unlike the Lord, Saul did not have the power to enforce the curse.**
 - **Scholar Robert D. Bergen said 'The curse of a king, like every other royal utterance, was ultimately the word of a human being and thus mired in the frailties of the human condition.'**

- So men could do nothing to change God’s curses, they could change the curse that mankind came up with.
 - *Saul’s downward spiral continues, and his relationship with his son continues to greatly deteriorate.*

Point 5: *The Loyalty Shown. (V. 45)*

- ‘Then the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die.’
- *Don’t forget the powerful words of Jonathan himself back in 1st Samuel 14:6...*
 - ‘Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.”
 - Jonathan’s faith had been seen before, as it was being seen now...
- *When I think of these circumstances, I can’t help but think of Exodus 14:14...*
 - *‘The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.’*
- Jonathan didn’t outrage about the result of the lots (like I know I probably would have), he simply let the Lord fight on his behalf.
 - *The Lord uses the people of Israel to expose Saul and to redeem Jonathan.*
 - *What’s interesting here is that by saying ‘As the Lord lives’, they are using the same oath that Saul did.*
 - *The people value Jonathan’s genuine faith over Saul’s rash and destructive vow...*

Conclusion:

- No matter the context, as long as I’ve heard the phrase ‘Sin in the Camp!’, it’s always been used in reference to someone else.
 - *Their sin and actions, and not the sin and actions of the one saying it.*
- *When you think and look back on this sermon in the days and weeks to come, when you hear the phrase ‘Sin in the Camp!’*
 - *I want you to immediately look at yourself.*
 - See what sin you may have done to separate you from God, and do whatever is necessary to repent and ask the Lord to forgive you.
- *For years, most of us in this room tonight have acted like Saul for way too long...*
 - *We’ve been the cause of sin in the camp but we’ve wasted so much time and energy trying to get others to believe that it’s not us. It’s someone else.*
 - Remember sin will blind you, and God will make a way for the truth to come out. He did that tonight by showing the loyalty of the men to side with Jonathan...
- Is their sin in the camp of your life that you need to deal with tonight?
 - **Point 1: *The Lord is Silent. (V. 36-37)***

- **Point 2:** *The Leaders are Summoned.* (V. 38-39)
- **Point 3:** *The Lots are Started.* (V. 40-42)
- **Point 4:** *The Livid Saul.* (V. 43-44)
- **Point 5:** *The Loyalty Shown.* (V. 45)

Sermon #26:

Sermon #27:

'Abusing God Given Authority!'

1st Samuel 15:1-9

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see that Saul abuses God Given Authority when we look at how the Orders were Straightforward, Operations Started Smoothly, and then Obliteration of the Amalekites Stalls.

Intro:

- Earlier this week I read an article that a local Pastor wrote about *How it is easier to read, learn and focus on the Pastors of the Past who have already gone to be with the Lord, then to listen and learn from 'big name' preachers today who seem to be dropping like flies from the ministry.*
 - *In his article, he argued that the preachers who have already finished the race can be looked up to because they did not fall out of the ministry due to moral failings.*
 - *Even with that, I prefer to make the argument that just because they are dead and we don't know if they abused God given authority or not, doesn't mean that they didn't.*
 - The root of the issue is that we are all sinners and have the potential of abusing the authority God has given us by disqualifying ourselves personally.
- For years now in our culture, we have seen countless spiritual leaders in our world have to step down or be removed due to abusing the authority that God has given them.
 - ***Before I give you a list of the most recent occurrences of this, let me preface with saying that it's not just pastors that are in this boat, but Deacons, SS teachers, and other Church leaders.***
 - It's just most often the headline preachers that reach the headlines after falling and failing. This is why it's important to pray for those that God has placed into these ministry positions.
 - Just last week, ***Pastor Steven Lawson*** of Trinity Bible Church of Dallas was removed as Senior Pastor due to an inappropriate relationship with a woman.
 - Several years ago my wife's childhood Pastor, ***Dr. Frank Page*** was removed from his position with the Southern Baptist Convention for an inappropriate relationship with a woman.
 - In 2015 North Greenville University ***President Jimmy Epting*** was removed due to an affair with a woman on the NGU staff.
 - In 2021 after the death of ***Evangelist Ravi Zacharias***, it was revealed that he engaged in sexual abuse and sexual misconduct.
 - In 2022 former Pastor of Woodstock, ***Johnny Hunt*** admitted to an inappropriate relationship in conduct.

- **The list could go on and on of men whom God has given positions of leadership and authority.**
 - *But before we think and look at these men in disgust and shake our heads, may we remember that they are just that, men.*
 - **May we remember that *there go I but by the grace of God.***
- *One may ask the question why is it that Pastors and Christian leaders are dropping like flies in our Convention and world?*
 - ***Because I believe that satan tries his absolute hardest against Pastors and those who lead others spiritually.***
 - *To satan, these men and their families are a trophy.*
 - *Now, I believe all these men can repent, turn to God, and be restored to a certain level and extent.*
 - But there's no doubt that there will be consequences for those actions
- This is something I am reminded of everyday and I pray to the Lord everyday: Keep me clean and keep me close to you.
 - *Am I perfect, no absolutely not.*
 - But this is why I need your prayers daily so that the Lord might keep me close and clean so that I don't become another trophy in satan's trophy case.
- **I bring all this up to show you that in tonight's text, we find a man who abused the authority of God.**
 - We find a man who had already been rejected by God once, but due to his persistent and continual disobedience, would be rejected completely.
 - *He and his family would no longer be able to continue in the royal line.*
 - ***We find a man who God had chosen and given great abilities to lead Israel, yet he took advantage of it and abused it.***
 - Whether you lead a SS, lead a ministry, lead your family, or simply lead others in any kind of way or format, you are held to a higher standard, and satan will constantly be on you trying to get you to abuse your God Given Authority. Don't do it...
- **To define abusing the authority of God, is to simply disobey Him and His commands and simply do what you want to do over what He has said and directed for us to do.**
 - In order to get a good grasp on our text tonight, we need to look at how Saul was not an **Ordinary** King. I think there are three good pieces of evidence.
 - #1: The Lord was the one who had decided Saul would be the King.
 - #2: Saul had to submit to the prophet Samuel.
 - #3: The people over whom he reined were not his people but God's people.
 - ***Saul, like you and I, Saul fell into the train of thought thinking that he was the boss. When in reality, it was the Lord.***

Read 1st Samuel 15:1-9

Question to Ask:

How does King Saul continue to abuse the authority that God has given him as King of Israel?

Point 1: *Orders are Straightforward. (V. 1-3)*

- ***In verses 1-3 we see that Samuel comes back into the picture to tell Saul what the Lord wanted to say to him.***
 - Several chapters ago we had heard Samuel's farewell message. But, as I told you then, Samuel is not out of the picture yet, he just was not the judge/leader of Israel. Saul was.
 - ***But, he still acted as a prophet and the spiritual leader for Israel whenever God had a message for his people.***
 - Last week when Pastor Steve preached from 1st Samuel 15:47-52, that was an overview of Saul's military career, family and administration.
 - ***Tonight, our narrative into Saul and the continuing story of his reign in Israel continues.***
 - ***While we've already seen a pretty downward turn in the life of Saul, that snowball is going to get bigger and faster as Saul will choose to disobey the Word of the Lord, again.***
 - One important concept I find in these three verses is that when God tells us something, He does not want to confuse us.
 - ***God is not the author of confusion, but satan most certainly is.***
 - That's why much of the Bible is straightforward so that we will follow it and live by it, accordingly.
 - In these first three verses, I want us to see **3** important things about the orders Saul was being given being straightforward.
- ***Listen. (V. 1)***
 - 'And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD.'
 - ***Samuel is still the mouthpiece that the Lord is using to speak to His people and will be until his death.***
 - It's important that Samuel says this, because he shows that it is not that Saul should obey him necessarily, but that he should obey God who is speaking through him.
 - ***The orders and commands of God come straight from Him, and Saul is to obey them just as we are.***
 - We must listen, but in this case there is a history lesson that Saul was going to be made aware of by Samuel...
- ***Learn. (V. 2)***

- ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.’
 - ***The Lord is giving explanation to what the order will be that will follow in verse 3.***
 - We must understand the Amalekites were constant and continuous enemies of Israel.
 - ***The Amalekites were also a very evil group of people.***
 - ***The Israelites first come in contact with the Amalekites as they were coming out of Egypt and they were alone and defenseless:***
 - ‘Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.’ Exodus 17:8
 - ***Joshua was leading the Israelites and they defeated the Amalekites that day.***
 - After the Battle, the Lord made this prophecy...
 - ‘Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” Exodus 17:14
 - ***This is when and where the Lord gave this prophecy, but several other scripture passages reiterate and reaffirm this prediction...***
 - ‘Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and said, “Amalek was the first among the nations, but its end is utter destruction.” Numbers 24:20
 - ‘Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, **18** how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. **19** Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.’ Deuteronomy 25:17-19
 - ***The Lord had a plan to wipe out the Amalekites.***
 - ***Because this event was mentioned multiple times in scripture and anticipated, most of Israel knew about it.***
 - It’s possible that the Lord reminds Saul tho, because Saul didn’t grow up knowing the Word of the Lord as was evidenced all the way back to the search for lost donkeys.
 - One scholar, Robert D. Bergen said ‘***Now Yahweh was giving Saul the awesome responsibility of fulfilling these Torah prophecies. Saul, who was noted for his military leadership, was ideally suited for carrying out this challenging task.***’
 - There was a lesson to learn, now an army to lead.
- ***Lead. (V. 3)***

- ‘Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction[a] all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”
- The command here that God gives Saul to go and do, is unique and not the norm.
- **‘Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’**
 - This was the kind of warfare that was practiced only against people who had come against the Lord’s most severest form of judgment (another example in the OT would be the city of Jericho).
- ***In this kind of mission, the soldiers were not to take the spoils (prizes) of war, because this was viewed as a solemn and holy task, as they got to function as the Lord’s agents in fulfilling a prophecy.***
 - Heath Thomas said *The goal of the attack was not to make Saul rich but to execute justice on a rebellious group of people. Saul was explicitly told to take no prisoners and to leave the wealth alone.*
- ***While this seems dark and extreme to us, God does not like it when others oppress and seek to hurt His people.***
 - So, God let Saul know what the plan was and how it needed to be executed...
- ***In the beginning, things went well...***

Point 2: *Operations start Smoothly. (V. 4-6)*

- ‘So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. **5** And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. **6** Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.’
 - ***Obviously, this is a big task with big theological implications that Saul was assigned with.***
 - Saul was known as a great military leader (although not as great as his son), so he was going to assemble an army and begin this task. A task that Israel had awaited for many years so many of the men would’ve been hungry to get in the fight.
 - There are **3** things to look at concerning how the operation started smoothly...
- ***The Number. (V. 4)***
 - ‘So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah.’

- *Saul must've somewhat understood the magnitude of this task, because he gets a large number of troops together. (notice that God did not give him a number of troops that he was to recruit).*
 - *Based on the text, there was 210,000 men that were going to be apart of this battle.*
- This would have been the second largest army under Saul's command that we find in the Bible.
 - The Number was really big, but before they could engage in battle, they actually had to get their first...
- **The Navigation. (V. 5)**
 - 'And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley.'
 - *We do not know where the city of Amalek would have been located.*
 - Most scholars believe that it would have been to the south or southwest of Judah.
 - *'Lay and wait in the valley' is a phrase conveying that this was going to be an ambush attack.*
 - Robert D. Bergen holds the belief that this location was probably called 'the brook of egypt' which was a major road in the region at that time.
 - *Saul's troops were ready for an attack on the major Amalekite settlement, and then they would have to inevitably travel throughout the countryside attacking the fleeing Amalekites.*
 - *Before the fighting begins, Saul shows his knowledge of Israelite history and tradition and extends an olive branch of kindness and niceness, to a people group who had helped the Israelites years ago.*
- **The Niceness. (V. 6)**
 - 'Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.'
 - *Who were the Kenites and why was Saul being nice to them in letting them escape?*
 - According to Judges 1:16, Moses Father-in-law was a Kenite and his son had been very helpful to the Israelites. We see evidence of that in *Numbers 10:29-32*...
 - 'And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel." **30** But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." **31** And he said, "Please do not leave us, for you know

where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. **32** And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you.”

- *The Kenites had been kind to Saul, and ultimately down the line, were related to the Israelites because the mother to Moses children was a Kenite.*
 - *They were very nomadic people.*
 - *They had settled among and near the Amalekites at this time. Probably because they wanted to be friendly towards them, so that they (Amalekites), would not be hostile towards them. That's how feared the Amalekites were at this time in Israel.*
- David would later spare the Kenites when he was in Ziklag according to 1st Samuel 27:8-10.
 - *Saul does a very kind and commendable thing here, but it does not excuse what he's getting ready to do in verses 7-9.*
- So far tonight we've seen the orders of God were straightforward, the Operation starts smoothly, but now we see Obliteration will stall...

Point 3: *Obliteration Stalls. (V. 7-9)*

- ‘And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. **8** And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. **9** But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves[b] and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.’
 - *The battle goes well, but the military leader or mastermind, did not fully obey the directions.*
 - From the beginning of the passage we were told that Saul was to completely obliterate the Amalekites...
 - *But the mission to obliterate starts to stall, when Saul sees that he can get some glory for himself and put others to shame to spread his own fame...*
 - This is where the abuse of God's authority is really evident in the life and tenure of Saul's time as King.
 - *There's so much of Saul in each one of us than we are usually willing to realize.*
 - Saul sees an opportunity to make 210,000 men happy.
 - *If Saul chose to obey God, then 210,000 men would not be happy because they would have fought in a battle and not been able to take any of the spoils home (which was their usual compensation when they would fight).*
 - If he's able to obey God and send them home empty handed, he will be hated and be talked about for years. At the end of the day, Saul's desire is that the people of

Israel think and speak about him in such a way that David would be years from this time period when they would say

■ “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” 1st Samuel 18:7

● *Saul would rather be liked and disobey God, than to obey God and be disliked by the world.*

■ *We have this same struggle each and everyday.*

● There are **2** things you need to see here in the text...

● **Huge Victory. (V. 7)**

○ ‘And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.’

○ This expression in the Hebrew text that is translated to ‘*From Havilah as far as Shur*’ is a *reference to the entire geographic extent of the territory of the Ismaelites according to Genesis 25:18.*

■ *In modern geographic terms, it’s the distances from Arabia to Egypt.*

○ *Even in today’s standards of modern warfare, this is quite the wide sweeping attack.*

■ But, due to the amount of troops that Saul had, it was certainly possible.

■ John Woodhouse said ‘*We might shudder as we think of what was involved behind those brief words. We sense that King Saul was indeed bringing the long anticipated judgment on the people of Amalek.*’

● *While we may see God’s command to destroy all the Amalekites as harsh, we can’t argue the fact that the command was clear.*

○ One thing I’ve picked up on in our study of 1st Samuel, is the fact that Saul does have a little bit of an anger issue...

■ And we see it on display in the next two verses...

● **Humiliating Vengeance. (V. 8-9)**

○ ‘And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. **9** But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves^[b] and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.’

○ *Out of all the Amalekites, they only spared 1. They only kept one alive.*

■ *The fact that they kept 1 alive, is a direct contrast and sign of disobedience from the command in verse 3.*

● ‘Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction^[a] all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”

○ *The Hebrew idiom translated here as ‘taking alive’ means that Saul more than likely was going to eventually kill king Agag...*

- ***But what is really happening here is that I personally believe, Saul is keeping him alive so that they can have a parade and festival for killing the Amalekites, and put Agag's head on some sort of thing that would have been shown off.***
- *This was to humiliate agag and the amalekites, but it wasn't what God wanted him to do...*
 - The people also took spoils of war, that they were not supposed to take.
- ***So what do we call what we see happening here? It's something you and I do on a daily, sometimes hourly basis...***
 - ***This is a Self-Serving Selective Obedience by Saul and the army.***
 - The result of this???
 - ***To pursue personal gain on the guise of serving God.***
 - That is abusing and using God given authority...
- We must be careful to never fall into that same trap that Saul was entranced with.

Conclusion:

- ***For those who are serving the Lord, no matter where or what you are doing, you are God's representative here on earth.***
 - We saw that from our text on Sunday.
- ***So to abuse the authority of God is a very dangerous situation to be in.***
 - As I said at the beginning of my sermon tonight, to abuse the authority of God, is to disobey Him and live the way that you want to live.
- ***To abuse the authority of God is to disobey what is written in His Word and to continually reject the teachings and ways of the Lord.***
 - While Saul obeyed part of the mission directives, He was still guilty of disobedience because he did not do ALL that God had told him to do.
- ***To partially obey God is to fully disobey Him.***
 - Do you have areas in your life tonight where you are partially obeying God? But you don't think it's bad because you're still serving Him and living for Him?
 - ***If you're partially obeying the Lord, you are living a full life of disobedience.***
 - It's time for you to come and repent and give that to the Lord fully and wholly tonight.
 - **Point 1: *Orders are Straightforward. (V. 1-3)***
 - **Point 2: *Operations start Smoothly. (V. 4-6)***
 - **Point 3: *Obliteration Stalls. (V. 7-9)***

Sermon #28:

'The Results of Disobedience!' Part 1 *1st Samuel 15:10-23*

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see the results of Disobedience in this passage when we see that Samuel is made Aware, Samuel is righteously Angry, Saul has poor Actions, Samuel responds Accurately, and Samuel kills Agag.

Intro:

- Briefly discuss the fact that this message is going to be a two part message and how that came about.
 - *If we're being honest, many of us enjoy our own disobedience against God in the moment. It is the results of our actions that we often lament.*
- *In other words, most of the time we are sorry for the results of our actions and not necessarily the action itself.*
 - Every person who is a Christ follower here tonight should aspire to get to the point in their life where we can say what the Apostle Paul did in [Romans 7:19](#):
 - 'For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.'
 - *While we should aspire to get to that place in our lives, if most of us are being honest tonight, we aren't there.*
 - Meaning, we think we don't like sin, and we try in our own power to turn against it, but without the power of the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to overcome the disobedience in our lives.
 - *As we continue in this section of our study in 1st Samuel, we will see tonight that Saul did not like the results that came from his actions.*
 - We will see that his initial reaction to Samuel is that he even denies doing any wrong.
 - *It's not until Samuel reveals the consequences of what he's done that he starts to backtrack. Admit that he was wrong, and give an apology.*
- **Illustration**
 - Growing up, I was always told stories of mischief that my dad would get into.
 - *One story in particular, he was in the 7th grade (I believe).*
 - He and his friends were in the woods in Greer, South Carolina.
 - They had gone down to the local convenience store and purchased firecrackers and small fireworks.
 - *According to those that tell the story, this was all my dad's idea.*
 - I am told that the firecracker my dad threw at someone, landed on a kudzu tree, and the tree went up in flames almost instantly.

- *With it being in Greer, the entire forest was mostly Kudzu, and within minutes 7 acres in Greer SC were on fire.*
 - *The boys, including my dad, ran through the creek back to their homes to act like nothing had happened.*
- *Of course, the truth came out, and it was revealed my Dad was the main instigator of the awful tragedy.*
 - My grandfather Bob, Dad's dad, was away on a business trip.
 - So, my grandmother Francis, had to do the initial disciplining.
- He got in huge trouble and was grounded for a very long time, along with the lifelong shame of knowing he had started such a fire.
 - *I give that illustration this evening to show that my Dad didn't think it was wrong on that afternoon to throw a firecracker at someone, until the tree turned into flames.*
- *You and I often hold firecrackers (sin) in our hands, without realizing the weight of it until the damage is already done.*
 - *My prayer tonight, is that we will see what the results of our sin can cause, to encourage us to put the firecrackers down, before it's too late.*

Read 1st Samuel 15:10-23

Question to Ask:

What are the Results of Saul's personal decision to actively engage in disobedience against God?

Truth 1: *Samuel is Made Aware.* (V. 10-15)

- The actions of Saul were going to spread, and spread quickly.
 - *I believe that before Samuel found out of Saul's actions by word of mouth, the Lord came to him and told him that He (God Himself) was grieving.*
 - So Saul was going to go down and find out for himself what actions Saul had done that grieved the Lord.
 - *In these first 5 verses, we find dialogue and situation that will continue and escalate the rest of this evening and into next Wednesday night when we continue our study.*
 - There are 5 things to point out concerning the truth that Samuel is made aware of Saul's sin...
- *Genuine Sorrow.* (V. 11)
 - "I regret[c] that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night.'
 - Verse 11, and verse 35 of the ESV translation both say 'God regretted'.
 - *The older RSV had 'I repent that I have made Saul king.'*
 - *The NIV has 'I am grieved that I have made Saul king.'*

- *The CSB & ESV have ‘I regret that I have made Saul King’*
 - *The KJV has ‘I repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be King.’*
- No matter the translation you have, to understand this genuine sorrow, we must go back to the Hebrew text.
 - *It comes from a Hebrew word (נָחַם nāḥam) that occurs 108 times in the OT, and literally means to grieve.*
 - *I believe that God is deeply saddened and grieving over Saul’s sin. And Saul’s decision to do his own thing, instead of obeying God.*
- **This is the exact same Hebrew verb that is used in Genesis 6:6.**
 - ‘And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.’
- *I believe that this is meaning that God feels real and genuine sorrow when thinking and seeing Saul’s sin.*
 - It does not mean regret in the way you and I view it through our 2024 vision.
 - I believe in this context and in Genesis 6:6, is not that God thinks his decision to make Saul King (or to make mankind) is going to derail his plan in the overall course of his plans for history.
 - *But it’s that the decision of mankind does grieve the Heart of God.*
- *If Saul’s actions grieved the heart of God, we must know that the same is true with us when we choose sin over God.*
- **Gross Selfishness. (V. 12)**
 - ‘And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal.”
 - *In the eyes of the Lord, and others, selfishness is just gross. There’s no way around it.*
 - Samuel goes to find Saul to confront him on why the Lord would be grieving, and is told by someone (we don’t know who), that Saul was putting up a monument to and for himself.
 - *The text tells us Saul came to Carmel, this is not the famous Mount Carmel that will become prominent with Elijah.*
 - This Carmel was 7 miles South from Hebron. In the southern section of Judah (see Joshua 15:55).
 - *It seems as if Saul created a monument for and to himself to commemorate his victory over the amalekites.*
 - The battle had JUST been won, and already, Saul is wanting to make a monument of Himself, to show Israel who and what he was...

- ***This is a big contrast to what Moses did when he oversaw the victory over the amalekites...***
 - After Moses defeated them, he built a monument, but it was an altar to the Lord, and it was to ‘The Lord is my Banner’
 - ‘And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD IS My Banner,’ Exodus 17:15
- ***Let me go ahead and say something controversial here regarding this, I do not believe any Church should name any building, SS Class, or anything on their property after one individual.***
 - This Church has done an AMAZING job of not doing that through all these years. But we need to keep that up.
- ***We will not name anything after an individual. All we do here is for the Glory of God anyway. That is such a baptist tradition that needs to go away (maybe we got it from Saul).***
 - ***Saul was inappropriate to try and take credit for something God could only do.***
- ***Greetings Start. (V. 13)***
 - ‘And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”’
 - Saul may be thinking that Samuel is coming to greet and congratulate him.
 - ***Saul may be thinking Samuel is coming to scold him, but at this point, I don’t think Saul thinks he’s done anything worth scolding, so I tend to believe he thinks Samuel is coming for a handshake, hug, and a ‘good job my son’. But, that’s not what happened... Nor should it have...***
- ***General Sarcasm. (V. 14)***
 - ‘And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?”’
 - ***I can’t help but see Samuel shaking his head at Saul. Like, really?***
 - ***You’re building this statue and saying you’ve obeyed God when I can literally hear the sound of disobedience in my ears?***
 - ***I wonder if that’s part of what grieves God? When we building buildings, ministries, and Churches all around us. All around our name. All around our own self fulfillment, instead of for His own Glory?***
 - This sarcasm of Samuel would turn into a much needed scolding for Saul.
- ***Great Sparing. (V. 15)***
 - ‘Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction.”’
 - For the first time, of what will be many, Saul shifts the blame.

- ***Saul tells Samuel that it is the PEOPLE who have spared the best of the sheep and that's why he hears the animals.***

- Saul doesn't take leadership responsibility and admit that he allowed them to do such a thing.

Truth 2: *Samuel is Righteously Angry. (V. 16-23)*

- Now that Samuel is made aware of Saul's actions and has heard Saul give his own explanation, Samuel gives his response to Saul's words, and what I see here, is that he is ***righteously angry*** and upset with Saul.

- ***Samuel and Saul are going to have a comparatively lengthy conversation here that throughout the passage will turn heated.***

- But I do want you to see the ***tale of two people*** here.

- ***Saul is going to lash out and react in rage.***

- ***While Samuel is angry and will cut someone's head off that we will see next week, he is still righteously angry.***

- There's a big difference. In Matthew 21:12-13, we see that Jesus Himself showed righteous anger, when He flipped the tables that were being used in the temple to sell goods.

- ***If you and I are being honest tonight, there are more times in our lives where we show the anger of Saul, than we do that of Samuel.***

- There's a comparison here that we cannot ignore.

- Samuel's righteously angry, because of the first 5 verses we studied tonight, there is little to no repentance in Saul whatsoever. We will even see that again next week.

- ***I believe there are 4 things we need to see concerning Saul and Samuel's conversation here...***

- ***Enough! (V. 16)***

- 'Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak."'

- ****Word Study****

- The english word 'Stop' is translated from the Hebrew word ***'Raphah'*** ***רָפָה*** which occurs 46 times in the OT, including in Psalms 46:10, where it is translated 'be still'.

- ***This Hebrew verb means to literally cease, stop moving, be still, to stop.***

- ***Based on the emphatic way 'STOP' comes across in the Hebrew, I truly believe that Samuel shouted this. It wasn't whispered.***

- Samuel has really and truly had enough. He is righteously angry.

- ***John Woodhouse said 'Samuel saw Saul's 'defense' for what it was and shut him up.'***

- Remember in 1st Samuel 10:22 when he hid among the baggage when they tried to find him?
 - ***I don't think Saul ever lived up to the responsibilities of being the King, because he never truly accepted it.***
 - Samuel also reminds him of his position in Israel, because Saul's go to method is a lot like ours. Blaming others. When he (Saul) was responsible for his troops.
 - ***Purpose. (V. 18)***
 - 'And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'
 - The word 'sinners' here is important.
 - ***God wanted Saul to completely destroy them because they were sinners, as an arm of His judgment.***
 - ***Saul had a distinctly Divine task that he chose to make it his own task, when he deviated from God's instructions.***
 - Which led to uncontrolled Pouncing...
 - ***Pouncing. (V. 19)***
 - 'Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?'
 - This word **WHY** is huge and has great significance in our lives...
 - Disobedience is foolishness and that's the feeling I get when I read this **WHY** in the text.
 - **WHY** do we sin?
 - **WHY** do we fail to obey Him daily?
 - **WHY** do we know the right thing to do, yet still CHOOSE not to do it?
 - **WHY** do we choose to GOSSIP about the sins of others when we have our own to deal with?
 - **WHY** do we choose to say awful things behind someone's back, instead of to their face?
 - **WHY** do we choose to **POUNCE** on **SIN** at any and every opportunity?
 - Because we are fallen and in need of a Savior, the Lord Jesus, who desires to CHANGE us.
 - **WHY** do we pounce?
 - Because we care much more about what we **WANT** and desire than we do consulting and **ASKING** God ***'is this your will for me?'***
 - Saul may now be regretting that he allowed Samuel to speak to him.
 - He shows great effort in still trying to defend himself and his actions...
- ***Effort. (V. 20-21)***

- ‘And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”
- ***Saul continues to give a strong effort in proving his own innocence, and blaming others.***
 - Saul spends more time pleading his case, than he does in pleading for his need of forgiveness.
 - ***It reminds me of the story I once heard a fellow Pastor tell.***
 - ***‘Church going people in their prayer times prefer to have a gossip session with God because that’s all they do with anyone else they converse with.’***
 - Can you believe he/she did this, said this, bought that... etc.
 - ***When in reality God wants you and I to look at our own heart. Like the Psalmist David Wrote...***
 - ***‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right[a] spirit within me.’ Psalms 51:10***
 - How many of us tonight can actually say we pray that prayer regularly...
 - Up until this point, Samuel had been interrogated Saul about the animals that had not been slain because he heard the noise of the sheep.
 - ***So, Saul is saying he obeyed the Lord because he killed the Amalekites and the people were the ones who disobeyed God because they took the animals...***
 - ***In verse 20, Saul tells on himself and gives Samuel information he had not previously had...***
 - ‘I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.’
 - ***This tiny detail is important. Saul knows he can’t hide that information for long...***
 - Some scholars suggest that Saul brings this up about Agag, as prove he completed his mission. But see, that probably wasn’t the root of why Saul kept Agag alive and also shows his heart...
- ***Saul blames the people, in verse 21, but then states that they did it for spiritual reasons...***
 - Sacrificing unto the Lord for their victory.
 - ***And with Samuel’s edict, he’s about to explain how much Saul messed up by letting all of this escalate the way it did...***

- In Samuel's mind, it just kept getting worse...
- **Edict. (V. 22-23)**
 - 'And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."
 - **The edict or verdict here, is what Samuel is getting to and that's at the very end of verse 23.**
 - 'He has also rejected you from being king.'
 - **We will study in depth next Wednesday about what it means that Saul was rejected from being King. Saul is going to lash out and we get to see that up close and personal next week.**
 - **But I want to study the portion of Samuel's Edict where he gives Saul a little lesson, before the ultimate verdict...**
 - John Woodhouse says this '*Samuel's Speech goes to the heart of Biblical faith, which is a response to the God who has spoken.*'
 - God has given us His Word with commands in it to obey and follow. What Samuel says Saul did here and you and I often do as well, is this...
 - **We think that our disobedience to the Word of God can somehow and some way be compensated for by different amounts of religious activity (saul's idea of sacrificing the animals to make up for his sin), is disgusting to God and foolish.**
 - **Let me give you some modern examples of how we may do this... By the way, I see these quite often...**
 - Well I sinned pretty bad this week, although I don't ever go to Church let me 'make it up to Him' by going this week.
 - Well I sinned pretty bad this week, I don't ever attend SS, but let me make it up to Him by going to SS this week.
 - Well, I sinned really bad, let me read by Bible to make up for it.
 - Well I sinned again this week and the consequences may be steep, let me actually tithe this week although I never do it normally.
 - I've sinned pretty bad this week, let me pray and spend time with God to make up for it.
 - **You and I are often just as guilty with Saul when it comes to trying to compensate for disobedience in our lives.**
 - There is only ONE thing that can truly compensate and clean the disobedience in your life.
 - The Blood of Jesus that was spilled on Calvary. That's it.

Conclusion:

- This evening, I believe we've been able to see and study that the results of our disobedience are sometimes gruesome and hard to hear.
 - *But, as I began this message tonight, how much better we will all be, if we can prevent the results of damage by consciously seeking not to consistently disobey God.*
- ***Tonight as we get ready to enter into a time of invitation and reflect, I want you to think back on the firecracker we all hold, called sin.***
 - *Sin can do so much damage. So much more than we realize when we have that tiny firecracker in our hand.*
 - I've asked my dad before, if you would've known that 7 acres were going to go up in flames in 20 minutes and that you'd be in trouble for a long, long time, would you have thrown the firecracker?
 - *Of course he says no...*
 - *My question to you tonight is this, why even throw it? Why even mess with it? Why not express true repentance and allow Christ to cleanse and change you tonight?*
 - Throughout the last two weeks, we've seen...
 - **Truth 1: Samuel is Made Aware. (V. 10-15)**
 - **Truth 2: Samuel is Righteously Angry. (V. 16-23)**

Sermon #29:

'The Results of Disobedience!' Part 2

1st Samuel 15:24-35

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see the results of Disobedience in this passage when we see that Samuel is made Aware, Samuel is righteously Angry, Saul has poor Actions, Samuel responds Accurately, and Samuel kills Agag.

Intro:

- ***If we're being honest, many of us enjoy our own disobedience against God in the moment. It is the results of our actions that we often lament.***
- ***In other words, most of the time we are sorry for the results of our actions and not necessarily the action itself.***
 - Every person who is a Christ follower here tonight should aspire to get to the point in their life where we can say what the Apostle Paul did in [Romans 7:19](#):
 - 'For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.'
 - ***While we should aspire to get to that place in our lives, if most of us are being honest tonight, we aren't there.***
 - Meaning, we think we don't like sin, and we try in our own power to turn against it, but without the power of the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to overcome the disobedience in our lives.
 - ***As we continue in this section of our study in 1st Samuel, we will see tonight that Saul did not like the results that came from his actions.***
 - We will see that his initial reaction to Samuel is that he even denies doing any wrong.
 - ***It's not until Samuel reveals the consequences of what he's done that he starts to backtrack. Admit that he was wrong, and give an apology.***
- ****Illustration****
 - Growing up, I was always told stories of mischief that my dad would get into.
 - ***One story in particular, he was in the 7th grade (I believe).***
 - He and his friends were in the woods in Greer, South Carolina.
 - They had gone down to the local convenience store and purchased firecrackers and small fireworks.
 - ***According to those that tell the story, this was all my dad's idea.***
 - I am told that the firecracker my dad threw at someone, landed on a kudzu tree, and the tree went up in flames almost instantly.
 - ***With it being in Greer, the entire forest was mostly Kudzu, and within minutes 7 acres in Greer SC were on fire.***

- *The boys, including my dad, ran through the creek back to their homes to act like nothing had happened.*
- *Of course, the truth came out, and it was revealed my Dad was the main instigator of the awful tragedy.*
 - My grandfather Bob, Dad's dad, was away on a business trip.
 - So, my grandmother Francis, had to do the initial disciplining.
- He got in huge trouble and was grounded for a very long time, along with the lifelong shame of knowing he had started such a fire.
 - *I give that illustration this evening to show that my Dad didn't think it was wrong on that afternoon to throw a firecracker at someone, until the tree turned into flames.*
- *You and I often hold firecrackers (sin) in our hands, without realizing the weight of it until the damage is already done.*
 - *My prayer tonight, is that we will see what the results of our sin can cause, to encourage us to put the firecrackers down, before it's too late.*

Read 1st Samuel 15:10-23

Question to Ask:

What are the Results of Saul's personal decision to actively engage in disobedience against God?

Truth 3: *Saul's Poor Actions. (V. 24-27)*

- 'Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD." 26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore.'
- *Based on the text so far this evening, I feel like Saul is a child who is being scolded by his mother or father, for a wrongdoing.*
 - He doesn't want to listen to Samuel speak on behalf of the Lord about all of his own bad personal actions.
- He wants them to go away and he feels that he can talk his way out.
 - *If he can just say the right things, maybe he can get Samuel to be quiet.*
 - When these doesn't happen, Saul, yet again, will show his true colors and the real temperature of his heart.
 - *If you want to find out what someone is really like inside, see how they respond when they don't get what they want. Especially Church people...*
- I believe there are 3 things to look at regarding Saul's Poor Actions...
- *The Request. (V. 24-25)*

- ‘Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. **25** Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD.”
- This is the first time that Saul seems to repent, and it will not be the last time...
- Saul’s word choice is also important to look at...
 - **‘I have sinned’**
 - Shows that he is admitting personal failure.
 - **‘I have transgressed’**
 - Shows that he has crossed the boundaries because he broke the Lord’s command.
- ***Saul is using the right words! But just like you and I, we sometimes use our words to manipulate God and others without meaning anything by them.***
 - True repentance is shown and revealed by our actions...
 - Starts with words yes, but must be followed by actions.
- ***Verse 25 shows that Saul wants a pardon, he is pleading hard, but we must ask the question based on his rage a few verses later, did he actually understand the dimensions of his disobedience? Do we?***
 - Saul at this point, is the ***EXACT opposite*** of what the Psalmist wrote in Psalms 51:4...
 - ‘Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.’ Psalms 51:4
- When we request and ask God to forgive us, are we truly ready to be changed by Him? Or do we just want the scolding to be over?
- ***The Response. (V. 26)***
 - **26** And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”
 - Samuel responds in the way Saul did not want him to, but also formally states what Saul has done.
 - ***Which Saul does not fully understand or comprehend.***
 - I think the first reason that Samuel refused to go with Saul, is because he most likely felt as if Saul had not truly repented, so in Samuel’s mind, why go with him if he is not actually and truly sorry?
- ***The Rage. (V. 27)***
 - ‘As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore.’
 - Samuel had spoken, he was going to exit and leave, and Saul’s rage (that we’ve seen in the text before and will certainly see again), comes out...

- *Like a coward, Saul waits until Samuel has his back turned to him, and grabs the corner of his robe... (the hebrew word for skirt is 'Kanap'*

קַנָּף *and literally means corner).*

- *According to Numbers 15:38-39, the Torah law required that tassels be present on this bottom of the robe to be reminded of all the Lord's commands.*
 - *So, when Saul tears this part of the robe, he symbolizes that he has broken the Lord's commands.*
 - This is an example of biblical imagery and symbolism.
- *When thinking and looking at Samuel's rage, I must ask you tonight...*
 - How do you respond to someone when they say something you don't like? Even if and when it is the truth?
 - While you may not be pulling the bottom portion of people's clothes, you may be showing rage in other ways.
- Next we see that Samuel responds accurately with what the Lord had already said and decided regarding Saul.

Truth 4: *Samuel Responds Accurately. (V. 28-31)*

- 'And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. **29** And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret." **30** Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God." **31** So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.'
- *Just as Saul tore Samuel's clothing out of anger, Samuel responded with some news that God had already done (torn and given are in the past tense), but had just not yet come to realization.*
 - When Samuel responds here, it is accurate with what had already occurred, Saul had probably just not yet realized the magnitude of it, due to his response in verse 30.
 - We need to look at **3** things regarding Samuel's Accurate Response to Saul's pleading...
- *Rejection is Final. (V. 28-29)*
 - 'And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.'"
 - This 'better' neighbor will be revealed in 1st Samuel 16. We will get a front row seat of his anointing next week.
 - *We know that this will be King David. A man after God's own heart, but still a man who was not without sin.*

- *When we pickup with the stories of Saul again, we will find that he is jealous of David, and wants to kill him as well.*
 - The aggression Saul had shown in verse 27, will just get even louder...
- *Earlier in Samuel we have learned that the Kingdom would no longer belong to Saul or his royal line.*
 - But now it's fatal, it's final, and it's fully understood by Saul.
 - *In Jonah, for example, God's Judgment was conditional on Ninevha's repentance...*
 - *But after COUNTLESS warnings and please from the Lord through the Priests, Saul would not stop. He couldn't let God increase, and himself decrease...*
- *Saul makes one last effort at trying to regain what he had already lost...*
- *Repentance out of Consequence, not Conviction. (V. 30)*
 - 'Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.'
 - This is the second time that Saul has said that he was wrong...
 - *Robert D. Bergen said 'Saul, desperate to retain his position of authority over the people, repeated and expanded his petition to Samuel. In an apparent effort to appease the prophet and regain his support, Saul confessed for the second time that he 'sinned' and yet still wanted to worship the Lord.'*
 - *I believe this is 'fake' repentance out of consequence and not conviction (which you and I are guilty of more than we realize). Why?*
 - *#1: Future Actions.*
 - Just a moment earlier, he was mad at what Samuel had said and tore the bottom of his robe.
 - *True repentance will result in true life change.*
 - Looking ahead at the second section of 1st Samuel, Saul will seek to Kill David, he will visit a witch for guidance, and this will all culminate to his personal suicide.
 - *#2: Outward Appearance.*
 - Yet again, Saul is worried about how he looks in front of people. He thinks if he can get Samuel to come back with him, that he would look good in front of the elders.
 - *People that truly haven't repented only care about the results of their actions when it affects them.*
 - *#3: Saul doesn't respect God.*
 - It's a small, but important detail, Saul says in verse 30, 'YOUR' God. Not our God, but YOUR God.

- *This isn't repentance. Saul isn't concerned about how God is grieving over HIS sin, he wants to go through the motions and get this over with.*
- **Really trying to Keep the Peace. (V. 31)**
 - 'So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.'
 - *Because Saul was able to finally convince Samuel to come back with him, in Saul's mind, he was able to keep an undamaged appearance.*
 - Eventually, the entire nation would know that the line of Saul was torn from him due to his actions.
 - **But we must ask and answer the question, why did Samuel finally agree to go to the temple and let Saul worship in front of others?**
 - I believe that Samuel changes his mind as a man (we all are susceptible to changing our minds), to keep temporary order and peace until a new King is appointed.
 - *Samuel is no doubt tired. Tired of the people's attitude, Saul's antics, and Saul's anger.*
 - To keep the peace, and to keep everyone temporarily happy, he does this. But he may have also wanted to see God's command fulfilled, with the killing of all the amalekites, including Agag...

Truth 5: Samuel Kills Agag. (V. 32-35)

- 'Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully.[d] Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.'
- **While MUCH has occurred in our text tonight, there is still one major piece of business that needs to be taken care of.**
 - *The task that Saul was directed by God to do, is going to be finished by Samuel.*
 - John Woodhouse describes Samuel's actions as **'Taking over the royal prerogative'**.
- In leading Israel, Samuel really has gone through a lot of pain.
 - *The people came to him and demanded a King, because they no longer wanted God as their King. They wanted to be like the other nations.*
 - And here, Saul was partially obedient, so Samuel has to finish what Saul was supposed to do all along. Obey God Fully and kill king Agag.
 - As we wind down tonight's message, there are **3** things to point out concerning the killing of King Agag...
- **Agag Hopes he has Escaped Death. (V. 32)**

- ‘Then Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully.[d] Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”
- **Verse 32 in the Hebrew text can be muddy and somewhat unclear, so let’s dive into to dig out the meaning.**
 - ***Word Study***
 - The word ‘Cheerful’ comes from the Hebrew word **‘Ma’adannah’**
מֵעֲדָנָה *Which can mean, trembling, in fear, cheerfully or influenced.*
- I personally believe ‘influenced’ and or ‘cheerful’ is the best way to translate this word based on the context of what is going on with Agag here.
 - **From Agag’s perspective, Saul had been stepped to the side, and this old priest walks in and grabs a sword.**
 - **To Agag, he probably thought this was good news!**
 - **The big, strong, handsome man who had killed all his people is off to the side.**
 - Now this old feeble man walks in who was a priest.
 - **I believe Agag was ‘influenced’ to believe that he could be cheerful that he had adverted death.**
- Agag says to Samuel ***‘Surely the bitterness of death is past’***
 - This phrase is looked at as a resignation of his fate, or, supporting my belief on the Hebrew word **‘Ma’adannah’**, a last second plea to not be killed.
 - **Based on Samuel’s verbal response, I tend to agree with the latter...**
- **Agag is Murdered by an Old Man. (V. 33)**
 - ‘And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.’
 - As I’ve stated before in our study of 1st Samuel, the Amalekites were a ruthless bunch.
 - **They killed men, women, and children ruthlessly, and now Samuel is essentially saying to him ‘Why would I spare you when my God desired for you to get a taste of your own medicine?’**
 - **God’s judgment on the Amalekites, and their leader, Agag.**
 - By the way, what Samuel says in the Hebrew text actually rhymes in Hebrew.
 - **Just before Agag dies, Samuel is reminding him the OT Biblical Truth that bloodshed begets bloodshed.**
 - “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.’ Genesis 9:6

- ***Word Study***
 - What's interesting here is that the word 'hacked' is not found in the Hebrew text.
 - **The word 'pieces' in English comes from the Hebrew word 'Shawsaf'**
שׂוֹשֵׁף which literally means to cut into tiny pieces.
 - This word only occurs one time in the Hebrew OT, but it's Hebrew Root Word (Shaw-aw) is often used in regards to sacrificing animals to the Lord.
 - **The reason Samuel doesn't sacrifice animals here, Agag is the sacrifice.**
- Agag is killed by an old man.
- **All Parties go home. (V. 34-35)**
 - 'Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.
35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.'
- **Saul and Samuel both go to their own hometowns.**
 - Briefly, we get a break from Saul as next Wednesday night we get to look at the anointing of King David.
- **While Saul would initiate contact with Samuel again (1st Samuel 19:23-24), Samuel would no longer initiate or desire any contact with Saul again.**
 - I think what we see in Samuel here, might be what God thinks when He deals with us.
 - **God has given us a way to be saved, He sent His Son, and He's given us His Word for us to follow and live for Him.**
- Yet what do we do?
 - **We continue to disobey Him.**
- 'And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul King over Israel'
 - **I believe the word regretted is a poor translation, as it was back in verse 11.**
- **The word regretted that is in regard to God's own personal regret, occurs twice in this passage (verse 11 and verse 35).**
 - **It comes from a Hebrew word (נָחַם nāḥam) that occurs 108 times in the OT, and literally means to grieve.**
- **I believe that God is deeply saddened and grieving over Saul's sin. And Saul's decision to do his own thing, instead of obeying God.**
 - Just as Saul grieved the heart of God, you and I do the same thing...

Conclusion:

- This evening, I believe we've been able to see and study that the results of our disobedience are sometimes gruesome and hard to hear.
 - *But, as I began this message tonight, how much better we will all be, if we can prevent the results of damage by consciously seeking not to consistently disobey God.*
- ***Tonight as we get ready to enter into a time of invitation and reflect, I want you to think back on the firecracker we all hold, called sin.***
 - *Sin can do so much damage. So much more than we realize when we have that tiny firecracker in our hand.*
 - I've asked my dad before, if you would've known that 7 acres were going to go up in flames in 20 minutes and that you'd be in trouble for a long, long time, would you have thrown the firecracker?
 - *Of course he says no...*
 - *My question to you tonight is this, why even throw it? Why even mess with it? Why not express true repentance and allow Christ to cleanse and change you tonight?*
 - Throughout the last two weeks, we've seen...
 - **Truth 1: *Samuel is Made Aware. (V. 10-15)***
 - **Truth 2: *Samuel is Righteously Angry. (V. 16-23)***
 - **Truth 3: *Saul's Poor Actions. (V. 24-27)***
 - **Truth 4: *Samuel Responds Accurately. (V. 28-31)***
 - **Truth 5: *Samuel Kills Agag. (V. 32-35)***