


First Baptist Church
Canton
Gather, Grow, Go.

**'HONING IN ON THE
HEART!'**



**A VERSE-BY-VERSE SERIES ON THE BOOK OF
1ST SAMUEL
DURING WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICES IN 2024**

Honing in on the Heart!' Sermon Series

Sermon #21:

'Last Words of an Exceptional Leader!'

Wednesday, July 24th, 2024

Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart:

- Last week, we were able to scratch the service on what Samuel shared with the nation of Israel at Gilgal.
 - *Last week we saw that Samuel discussed his personal character and accomplishments in verses 1-5 of 1st Samuel 12. I preached a message entitled: 'Integrity is Invaluable!'*
 - I asked the question: *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)**
 - **Attribute #2: Longevity. (V. 2)**
 - **Attribute #3: Blamelessness. (V. 3)**

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

- Based on last week's sermon, do you have and exhibit the attributes of integrity that we looked at from Samuel in your own personal life?

'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
 - ***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 where 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 Habits 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 Heathy ways.