


First Baptist Church
Columbus
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 #20:

'Integrity is Invaluable!'

Wednesday, July 17th, 2024

Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart:

- Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart!' we looked at 1st Samuel 11:1-15, with a sermon entitled, ***'How to Properly Handle Praise!'***
 - I asked the question: ***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)***
 - **Point 2: *Preparation Anchors All. (V. 5-11)***
 - **Point 3: *Praise Awaits. (V. 12-15)***

- Based on last Wednesday's sermon, how are you dealing with the problems that have been placed in your path?
- How are you preparing for the ministry assignments that God has given you right here and now?
- How are you handling praise when it comes your way from others?

'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 utmost 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 mighty.

- 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 Hophni and Phineas (Eli's sons), in 1st Samuel 2.
 - ***Now, All of Israel was gathering for the last time with Samuel has 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)***