


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 #19:

'How to Properly Handle Praise!'

Wednesday, July 7th, 2024

Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart:

- It's been a very long time since we've been in our study in 1st Samuel.
 - *Due to me being at the convention, VBS, vacations, and July 4th last week, we haven't been in 1st Samuel since Wednesday June 5th.*
- The last time we were in 'Honing in on the Heart!' we looked at 1st Samuel 10:17-27 with a sermon entitled ***'The Public Proclamation!'***
 - I asked the question: *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)
- **Point 2: *The Remarkable Process.*** (V. 20-24)
- **Point 3: *The Rights Presented.*** (V. 25-27)

- Based on that message is the Lord the King of your heart?

'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 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 Abraham'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 one's 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?*