

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 7TH-8TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

FAITHFUL (1 SAMUEL 12:1-15) A NEW ERA

After Saul is anointed king over Israel, Samuel gives a farewell speech to the people as he transitions from judge to prophet only. He's led the people from a young man to old age. His time is coming to an end.

- Our time on this earth is short. **How we use our time is of utmost importance.**

VINDICATION

Samuel asks the people to name any offense he's committed against them. Has he stolen anything, mistreated anyone, or been bribed? He even asks them to call the Lord as a witness. The people cannot accuse Samuel of any wrongdoing. He has been faithful.

- **Integrity is proven over time.**

GOD HAS BEEN FAITHFUL, TOO

Next, Samuel confronts the people with the faithfulness of God compared to their unfaithfulness. The exodus is the event that demonstrates God's love for His people. He delivered them from slavery in Egypt to freedom in Israel. God was faithful, but the people were not.

- **Do we reflect on God's goodness to us?**

THE CYCLE OF SIN

Samuel briefly summarizes the period of the Judges. Israel would walk with God. They would then be seduced into following other gods, which were worthless and powerless.

- We think the Israelites were foolish for following idols made by humans, **but our culture seeks anything but God.**
- God would hand them over to other nations. The people would cry out in repentance for deliverance, and God would raise up judges to lead them. Then, they would walk with God as long as the judge lived.
- **In times of abundance, people are more likely to abandon God.**

"GIVE US A KING"

When Nahash, the Ammonite king, threatened them, Israel chose a human king over their true King. God gave them what they wanted, which isn't always a good thing.

- **We need the Holy Spirit working through the Word to keep us from pursuing our sinful desires.**

FULL OF MERCY

We see God's sovereignty as He placed Saul over them. Even though the people chose a human king, God made a way for them to prosper. Both the king and the people were to fear God, worship Him only, and obey Him.

- **God has designed this world in a way that His principles always work for us.**

WARNING

Samuel warns the king and the people that failure to obey the Lord will result in God working against them, not for them.

- God's **discipline (correction)** and the **consequences of our sin** are all loving acts from Him to bring us to **repentance** (Hebrews 12:3-11).

WANDERING (1 SAMUEL 12:16-25)

POWERFUL PRAYER

Samuel reminds the people of God's power at work in and through him as he calls on the Lord to bring a thunderstorm at a time when thunderstorms normally wouldn't happen—at the fall harvest.

- **We need reminders that God is God and we are not.**

HUMBLED

The people are rightly humbled and cry out in repentance, asking Samuel to pray for them so God will not continue judging them.

- When confronted with our sin, we can either **run to God in repentance** or **run from God in rebellion**. If we truly know God, we know He is **gracious** and **merciful**.

PRONE TO WANDER

Even though Israel was easily distracted from God, God was faithful to them. God wanted the people to be blessed, as did Samuel. But it was up to the people to live wholeheartedly for God.

- The Bible exposes our wandering hearts but also gives us the cure. We **pray, worship God, read and obey the Word.**

FOOLISH (1 SAMUEL 13:1-12)

CHALLENGES OF BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

13:1 can be challenging to interpreters. Some ancient texts say Saul was one and ruled two years. Some say he was 40, some say 30. Because of Jonathan's age to lead an army, Saul

was probably older than 30. Vs. one could mean "one year later" from Saul's inauguration and his legitimacy as king lasted two years.

THE PHILISTINE PROBLEM

The Philistines continue to be a problem for Israel. By this time, Saul has a standing army of 3,000 men between himself and his son Jonathan. Jonathan wins a skirmish that provokes the Philistines to bring their full army against Israel. Saul blows the ram's horn to call all Israel into a battle that's certain to occur.

IMPATIENCE

The Israelite men begin to lose heart when they see the size of the Philistine army. Saul had been instructed to wait for Samuel before going to battle, but when Samuel doesn't show up on time, Saul acts foolishly.

- **There is much God can teach us during the "in-between" time if we are patient. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?"**

Circumstances cause Saul to disobey God and Samuel and offer an offering that is the priest's responsibility. When confronted by Sam, Saul offers excuses rather than repentance, which reveals his heart.

- **We will get bumped by the world. What will spill out?**

CONSEQUENCES (1 SAMUEL 13:13-22)

NOT YOUR WILL, BUT MY WILL

Saul was more concerned about his position and power than he was about the Lord and His Word. In ch. 12, Samuel called Israel and the king to obedience to God's Word. Saul feared failure in the eyes of man more than faithfulness to God's Word.

- **Saul's heart desired wrong pursuits.**

LOST KINGDOM

Before Saul lost his kingdom, he lost his heart for God. The heart always goes first, then actions follow. While God is patient, there comes a point when God acts in righteousness and judgment for His glory.

- **Whatever is sown in the heart will be reaped whether good or evil** (Galatians 6:7-8).

HOPE

In the midst of the foolishness of Saul, there is hope that God has found a man after His own heart (spoiler alert: it's David).

- We are like Saul with wandering hearts. But God the Son took on flesh and lived perfectly obedient to His Father so that we could have His righteousness given to us.

LOSSES MOUNT UP

Saul not only lost his kingdom, he lost his influence. His army goes from 3,000 to 600 men. Not only that, the nation pays an economic and military price for Saul's sin. Because the leader's heart was far from God, the people suffered the consequences.

- **Everyone of us influences someone.**

HOW'S OUR HEART?

- Does our use of time reflect that God and His Word are our priority?
- Is there enough evidence that demonstrates we walk with integrity?
- Are crises required for us to take our walk with God seriously?
- **Does God really satisfy our hearts?**

THE "IN-BETWEEN" TIME

- What lessons is God teaching you while you wait for Him to act?
- What do we allow to influence us when it seems God is silent?
- **Have we remembered God's faithfulness in the past so we have the fuel to trust Him in the present and in our future?**

GUARD OUR HEARTS

- **We are never too far gone that we can't turn from our ways back to God.**
- We can **humble** ourselves, **repent**, and **cry out** for God's help through Jesus.
- We can recommit to **prayer, reading the Word, obeying the Word, worship, and community.**