

1 Samuel 2-3

Good evening church, it is wonderful to be here with you on this beautiful Spring evening.

Tonight we are going to continue our Survey of the Scriptures, as we are making our way through the Old Testament.

We started the Book of 1 Samuel last week, and we will be in chapters 2-3 tonight.

Let us pray before we continue in our study.

Now, the unknown writer of this Book has set out to record the history of the transition period between the Era of Judges and the Kingdom of Israel.

The record picks up in the time of the Judges, where we saw last week, as bad as that time period was, God was still working and moving behind the scenes.

The book opens with the story of Elkanah and his dysfunctional family.

He had two wives, one whom he loved, Hannah, who was also barren.

His other child bearing wife was Peninnah, who spent her time gloating and provoking Hannah to shame.

The rivalry was great, and the pain went deep.

We saw, in the midst of this perverted and crooked society, that Elkanah was actually a devout Jew, who loved and honored his God.

He would take his family up to Shiloh yearly to the tabernacle and he would bring his sacrifice and offering before the Lord.

His wounded and deeply troubled wife Hannah, would use this time as an opportunity to go before the Lord in prayer, where she would bare her heart out.

This particular year, Hannah prayed, that if God grant her request, to be a mother, she would give the child back to Him.

We saw also this year, the Priest Eli, was standing outside the doorpost of the tabernacle, and he saw the poor woman praying.

He thought she was drunk, but she clarified she was had a sorrowful spirit, and was pouring her soul out before the Lord.

And the priest, who we will see tonight is a spiritually impoverished man and a coward, yet here he had enough sense to minister to this woman.

It was rare in Israel to see someone seeking the Lord, and Eli blesses her, and assured her God had heard her petition.

And Hannah left the tabernacle that year in faith, that God had heard her request.

She and Elkanah came together, and she conceived and bore a son, whom she named Samuel, which means “God Heard.”

Hannah waited until the boy was weaned which would be around three years old in this time and culture.

And she fulfilled her promise to the Lord, she brought the boy back to the tabernacle to surrender him to the service of the Lord.

And as we will see tonight, this was a huge step of faith on Hannah's part, and a great sacrifice.

The worship and the spiritual leaders were corrupt and debased.

Yet, Hannah trusted her God, and that her prayers would protect her son in the midst of the confused religion of the day.

Now, you would think Hannah, after giving such a costly sacrifice to the Lord, after leaving her firstborn there at the tabernacle, she would enter into a time of mourning, and grief.

But not so, she has found, as many people of faith still do today, the greater the sacrifice to the Lord, the Greater the Joy.

The world has marveled over the centuries at how true Saints of God can sacrifice so much, yet the sacrifice brings them into a place of singing and joyful worship.

Even, think of Jesus right before He offered Himself up on the cross, we see in **Matt 26:30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**

Or consider Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail after being beaten and humiliated for the cause of Christ,

Acts 16:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them

David wrote many songs and praises in the midst of trying and difficult circumstances.

Also, the many Christian martyrs over the centuries who have sung their way through persecution.

A believer's joy is much deeper than the hard times and even sacrifices we make for the cause of Christ.

Often through tremendous difficulties, we come to the greatest revelations of our God.

Hannah praises the Lord, instead of grieving her loss.

Her song has very similar themes to that of Mary in Luke 1:46-55.

Let's look at Hannah's song now in chapter 2...

Hannah's Prayer(cf. Luke 1:46-55)

2:1 And Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the Lord; My horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

2 "No one is holy like the Lord, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

3 "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the Lord is the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed.

We see Hannah's praise comes from her understanding of who God is.

Her heart can rejoice in the Lord.

Her horn, speaks of strength, something we hold onto.

Think of a horse's saddle, and the horn that is in the very front.

She says her strength is exalted in the Lord.

God has given her a son, she is victorious over those who have ridiculed her.

God has given her salvation in the midst of crisis.

This may also have a broader understanding, that her son, will be part of God's plan of deliverance for her people.

In verse 2, she bursts forth in praise for as she focuses on the holiness and glory of God.

There was none like Him.

You see, we all can have this hope as well, no matter the trial and circumstance you find yourself in tonight, you can trust that God is above it all, and He is a Rock, the Rock that we can stand upon.

He is stable, strong and steadfast and He never changes.

He is dependable and unfailing.

Mal 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I do not change;

The same Rock Hannah found strength in can be your Rock as well.

Hannah points out because of Who God is, man cannot be proud or arrogant.

God knows the hidden things in man's heart, He has all knowledge and understanding, and He must be approached in humility.

God heard Hannah's rival, and Peninnah will be weighed justly and right.

Our God is a fair Judge who judges with true equity and all fairness.

Now in verses 4-8 Hannah expands her prayer beyond just how Yahweh delivered her, and she focuses on how He rules the world.

4 "The bows of the mighty men are broken, And those who stumbled are girded with strength. 5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, And she who has many children has become feeble.

6 "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. 7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. 8 He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash

heap, To set them among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory.

"For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, And He has set the world upon them.

What her God has done for her specifically, is simply a characteristic of who God is and how He works.

He takes this world's ways and thinking and completely reverses them.

He uses the weak to overcome the strong, He takes those who have known hunger and feeds them and lifts them up.

Hannah says she is not the only Barren woman God has looked upon, it is His nature to do so.

In verse 6, God is Lord over life and death, He exalts the poor, and lowers the rich.

He even lifts the beggar and sets them among princes.

And consistently throughout the scriptures He uses those who this world would cast off and count out.

God has not changed today, and for those of us here who this world looks down upon, God looks upon you and sees someone who can bring His Name Glory.

It is the humble God lifts up, it seems so many today have forgotten how God works in this world of His.

1 Cor. 1:27-29

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Are you a fool as far as the world is concerned tonight, are you weak tonight, are you considered base and insignificant, maybe even despised and rejected by this world?

God has chosen those who are such to bring His Name glory.

Now, we are building up in Samuel to Israel's greatest king, David, who was the youngest, not even thought of any significance by his own father, and was left out with the sheep when the prophet came looking for a king.

After David is anointed, he will be an outcast and vagabond, and do you know who gathered to the anointed king David at first.

1 Sam 22:2

And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

It was the outcast of Israel that gathered to him, and those outcasts are who God will use, in their loyalty to become David's mighty men when he finally ascends to the throne.

This is how God works. And understand we have many outcasts in our church, many who do not fit into the status quo of the Christian culture, we may not seem like much to those looking in on the ministry.

But in God's economy we are just the people He sees, and uses to bring His Name Glory.

You are something special to Him. Understand as Hannah did, it is not the mighty, full, rich, or princes God works through, it is the no bodies.

God has not changed in our day, He is the same today as He was yesterday, and He will be the same tomorrow as well.

She ends this section saying it is God who established this world.

His ways and system cannot be moved, and everything that happens on our planet is under His watchful eye.

She ends her prayer in verses 9-10 now...

9 He will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

"For by strength no man shall prevail. 10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; From

heaven He will thunder against them. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed."

Here Hannah presents a Grand Finale to her prayer that has an impacting truth beyond even the nation of Israel.

Hannah is expecting God to Judge all the earth and the wicked in it.

He will separate the saints from the aints, and notice the end of verse 10, He will do this through His King and Anointed One.

Now, there is no king in Israel when Hannah sang this, this is prophetic.

Now, God told Abraham and Sarah **Gen 17:6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.**

And even the Law of Moses gave provisions for a future king, Deuteronomy 17:14-20 gives the parameters for a future king.

But this is future for Hannah, she knows God's Word spoke to a time when a king will come to Israel.

God knows one day His people will reject Him as their King and ask for a man to rule over them.

God was prepared to do this, and His chosen king, David fulfills Hannah's prophecy here in many aspects.

But the fuller understanding and fulfillment will be in Jesus Christ, David's decedent.

Jesus is the Anointed One, or the Messiah that this world will know as Judge of all the earth.

The Angel announced this to Mary in **Luke 1:32-33**

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Prophecy of Hannah.

So a powerful, Spirit led prayer by this godly woman who gave up much for the Lord.

And we will see later, God will reward her for her sacrifice.

Please know there is nothing you can give to the Lord, that He cannot restore many times over to you.

I don't know what you might be holding onto tonight, that you just can't let go of, but learn through Hannah that there is joy in giving to the Lord, and it usually does not go unnoticed.

You will find God will be no man's debtor, He will be always out give the giver.

So we read in verse 11,

11 Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest.

And we will now shift from this godly couple, and as I mentioned last week, the writer will cut back and forth and contrast between God's movement and the wickedness of the day.

Verse 12 tells us...

The Wicked Sons of Eli

12 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."

16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force."

17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

It is interesting that Hannah's prayer alluded to the prideful, arrogant, mighty, and wicked, and we see them now, but in a place that we least expect it, in the priesthood of Israel!

The worship at Shiloh was a mockery.

We see when a man would bring his peace offering and head to the meal after the sacrifice, that he would enjoy with his family.

The priest would send his servant with a three pronged fleshhook, and he would plunge into the worshippers pot and whatever that fork grabbed they would cart it away to the gluttonous priests.

God's Law already allotted plenty of provision for the priests in Leviticus 7:28-36.

But these carnal priests demanded more.

Remember in Leviticus 3, the fat of the offerings was to be offered to the Lord, but these men had a taste for the Holy portion, they demanded fresh uncut portions for themselves.

If the worshiper tried to remind the priests what was Yahweh's, and try to make his way to burn the fat off on the altar, the priest's gangster servant would threaten force upon the worshipper.

These sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas had contempt for the familiar religion they were raised among.

They were so evil, that men abhorred worshipping the Lord with their offerings.

These men were scoundrels through and through, they were the first of a long line of religious men who would use God as a means to selfish gain and manipulation.

Verse 12 explains the premise for it all, they did not know the Lord.

And nothing today has changed, so many so called religious leaders ascend to the pulpits because of their charisma and wit.

They are great orators, they are intellects, or they wonderful motivational speakers.

And many are embraced and brought to the forefront who have no relationship with the Lord.

They are charlatans and phonies, who carry on the fleshhook ministry of Hophni and Phinehas.

You know, when I was young in the my walk with the Lord, I remember sitting in church on a Wednesday Night hearing pastor Ray teach this portion of scripture.

And by then, I had known that God was calling me into the ministry.

And this picture never left my heart and mind.

I despise these two men, and this ugly scene never left me, now even well into ministry.

Today, I won't even take a stamp from our secretary Ashley without paying for it.

And you know the first thing I think of when the thought crosses my mind, it is only a few cents, no big deal.

Hophni and Phinehas, I never want to be a fleshhook pastor, taking more than what is allotted to me.

There are many pastors and ministries today that we see in the news, who were trying to take more than what was allotted to them.

Gal 6:7-10 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

We are also told in **1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

God will not be mocked.

I remember being a young kid even, and back when I was in grade school, I would come home from school.

And in Phelan we only had about 3 channels that came in clearly on the TV, and one of those channels was channel 64, a local high desert channel.

And every afternoon, they would have this fleshhook pastor on, and even as a child I knew that man was a fraud, every day he was asking people for money.

I found out today, he was raking in \$80 million a year off his charades.

They investigated the guy, and found the prayer cards in the trash, and the money taken out of the envelopes.

And he was exposed, God is not mocked.

I would watch him as entertainment, but even as a kid, I understood he was using people's longing to know God and truth, and using it for his own advantage.

That is a scary place to tread on.

Now, back to our reading, the writer will now shift back to God's man...

Samuel's Childhood Ministry

18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The Lord give you descendants from

this woman for the loan that was given to the Lord." Then they would go to their own home.

21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

Samuel even as a child is found serving before the Lord.

We see the contrast between him and Eli's son.

It really seems like Eli spoke into young Samuel's life.

Maybe he saw Samuel as a do over, because he got things so wrong with his own kids.

And here we see Samuel's faithful parents each year returning, and Hannah made him a yearly robe as the boy grew each year.

In the Bible, new garments spoke to a new beginning in life...

And each year Samuel was being made new with a garment.

I know, my Jessica finds so much joy in dressing her boy.

My son is on this thing where he only likes to where basketball shorts, and they have to have pockets for all of his stuff.

It is very important to him, and Jess is not too fond of his basketball shorts.

But this Sunday, she managed to convince him to wear the Easter outfit she got him for church.

And it was such a joy for Jess to dress him for church.

I can understand Hannah's excitement to dress Samuel for church as she happily brought him a new robe each year.

The priest Eli was so impressed with this family and their devotion to the Lord, that he would bless them as they came to visit, and they would go their way.

And we are told in verse 21, that God did bless her according to Eli's blessing.

She had five more children. Like I said, God will be no man's debtor, they gave one child to the Lord, and He gave them 5 more.

You cannot out give God, I hope you have learned that in your Christian walk, the more open handed you are, the more you open your life to bless others and the Lord, the more you are opening your life to be blessed by God.

**Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;**

**10 So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.**

And Proverbs 11:25

25 The generous soul will be made rich,

And he who waters will also be watered himself.

Jesus even said **Luke 6:38**

38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

He said this in light of forgiveness, but it is a principle that runs through every part of our Christian faith.

You cannot out give our God...

This section ends with Samuel growing before the Lord

So, we will now cut back to the corruption at the tabernacle, we will go from faithful parenting to lousy parenting...

I want to point out here, that Elkanah and Hannah had to let their son go into a wicked environment, and trust that God would keep him in the midst of perversity and corruption.

She surely prayed for Samuel without ceasing.

However, we see Eli's sons, represent another kind of child, grown up around the church, perhaps even homeschooled in the name of protecting them, they were sheltered and very familiar with religion.

Understand I know we like to protect our children from the world, and we in the church can have a tendency to shelter them too much that their faith is never tested.

When they are old enough to make their own decisions, they go out from the good religion they were taught with such a veracity that some of the things they do make even the heathen blush.

Being in youth ministry for almost a decade, I will be honest, the most debased, sickest, the most vial things I have seen by a long shot were from the sheltered homeschooled kids, who were very familiar with church life.

The parents were really good at keeping the picture of their family well, even if they were confronted on issues, they did not want to take care of it, because it would taint that religious image.

iPhone Example

We in the church have a tendency to want to raise these cookie cutter Christian kids, they have to look a certain way, talk a certain way, and sometimes the familiarity to churchy things does more damage than good.

It is important to let their faith be tested to be exposed to trials that will draw them into a relationship with God.

They must be allowed to feel the weight and consequences of their choices.

Eli's church boys turned out vial and filthy, all the while performing in a priestly office.

Samuel's parents trusted him to the Lord, and this young man's faith was far from sheltered and yet through his testing and trials, he is the one who will eventually hear the Lord in a time when God's Word was rare.

There is a huge contrast in the outcome of each of these parents, and the model of parenting they present.

Eli's monstrous kids could not be stopped...

Prophecy Against Eli's Household

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord's people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them.

So it is common knowledge his sons are perverts as they turned the tabernacle of God into a brothel.

Sin abounded in the place where confession of sin was supposed to take place.

Eli, too late in his lackadaisical parenting, tries to plead with them, but they would not listen to him.

They had already seared their own consciousness too far, they were destined for God's judgment.

God was going to clean house, and begin a spiritual revival with Samuel.

And again, it is a miracle, that with all the spiritual decadence happening in Shiloh, that we see Samuel in such a godly way.

His young faith was being tested and purified through all the evils that abounded all around him.

26 And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the Lord and men.

Now next we have a nameless prophet come on the scene and bring a Word from God.

27 Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 30 Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would

walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33 But any of your men whom I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. 35 Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. 36 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.'"

The man of God reminded Eli of his office of priest was a gift from God.

It was the decedents of Aaron would have this honor from generation to generation.

And it was privilege for Eli that he took for granted.

Then the messenger accused Eli of putting his sons before the Lord.

The family made themselves fat with the offerings of the Lord.

His failure to deal with the sin in his midst made him guilty of the sin himself.

His rebuke lacked any kind of correcting measures or discipline.

When the people came to him with gripes about his son's misconduct, he is found to be too cowardly to do anything.

People, understand your children can become your gods in this life.

So many today, put God and their devotion to Him, second to their kids, they love their kids more than they do their God.

And this type of parenting has huge consequences as well.

When you put your child's sports, schooling, and social engagements before their commitment to God, the balance then goes too far the other direction.

You see when they get older, they will find any old reason to not have a relationship with the Lord.

"Mom always put soccer practice as priority over youth group, or baseball season meant no Sunday church, because of games."

And they then understand God fits behind their schedule.

Eli loved his kids more than truth and dedication to God, and many today do this as well.

These spoiled sons of Eli walked all over their father's weak demeanor, and this family's right to the high priesthood will pass to another of Aaron's sons.

We will see over the course of events, Eli's lineage will be put down, and Zadok's family will be exalted.

This will be ultimately fulfilled when Solomon becomes king, and he removes Eli's great grandson Abiathar and Solomon will appoint Zadok to be high priest.

The prophet gives Eli a sure sign that all of this will take place, he tells him that both of his wicked sons will be killed in one day.

Now, the writer will shift back to God's behind the scenes working, and Samuel will now learn to hear God's Voice in a time where the Word was mostly silent.

Samuel's First Prophecy

3:1 Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation. 2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, 3 and before the lamp of God went out

in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, 4 that the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down.

6 Then the Lord called yet again, "Samuel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.)

8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me."

Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

We see here the boy Samuel, according to Josephus he was 12 years old, and as he was laying sleeping one night in the tabernacle, God's voice began to call him.

Now we are told the Word of the Lord was rare in those days.

And perhaps this is why Samuel is so confused here.

We see Eli is in the tabernacle as well.

As Yahweh breaks His silence the boy who is serving Eli in the ministry of the tabernacle here, the boy runs to Eli for his instructions.

We see this pattern 3 times, and we wonder if Samuel will ever hear the Lord's voice.

Understand Samuel has no encounters with God up to this point.

He served the Lord faithfully, but was in unknown territory as it came to hearing the Lord.

After the third attempt to get Samuel's attention, the old priest realizes that it was God speaking to the boy.

And Eli informs Samuel on how to respond.

So the preteen servant obeys his master Eli, and the message will be a difficult one to digest for sure.

10 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

11 Then the Lord said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And therefore I have sworn

to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

Now, we see something very attractive about Samuel's character here, he is a humble, obedient boy.

He goes back to his bed, and the Lord speaks again.

This time he speaks Samuel's name twice, and not only this but the Lord came and stood by him.

This was not a dream or vision, but a manifestation of the Lord.

And in verse 10, Samuel tells the Lord to speak, he has his ear open.

Understand, our ears must be open if God's Word is ever going to speak to us.

Samuel declares, "Speak for your servant hears."

I imagine this is a great template for anyone coming to hear God's Word taught.

To come humbly as a servant, and having a listening heart with a longing to obey.

Samuel hears God's Word, which is a judgment pronounced upon his master Eli.

It is a difficult message for sure.

And the Word of God so often is a confrontation to our worldly living, and it has a tendency to make us uncomfortable.

I read to you last week, that half of the pastors today are afraid to speak the absolute truths found in God's Word, they refuse to talk about controversial subjects, and the light of God's Word today is dimming as it was in Samuel's day.

But we will see, culture, feelings, emotions, or popularity do not dictate truth.

People even claim it is because of love they do not speak God's Word to people in fear of offense.

Well, we will see next, the messenger of God is bound by the message of God's Word, we cannot make excuses for it, apologize for it, we have to preach it in all confidence.

The same confidence a surgeon has.

How ridiculous would it be, if you had a brain tumor, and your surgeon came to you, and said, "you know Fred, I want to stay positive today, I don't want to talk about what is wrong with you, I want to talk about what is right."

"Your comfort is all that matters to me, sure there may be something wrong with you, but why focus on that, who am I to judge."

And they just 'him haw' around the truth for sake of your feelings.

That is how much of the preaching is today.

The surgeon must speak with precision and absolutes.

And so must God's messenger if he is going to have a lasting impact.

Sin is the issue, yet pastors dance around it, because they are afraid of the culture.

You know, "I don't want to judge your lifestyle, I want everyone to come to my church."

And pastors today are okay with their people sitting comfortably in their sin, because as long as their feelings are not hurt, and people are accepted, they are happy.

But sin is the tumor they are afraid to talk about, people need a remedy for their sin today, and the only way for the people to receive this remedy is by accepting the fact they have cancerous sin spreading throughout their heart and soul.

Salvation can only be found in Christ alone, and that will hurt people's feelings, but we are bound to the truth of the message.

Look at Samuel here after hearing God's Voice for the first time.

15 So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision.

Again, humble, he did not go and wake Eli up, and excitedly tell him the Word.

He did not care that promotion was coming for himself, he did not have any inkling of ambition.

He kept it to himself, and went back to bed, and woke up and served the judged priest.

He was afraid to speak the Word to a man he respected.

But he will see next, the Word of the Lord is the highest authority, and Eli will demand him to share it.

16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!"

He answered, "Here I am."

17 And he said, "What is the word that the Lord spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18 Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

I find Eli fascinating here.

He receives the judgement, which was validated by the earlier man of God.

But it is almost as though he is relieved.

He understands he blew it with his sons, but he did not blow it raising up Samuel.

We will see this weak man, Eli, really loves the nation of Israel.

Perhaps as he looked to his boys the outlook seemed so bleak for his beloved nation.

But at the profound revelation, that God is not done working in Israel, and He is speaking again, and working through Samuel, it is almost like Eli finds rest in all of this.

Everything will be okay, “It is the Lord, Let Him do what seems good.”

God would bring about spiritual revival with Samuel and he will be judge, priest, and prophet and the light of the truth of God’s Word would continue to burn bright.

All the old man could do was wait now... No pleading, no trying to make a name for himself, he rests even in the difficult Word of God.

Eli should be commended for his willingness to graciously lay down the mantle of leadership to his young apprentice.

Who we read about next...

19 So 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 had been established as a prophet of the Lord. 21 Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

For a second time we are told Samuel grew, and this time “the Lord was with him” is added.

God’s blessing is upon his ministry, and we read that he let none of his words fall to the ground.

It is so important that the ears that are hearing the Word of God taught are receiving it.

The Word must fall on Good soil.

Every Sunday, our Elder John and I pray in my office that the Word would go out in power from the pulpit, but we also pray for every ear to hear the Word, that nothing would fall to the ground and be lost.

The ministry of the Word has a going forth and a receiving aspect to it.

Samuel’s Word’s did not fall to the ground.

And He was established and over time respected as a prophet of God.

Israel was about to experience a new beginning and God was revealing Himself again.

Notice it was by the Word of the Lord.

The Bible Commentator Dale Ralph Davis says in his book on 1 Samuel, “... it is a sign of God’s Grace when God’s Word has free course among God’s people.”

He says... “that is the teaching of 1 Samuel 3. If contemporary believers have a church where social activities, committee meetings, and nifty programs

have not eclipsed the place of the Word of God, if the teaching of the Word of God stands at the heart of the church's life, if there is a pulpit ministry where the Scriptures are clearly, accurately, and helpfully preached, then they are rich in the Grace of God." P.43

I tend to agree with him, and I believe we are rich in the Grace of God here at Calvary Chapel Victorville.

May we strive to keep God's Word, and His Voice at the center of all that we do here.

We are living in a day where God's Word is despised by politicians, movie stars, talk show hosts, news anchors, celebrities of all kinds, and Christians are easily becoming the most looked down upon group in our culture.

But understand, as we cling to God's Word as the Days grow darker, our light will shine ever brighter.

The wicked will not prevail, although we look at our world and see the Hophni and Phinehas' abounding, we must not lose hope.

The Psalmist said it well in

**Ps 119:155-160 Salvation is far from the wicked,
For they do not seek Your statutes.**

156 Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord;

Revive me according to Your judgments.

157 Many are my persecutors and my enemies,

Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.

158 I see the treacherous, and am disgusted,

Because they do not keep Your word.

159 Consider how I love Your precepts;

Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.

160 The entirety of Your word is truth,

And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

Cling to His Word, hear His Voice church, among all the other noise and clamor of our world, trust God's Word.

Let's pray...

So Samuel dominated the first 3 chapters of this book, but he will disappear until chapter 7, God will fulfill his Word to Eli and his sons in the chapters to come.

Severe testings lay ahead for the nation, but Samuel will be established as the leader of God's people.

I hope you join us next week as we continue in God's Word.