

“Fear the Lord & Serve Him Faithfully” (Part 1) (1 Samuel 12:6–25)(2.20.22)

INTRODUCTION OF SCRIPTURE:

Last week, we were four chapters before today’s scripture. The people had asked for a king to fight their battles and so they could be like the nations around them. Even though, the LORD warned them through Samuel, they replied, “No! Give us a king.”

In response, the Lord sent Samuel on a mission to recruit Saul. By looks, it was easy to see why. He literally stood above everyone else, a head taller. Samuel anointed Saul with oil. AND, the Lord anointed Saul with the Spirit of the Lord, changing Saul’s heart.

Under the blessing of the Spirit of God, Saul rallied the people; raised an army; and, soundly defeated Nahash the Ammonite. So far, so good it seems. All the tribes and clans of Israel were gathered together. Samuel presented Saul as the man chosen by the LORD. Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!” There was a great celebration by all the Israelites.

After Samuel establishes his faithfulness to God and country, we come to today’s scripture:

1 Samuel 12:6–25 (NIV84)

⁶Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers up out of Egypt.⁷ Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your fathers.

⁸“After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

⁹“But they forgot the Lord their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them.¹⁰ They cried out to the Lord and said, ‘We have sinned; we have forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.’¹¹ Then the Lord sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely.

¹²“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the Lord your God was your king.¹³ Now

here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the Lord has set a king over you.¹⁴ If you **fear the Lord and serve and obey him** and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good!¹⁵ But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers.

¹⁶“Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call upon the Lord to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the Lord when you asked for a king.”

¹⁸Then Samuel called upon the Lord, and that same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the Lord and of Samuel.

¹⁹The people all said to Samuel, “Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.”

²⁰“Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.²¹ Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they

are useless.²² For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.²⁴ But be sure to **fear the Lord and serve him faithfully** with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.²⁵ Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away.”

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“Fear the Lord & Serve Him Faithfully”**

INTRODUCTION:

Is it not a rule of life, that our zeal, our love, our gratitude to God is like molten lava? When we first give ourselves over to the compelling love of the Lord, our zeal, love, and gratitude are hot and moving into the world. But, too soon it cools, hardens, stops, and becomes a rock. It is like a monument to once was a living relationship with the Lord Jesus.

It is in Samuel’s directive that we find the key:
verse 14 - **fear the Lord and serve and obey him**;
verse 24 - **fear the Lord and serve him**

faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. In doing these things, we maintain the connection, the relationship to the source of all love. We keep the heat and the light and the activity.

BODY:

Samuel confronts Israel with their apostasy, their falling away from Yahweh, God – the I AM. They must Consider; they must remember; they must respond; to the great things God has done for them. He reviews the history. And this process of remembering what God has done is regularly exhorted throughout scripture.

Samuel starts with Moses and Aaron being appointed to bring Israel out of bondage in Egypt. The pattern is consistent. The people cry out to the Lord. God hears their cry; effects rescue; and leads them into The Promised Land.

“But the people forgot the Lord their God.” Often, we are no better than the Israelites. Our memories are short-lived. We forget what Jesus did, is doing, will do, and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit now.

Today, we used Psalm 107 for our responsive reading. Because it is 43 verses, we only used a portion of it. But, it too is a call to remember how

Great our God is to His children. And, Psalm 107 demonstrates this pattern, this silly cycle to which we humans are prone:

Psalm 107:4–6 (NIV84)

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.

⁵ They were hungry and thirsty,
and their lives ebbed away.

⁶ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

Psalm 107:12–13 (NIV84)

¹² So he subjected them to bitter labor;
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.

¹³ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.

Psalm 107:17–19 (NIV84)

¹⁷ Some became fools through their rebellious
ways
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

18 They loathed all food
and drew near the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.

Psalm 107:26–28 (NIV84)

26 They mounted up to the heavens and went
down to the depths; in their peril their courage
melted away.

27 They reeled and staggered like drunken men;
they were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.

Psalm 107:43 (NIV84)

43 **Whoever is wise, let him heed these things
and consider the great love of the Lord.**

Considering the great love of the Lord is why we
had our special music today: "To God be the Glory"

1 To God be the glory, great things He hath
done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

Who yielded His life our redemption to win,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He hath
done.

2 Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of
blood,
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

[Refrain]

3 Great things He hath taught us, great things
He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.

[Refrain]

When Christians remember and embrace the truth
given in this hymn, we are empowered in a special
way. We are able to walk by faith and not by sight.
The truer our walk, and the more filled we are with
God the Holy Spirit. The more filled with God the
Holy Spirit, the better equipped we are to walk by
faith – to be obedient. Conversely, disobedience to
God's will, purposes, and precepts, quenches the

Holy Spirit AND propels us off the true path. It can cause the molten lava to harden quickly instead of the heat being fueled by faith.

This is one of the reasons that we worship together – it helps us to rightly consider who God is and who we are. We get so many conflicting and deceptive messages from the Enemy and the world. None of us is strong enough to go it alone. 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV84) Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Paul exhorts Christians in Romans 12:9–13 (NIV84)

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

And in Hebrews 10:19–25 (GNB) **Let Us Come Near to God**

19 We have, then, my brothers and sisters, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. ²⁰ He opened for us

a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body.²¹ We have a great priest in charge of the house of God.²² So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water.²³ Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise.²⁴ Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good.²⁵ Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

Unlike Christians, the Jews lived a works religion. They believed they earned their forgiveness and God's blessings. Certainly, Yahweh made them a Covenant People. When they honored the Covenant, many scriptures told them that the LORD would bless them. And disobedience brought God's displeasure and wrath.

I will just mentioned Samuel's warning in the 15th verse, "But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers." Samuel pronounced God's judgement which was followed by a miraculous demonstration of thunder

and rain during the wheat harvest on that very day.

We must realize that God's commandments are not meant to be arbitrary restrictions. They are meant to be for our own good. In following them, we live into who we are called to be: a people set apart, holy, and righteous. It naturally follows that it should be the desire of our hearts to live the Christian life. Out of gratitude, out of love, out of a desire to glorify our Savior, we should want to be disciples of Jesus.

To live the Christian life is no exemption from hardships or trials. Forming a true Christian Community will bless us individually, the group, and those that watch us from secular society. Those Christians, see how they love one another. We need each other to exhort and to encourage one another. We need to pray for one another. We need to worship together. In those hardships and trials, we will manifest the Fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV84) The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

CONCLUSION:

It seems that the issue of human suffering must be addressed to put things in context. Great minds

have grappled, debated, and taught about the conundrum of a loving and benevolent God in a world filled with pain, grief, and suffering. I will only make a couple of very brief points as they apply to this text.

I have heard and read many sermons where the preacher denies that God could be the source of pain or disaster. Those preachers must not have read today's text where God sends punishment to demonstrate the people's need to fear the LORD. This was a strong reminder to a people who had a terrible habit: they FORGOT the LORD.

Those preachers must not have read most of the Old Testament. Just a few minutes in the Minor Prophets would quickly diminish their position. They tend to argue that the God of the New Testament is different. That would deny a tenet of scripture that God is immutable – He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Those preachers must not have read Psalm 107. They must not have read the Book of Revelation.

Verse 14: **Fear the Lord and serve and obey him;** verse 24 - **Fear the Lord and serve him faithfully** with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

King David celebrated in Psalm 40:5 (NIV84)

5 Many, O Lord my God,
are the wonders you have done.
The things you planned for us
no one can recount to you;
were I to speak and tell of them,
they would be too many to declare.

Today, we have focused on the call to consider and respond to all of God's goodness. We addressed the place of obedience and the necessity of faith to live out the Christian life. Next week, we will explore fear of the LORD and serving His kingdom.

Maybe you are in the midst of trial right now and are having trouble seeing God's hand in your situation. Memorize and appropriate Romans 8:28 (NIV84) **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** I call on you to walk by faith and not by sight. I encourage you to share with your faith family, asking them to pray for you, and to come along side of you in your faith walk.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,

sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still my soul; when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.