

Old Testament Characters: Samuel – The Anointing Priest

Goldstone Church – 31-Jul-16 10:30am

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Introduction

This is the last of 3 weeks looking at the life of Samuel – probably one of the most significant priests and prophets in the Old Testament. We're looking at a time near the end of Samuel's life, when Samuel had the unexpected privilege of anointing Israel's second king. "Unexpected", because, when Saul was crowned king, Samuel was an old man, and he probably thought he would die before Saul. Even in his retirement years, God had a purpose for Samuel.

As a way of putting this Bible passage (1 Samuel 16:1-13) into Context, let us answer three questions:

- a) What did Saul do that was so bad, that God reject king Saul (v.1)?
The one-word answer is *disobedience* – actually *repetitive disobedience*. For example:
 - i. *Offering up a Burnt Offering* (1 Sam 13:9). God had said, priests offered sacrifices, not kings.
 - ii. *Making a Foolish Oath* (1 Sam 14:24). Saul banned and threatened his army from eating before a battle. God had said not to make oaths, and only then in God's name.
 - iii. *Disobeying God's Instructions* (1 Sam 15:3). Saul spared the life of the King of the Amalekites, even though God had *explicitly* said destroy everything.

What Saul had done was not appropriate behaviour for a king. Note: God did not reject Saul the person, God rejected Saul as king of the Israelites. Sadly, it was Saul who couldn't see that there was a difference.

- b) Why would Saul want to kill Samuel, if he heard that Samuel had gone to Bethlehem (v.2)?
The one-word answer is *jealousy*. Samuel was in Ramah his home town (1 Sam 15:34), and Saul was in Gibeah. The road from Ramah to Bethlehem passed through Gibeah. Samuel had told Saul (1 Sam 15:28) that God had given his kingdom to "*one of your neighbours*". Samuel was scared that Saul would become violently jealous if he saw him walking down the road with anointing oil.
- c) Why were Bethlehem's Elders trembling with fear when Samuel arrived (v.4)?
Probably 2 main reasons:
 - i. At that time, Bethlehem was an obscure town, not on Samuel's regular circuit as a Judge. The Elders may have thought there was some sinful actions going on, and that Samuel was going to bring judgement down upon them.
 - ii. Or the Elders had heard that Samuel had fallen out of favour with Saul, and they were scared that Bethlehem would be the venue for a bust up.

The context to 1 Samuel 16 was a tense and colourful political landscape.

1. Samuel is

ASSIGNED [a Mission] (v.1-4)

God knew what was going on in Samuel's life, yet God still says to Samuel (v.1) "*Fill your horn with oil and be on your way*". Even though you're an old man, ... Even though you are not the political force that you used to be, ... Even though you have to get up and out of your own home, ... I still have a mission for you, Samuel. So, "*Fill your horn with oil and be on your way*".

Samuel's response to this instruction was wonderfully human. Even though Samuel had a lifetime of following God, he still showed his humanity. Despite with all his spiritual experiences, Samuel focused on the...

- a) **Human Obstacles.** Effectively, Samuel says (v.2), '*God, I'm afraid of what might happen.*' Fear is a perfectly natural, human reaction. It's what we do with the fear that's important. Samuel's response was to be open and honest with God; to hand over his fear to God. This opened the way for a...
- b) **Godly Solution.** God likes to provide a practical solution to our daily problems; often involving us in focusing on and worshipping God. For Samuel, God says, '*organise an extra special worship service in Bethlehem.*'

Today, fear is still an issue – even for Christians. Fear of losing a job, losing a home, losing a family member, etc. These are genuine concerns - they prove that we are human. What are we going to do with these worries?

As God's people in 21st century Hove, we are called to share the Good News of the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, to those that we meet. That is our assignment from God, which can sometimes be scary.

Samuel teaches us to be open and honest with God; to hand over our fears to God. This is the practical application of our motto verse,

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Even from within our fear and apprehension, when we trust in God and focus on His ways, He will provide His Godly Solutions in our daily life.

2. Samuel

ASSESSED [the Brothers] (v.5-11)

Notice that Samuel focused on the...

- a) **Human Opinion.** Samuel was evaluating each son (v.6-7) based on 2 factors: (i) family position, (ii) physical appearance. When Samuel sees Eliab, he gets two "Yes's" – (i) Eliab is the firstborn son of Jesse, and (ii) Eliab is tall. Samuel possibly used these 2 factors because he is using the same selection technique when king Saul was chosen: Saul was the firstborn son of his family, and a head taller than everyone else (1 Sam 9). Perhaps Samuel thought that this was how God would choose kings from now on. Consequently, God intervenes and outlines His...

b) **Godly Values.** These are the characteristics and heart-values that God was looking for and saw in David.

Using David's own words from the book of Psalms, God is looking for:

- i. **Humility –**
Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Psalm 62:9
- ii. **Reverence –**
I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. Psalm 18:3
- iii. **Respect –**
Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. Psalm 31:9
- iv. **Trust –**
The LORD is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1
- v. **Devotion –**
Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. Psalm 4:7
- vi. **Recognition –**
I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. Psalm 9:1
- vii. **Faithfulness –**
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6
- viii. **Obedience –**
Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Psalm 119:34
- ix. **Repentance –**
For the sake of your name, Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Psalm 25:11
- x. **Adoration –**
I love you, O Lord, my strength. Psalm 18:1

No wonder God referred to king David as “a man after my own heart”. These are core, life-values that go to the very root of someone's personality.

Today, as His people, God is calling us to have a heart for God. To express and reflect these values in our lives - and to build them up in others.

Let us be people that do not “lean on our own understanding”, but rather, seek out and take on God's values and characteristics.

3. Samuel

ACCEPTED [God's Choice] (v.12-13)

After watching 7 sons parade before him, Samuel has to *wait* for David to be called, *wait* while he's brought back from the sheep, and *wait* while David washes and changes clothes – part of the consecrating ritual. Finally, Samuel gets to meet God's choice for the next king of Israel and receives...

- a) **Godly Instructions.** "*Rise and anoint him; he is the one.*" (v.12b)
Even though Samuel is an old man... Even though Samuel is a well-respected leader in the community... Even though Samuel has been kept waiting while David has been brought from the sheep... Even though David is the last and least of Jesse's 8 sons... Despite all this, God instructs Samuel to "rise". The Hebrew word means to "physically stand up and to establish". This is the defining moment – the moment when Samuel has a choice: Do I obey God and get moving, or do I do my own thing? Samuel decides on...
- b) **Human Obedience.** Samuel obeyed God (v.13) and anointed David in front of his family. In other words, Samuel didn't stop and have a "think", or have a discussion with God, he just obeyed, and anointed David with oil.
Notice: following on from Samuel's act of obedience, David is filled with the Spirit of God in a powerful way.

When God's people respond in loving obedience to God's instructions, the Spirit of God is released in a powerful way. As Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, we have been called "to rise up and to establish" God's kingdom on earth. The time of passivity and inactivity is over. It is time to step out of our comfort zones, and to respond to God in loving obedience. This is a defining moment for each one of us. Do we obey God, or do we do our own thing?

CONCLUSION

This and other Bible passages confirm that Samuel was a great man of God. But despite the miracles and amazing prophecies, Samuel's life can be summarised in one word: obedience.

- Samuel was **Assigned** a mission; despite his human fears, Samuel obeyed God.
- As Samuel **Assessed** the brothers; he learned what God was looking for, and followed God's values.
- And Samuel **Accepted** God's choice, and anointed David. Samuel responded to God's instruction with loving obedience – and the Spirit of God was released in a powerful way.

I believe that many of us already know what God has asked us to do in our daily lives. We know our assignment, but there is still a reluctance, a hesitancy. Jesus put it this way (John 14:14), '*If you love me, keep my commands.*'

AMEN