

“By Faith”
1 Samuel 7:1-2
(Preached at Trinity, August 14, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, after the Philistines defeated Israel and captured the Ark of the Covenant they celebrated their victory over God and brought the Ark to Ashdod and placed it before their god, Dagon. They immediately fell under the wrath of God and many died.
 - A. God will not share His glory. He commands all men to bow before Him alone in worship and praise.
 - B. The response of the Philistines was that of terror. Instead of repentance they determined to rid their town of the Ark as quickly as possible. So they sent it to the neighboring city of Gath, partly because they wanted the Ark gone and partly because they wanted to be sure it wasn't just a coincidence.
1 Samuel 5:8 NAU - "So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath."
2. Gath also came under God's judgment so they sent it to Ekron. Fear gripped the hearts of all in Ekron as they too fell under the judgment of God.
1 Samuel 5:9-10 NAU - "After they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. ¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people."
3. After the Philistines had suffered for seven months they loaded the Ark on a cart and sent it back to Israel. The people of Beth-shemesh rejoiced to see the Ark and received it gladly into their city. But they too failed to acknowledge the holiness of God represented in the Ark and they too fell under the judgment of God.
Their response was really no different than the Philistines—get the Ark out of town. Where shall we send it?
1 Samuel 6:20 NAU - "The men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?"
4. So they sent a message to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim saying, "Come get the Ark and bring it to your city."
Well, as **Chapter 6** comes to an end we can surely anticipate the response of Kiriath-jearim. What!! Are you nuts! We've heard about what happened to the cities of the Philistines and it's no secret what happened when you brought it into your city. Send it someplace else, but don't expect us to take it.
5. But there is a wonderful story here as we call to our remembrance the people of Kiriath-jearim. This was a city of Judah but was inhabited by the Gibeonites. Turn with me to **Joshua 9:1-27**. (this account occurred some 400 years before)

6. While none of the Israelites would have the Ark the Gibeonites brought it into the city where it remained for 20 years before David finally brought it to Jerusalem.
7. On one hand, the Gibeonites were basically the slaves of Israel. They were commanded to bring the Ark into their city. On the other hand, I want us to see this as an act of faith. I want us to consider the Grace of Faith, the Duty of Faith, and the Blessing of Faith.

I. The Grace of Faith

A. We can't overlook the movement of the Ark over the previous 7 months

1. First, Israel's bringing of the Ark into battle resulted in their defeat and its capture – 30,000 lost their lives including Hophni and Phinehas.
 - a. These were God's covenant people, and yet they were people of unbelief. They were looking upon the Ark as simply a good-luck charm.
 - b. God judged them for their sinful failure to recognize the holiness of God.

Leviticus 10:3 NAU - "By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored."
2. Then we see three cities of the Philistines, each falling under God's judgment for the same reason—they failed to recognize the holiness of God. They mocked and blasphemed Him by placing Him in a subservient position before Dagon. Thousands lost their lives. The Philistines rid themselves of the Ark. In essence, they were trying to rid themselves of God.
3. Then the Ark returns to Israel entering the city of Beth-shemesh. They fell into the same sin as the Philistines. They failed to acknowledge the holiness of God. Instead of shielding their eyes from the holiness of God they looked upon it as a common thing. God's judgment also came upon this town.
4. The people of Beth-shemesh cried out,

1 Samuel 6:20 NAU - "The men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?"
5. So now the Ark is moved to Kiriath-jearim. We might presume they had no choice, being subservient to the Israelites. But for the first time in seven months we find the Ark dwelling in peace. And it remained there for 20 years.
6. The Gibeonites were of a different sort. Like Ruth, these were a pagan people who had determined to dwell with the people of God. We can almost hear them repeating Ruth's words to Joshua:

Ruth 1:16-17 NAU - "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."

7. Their actions were motivated by fear of God's judgment but their response was that of subjection and humility – positions of faith.

Joshua 9:25 NAU - "Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us"

B. We can see in the Gibeonites God's Gospel of grace

1. Even from the beginning we can see God's ultimate purpose in the Gospel
 - a. God told Abraham

Genesis 22:18 NAU - "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - b. From the beginning God received individuals from outside Israel
We see it with Rahab and Ruth. And we can see it with the Gibeonites
2. Paul declares the true sons of Abraham:

Galatians 3:7-9 NAS - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."
3. How glorious it is that God has offered mercy to the Gentiles

Ephesians 2:11-13 NAU - " Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision " by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- ¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."
4. The Philistines turned away the Ark of God in unbelief
The people of Beth-Shemesh turned away the Ark of God in unbelief
The people of Kiriath-jearim received the Ark by faith. This is evidenced by the fact they remained in peace with the Ark in their midst for over 20 years. These Gentile people gladly received the Ark to dwell among them. This is true of every believer. We have received Christ to dwell in us.

II. The Duty of Faith

- A. They received the Ark because it was their duty to do so
 1. They were subservient to Israel – they were expected to obey. But, unlike their Israelite counterpart, they gladly received the Ark into their midst. William Blaikie: "There was faith and loyalty to God shown in their readiness to give accommodation to it within their bounds."
 2. They considered it an honor, but they also saw their duty before God – they were expected to regard the Ark as holy
 3. We often are called upon to act out of duty
 - a. Duty is often frowned upon today – as if it is unspiritual
 - b. Some believe that if something is done out of duty it is somehow tainted. They say you must never pray or read God's Word out of duty.

- c. Granted, we serve Christ out of love. We believe in evangelical obedience, not servile obedience.
 - d. But, we are still servants.
Luke 17:10 KJV – “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”
 - e. Although we serve Christ from a motivation of love it in no way diminishes our duty to obey.
- B. They received the Ark with great reverence. They followed what we call today, the Regulative Principle for Worship. We only worship Him in the way He commands in His Word.
1. They brought the Ark into the house of Abinadab who lived on a hill. They brought it into a house. They shut it up. It was not to be gazed upon as some carnal attraction.
 2. Compare this with the people of Beth-shemesh. They followed their own wisdom and ingenuity.
 - a. We must take notice that Beth-shemesh was one of the cities of the Levites. It was the city of the Kohathites who were charged with the care of the Ark – yet they handled it carelessly
 - b. When the Ark arrived they placed it on a large rock – **Verse 15**. In other words, they put it on public display. It became a tourist attraction.
 - c. God commanded Ark to be shut-up behind a curtain.
Exodus 26:33 NAU - "You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies."
 - d. Even when they took the Tabernacle apart for travel the Ark remained covered.
Numbers 4:4-6 NAU - "This is the work of the descendants of Kohath in the tent of meeting, concerning the most holy things. ⁵ "When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it; ⁶ and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles."
 3. The people of Beth-shemesh sacrificed two female cows when God commanded the sacrifice of bulls. The Kohathites knew better. They flagrantly disregarded the Law of God
 4. The Gibeonites treated the Ark with holy reverence and assigned it to the house of Abinadab. Abinadab consecrated his son, Eleazar to care for the Ark. It was his chief duty, and he did so for 20 years. Beth-shemesh was a city of priests but no one took it into their home. Here it was taken into a home at the top of a hill.

5. Kiriath-jearim did not pretend to become the new place of worship since they had the Ark and Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines. This would not have been in accordance with God's Word.
During the 20 years in Kiriath-jearim there were no sacrifices offered, no feasts celebrated. The Ark was simply cared for and protected by the Gibeonites who trusted God and treated Him as holy.

C. This is the duty of the Christian

1. We have a duty to treat God as holy. We must worship God in His holiness
Psalms 29:2 KJV - "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."
2. This is the heart of faith. The lost man cannot see God in His holiness. He is always treated as common. This is why we treat sin so lightly.

III. The Blessing of Faith

A. The people of Kiriath-jearim were blessed of the Lord

1. The text doesn't reveal much here. The most obvious is after residing in four different cities we finally find the Ark residing in the absence of God's displeasure. Kiriath-jearim enjoyed the pleasure of God.
2. While we don't find it mentioned here specifically, we do find God's blessings upon another keeper of the Ark – see **2 Samuel 6:6-12**
3. It wouldn't be far-fetched to believe the house of Abinadab experienced unprecedented blessings as the Ark of God resided in his house
4. God always blesses a people who receive Him by faith and treat Him as holy. The question of the people of Beth-shemesh was answered by the people of Kiriath-jearim:

"Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God?"

The answer is those who receive God by faith and treat Him as holy

B. God's people have the infinite blessings of faith

1. We have the blessings of God's presence with us. The Gibeonites knew this was more than just a gold-covered box. They knew it was more than just a religious good-luck charm. It was the presence of God.
2. We have the blessing of His divine pleasure. Rather than the fear of God's condemnation that leads men to send God away Abinadab gladly received God into his home and enjoyed the infinite blessings of God's presence.

C. God always blesses a people who trust Him and regard Him as holy

1. How much does the American church suffer because they forget this
2. Do we recognize this as a church? Do we regard God as holy? We must never forget the words of Hannah from **Chapter 2**
1 Samuel 2:1-2 NAU - "My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation. ² "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God."