

“Samuel’s Farewell Discourse” 1 Samuel 12:1-25

INTRO:

The drama of calling Israel’s first king continues. We have watched as the LORD listened to Israel’s plea for a king and chose Saul a tall handsome man who did not want the job. God worked providentially to accomplish his anointing, his announcement to the nation as the king, and finally in orchestrating a divine deliverance to put Saul into the job as the first monarch in Israel. Now all the who’s who in Israel gathered at Gilgal for the gala celebration to reestablish Saul as king. While everyone wants to get together and sing “Everything is beautiful,” Samuel changes the mood of the party.

There are three parts of Samuel’s farewell address to Israel. First, he asked for an audit. Then he addressed the LORD’s past blessings. Finally, Samuel confronted Israel’s sin, and assured them of God’s response to their repentance.

I. Samuel’s Audit (1 Samuel 12:1-5)

II. Samuel Rehearsed the LORD’s Faithfulness and Israel’s Failure (1 Samuel 12:6-18)

III. Samuel Reassures Israel of God’s Forgiveness (1 Samuel 12:19-22)

I. Samuel’s Audit (1 Samuel 12:1-5)

A. God’s prophets can sometimes be party poopers. This is a great moment. King Nahash of Ammon has been defeated. King Saul was clearly used of God in a miraculous way to produce the victory. Despite the nation’s rejection of the LORD’s will and the LORD’s timing everything turned out better than anyone could have imagined. Then Samuel steps forward to officially hand over the reins of the nation to Saul the new leader.

B. At first this process is not threatening. Samuel the prophet asks for an audit of his administration. **(1 Samuel 12:1-5)**

“Then Samuel said to all Israel, ‘Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you. Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you.’ They said, ‘You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man’s hand.’ He said to them, ‘The LORD is witness

against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand.’ And they said, ‘He is witness.’”

The result of Samuel’s audit is that everything is present and proper. Samuel has been an honest leader.

C. Having said this, Israel no doubt let out a sigh and said, “I sure am glad that is over.” Samuel is not done.

II. Samuel Rehearsed the LORD’s Faithfulness and Israel’s Failure (1 Samuel 12:6-18)

A. Now that Israel admitted that Samuel was an honest leader they needed to admit the LORD, Yahweh, their always faithful, ever committed, covenant keeping God also did not fail them. Yahweh delivered them miraculously from their slavery in Egypt. **(1 Samuel 12:6)**
“Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt.”

Apart from God the situation was hopeless, but God provided the right leaders and sprung them with power.

B. Then Samuel rehearsed all that God had done in the years between the Exodus and the present moment in Israel. **(1 Samuel 12:7-11)**

“So now, take your stand that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers. When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. They cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroath; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You. Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.’”

B. The point that Samuel was making is that God never failed them, even though they had continually forgotten God. Have we ever failed here? Consider the situation in which you find yourself. Does it seem hopeless? Do we feel like victims with no place to turn for relief? What do we do? We cast around for solutions, but forget God.

1. Has He ever failed us? Do we remember and rehearse the innumerable times He has come through for us? Or, do we wallow in our troubles and refuse to call on Him for

help? Do we fail to repent of our sin of unbelief and throw ourselves on our Lord and seek His help?

2. This is what Israel had done. They had forgotten all the good that God did for them. They chose to rely on their own wisdom and the arm of the flesh instead of turning in faith and repentance to God.

C. Listen to Samuel's indictment against them. **(1 Samuel 12:12-13)**

"When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' although the LORD your God was your king. Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you."

D. They had a king, but they also had a vital responsibility. **(1 Samuel 12:14)**

"If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God."

Samuel laid down three requirements for Israel and for us. First, we must fear Yahweh. We never doubt His character and faithfulness to us. Second, we must serve Him. We need to obey and worship Him. Finally, we must listen to Him and not rebel against His Word. God's people must be a people of His book. If they obeyed God would bless.

E. However, if they do not obey, God will judge. **(1 Samuel 12:15)**

"If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers."

To underline how serious the LORD was about this warning, Samuel gave them a sign. While thunder and rain does not strike us as all that miraculous, the wheat harvest was a dry season in Israel and this thunder was miraculous.

III. Samuel Reassures Israel of God's Forgiveness (1 Samuel 12:19-22)

A. What do we do when we recognize we have sinned against our God? Do we wallow in our guilt? Do we wish as hard as we can wish that we didn't sin? Can we somehow get in a time machine and change the past? We can say this is all silly, but these are also our usual response to our sin. How are we to act? Samuel tells us and Israel. **(1 Samuel 12:20-22)**

"Samuel said to the people, 'Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which cannot profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His

people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.”

B. Although we must not deny we have sinned, we must realize the Holy God whom we have offended with our sin, is vitally interested in forgiving our sin and not remembering it anymore. Our Lord sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world in order that in Him [Christ], He might condemn our sin in the flesh, and forgive us of our sin.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

(Hebrews 8:12)

“For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

What a promise. To ensure we get it, I want to quote it in a little different translation.

“For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.” (HCSB)