

“Samuel, A Model of Leadership”
1 Samuel 7:3-17
(Preached at Trinity, September 11, 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. Before we move on from **Chapter 7** there is one more important thing I want us to look at. The Bible contains many examples of leaders, some good, some not so good. Sadly, Israel was often plagued by poor leaders. We saw this with Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phineas. But when we come to examples of excellent leaders we should rise up and take notice.
2. This is an important topic.
 - A. On one hand, apart from Christ there are no perfect leaders. Human beings are broken. Sin has defiled and corrupted us. While Christ has begun a good work in us making us holy, this work will not be complete until we are glorified. This means that all of us suffer under the defilement of sin. The best of leaders are still flawed. If we set them up as models of perfection we will soon be disappointed. As **Chapter 8** opens we'll see that even Samuel was in no way perfect. If his sons are a reflection of his home life we see a great flaw in Samuel's leadership.
 - B. On the other hand, the church needs excellent leaders. I've often said, a church will never advance beyond the example of its leaders.
1 Corinthians 4:16 NAU - "Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me."
1 Peter 5:2-3 NAU - "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."
3. With each example of good leadership in Scripture we find various strengths that stand as a model for us. Pastors and deacons are not the only leaders in the church. Leaders don't necessarily have a title. They are men and women who love Christ and His people. They want to serve and be used of Christ. They want to see the church prosper. Every church needs leaders. Our church needs more leaders. How about you?
4. In **Verse 3** we find the first mention of Samuel since the beginning of **Chapter 4**. It's been twenty years.

"Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel"

What follows are some of the characteristics of an effective leader of God's people.

- I. A Godly leader has a heart for God
- A. Samuel directed God's people to holiness – **Verse 3**
1. Samuel called upon Israel to repent
He called them to put away their idols – God will not have rivals. He alone must be worshipped and served.
Verse 3 - "direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone"
 2. What was Samuel's motive? It was simply that he desired God to be honored by all.
 3. Samuel had a heart for God. Even in the environment of living with Eli and daily watching the corruption of Hophni and Phineas Samuel continued faithfully serving God.
 4. He was faithful to God even as a youth.
"He was manifestly one of those who are sanctified from infancy, and whose hearts go from the first with sacred duties. There were no wayward impulses to subdue, no hankerings after worldly freedom and worldly enjoyments; there was no necessity for coercive measures, either to restrain him from outbursts of frivolity or to compel him to diligence and regularity in his calling. From the first he looked with solemn awe and holy interest on all that related to the worship of God. God to him was a reality, a personality, a Being who dealt very closely with men, and with whom they were called to deal very closely too."¹
- B. God's leaders are spiritually minded
1. What does it mean to be spiritually minded? It means that our heart and mind is fixed upon the higher order of Christ and His Kingdom rather than a mind fixed upon this world and the things of this world
Romans 8:5-6 NAU - "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace"
 2. These are the type of people God sets up as leaders
Listen to the qualifications for deacon
Acts 6:3 NAU - "select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom"
 - a. Full of the Spirit describes a life under the dominion and direction of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. This wisdom refers to spiritual wisdom. This is the wisdom we gain from having our minds shaped by the Word of God resulting in discernment.
 3. God's leaders are those who see God as a reality, not just an abstract religious principle. They have a relationship with Him. He is a reality in their lives.
 4. This was the Samuel model. He stood before God in righteousness and led God's people in righteousness.

¹ Blaikie, William Garden. (2005). *Expository Lectures on the Book of 1 Samuel* (p. 49). Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books.

- II. He gives himself continually in prayer for God's people
- Verse 5** - "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the LORD for you."
Verse 8 - "Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us"
- A. Samuel was anointed as both prophet and priest
1. He served as a mediator for God's people
 2. He faithfully prayed for them and they knew his faithfulness in prayer
 3. Samuel was confident in God's answer to prayer
1 Samuel 7:9 NAU - "Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him."
- B. God's leaders pray
1. This was true of the Apostles:
Acts 6:4 NAU - "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
 2. The same is true for pastors today
 3. But all of God's people should see themselves as prayer warriors continually going before the throne of God.
 Sadly, so many Christians fail to see the importance of prayer.
 4. Prayer is essential.
 E.M. Bounds: "Salvation never finds its way to a prayerless heart. The Holy Spirit never abides in a prayerless spirit. Preaching never edifies a prayerless soul. Christ knows nothing of prayerless Christians. The gospel cannot be projected by a prayerless preacher."
 5. We need leaders who spend time before the throne of God
Robert Murray M'Cheyne – "What a man is on his knees before God, that he is – and nothing more."
Martyn Lloyd-Jones – "There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christians so much as our prayer life."
 6. This is true in private prayer, but it is also true of corporate prayer. We need strong men and women to take the lead in prayer, encouraging one another as we go before the throne of grace.
- III. He continually reminds the people of God's faithfulness – **Verse 12**
- A. Samuel set up a stone of remembrance
1. Joshua set up stones at the command of God
Joshua 4:1-3 NAU - "Now when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, ² "Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, ³ and command them, saying, 'Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan"
Joshua 4:6-7 NAU - "Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' ⁷ then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever."
 2. It would seem, however, that Samuel did this of his own initiative

3. He didn't want Israel to forget God's mighty deliverance from the Philistines. This was always a problem for Israel. Sadly, they would soon forget and reject God as their King. Technically, this is still the period of the judges and Israel's repentance would be short-lived.
1 Samuel 8:5 NAU - "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."
1 Samuel 8:7 NAU - "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."

- B. We need to encourage one another to remembrance
 1. God's wondrous deeds should be continually on our lips as we stir one another to the praise of God
 2. One of the places for this is during corporate prayer as we recount before God all that He has done. We have witnessed His gracious hand of healing, of His provision for our families and church. He has wondrously given us this facility.

IV. He continues faithfully until the end

- A. Samuel served faithfully all the days of his life
 1. **Verse 15** records: "Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life."
 2. Samuel had served God from childhood, faithfully giving himself to his duties. Then, he faithfully executed his offices of prophet and priest. In **Verse 15** we read of his faithful service as Israel's judge.
 3. In his farewell address Samuel declared: "I have walked before you from my youth even to this day."
- B. Strong leaders press on
 1. Paul expressed the words of a faithful servant of Christ
2 Timothy 4:7 KJV - "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith"
 2. In my almost 30 years of pastoring I've seen far too many who blaze hot for a season and then grow cold
 This is a tragedy.
 3. This is also true in the pastoral ministry. Far too many begin with good intentions but do not finish.
 50% of those entering the ministry do not last 5 years
 Only 1 in 10 will actually continue in pastoral ministry until retirement
 4. Churches need those in leadership who press on until the end.
- C. If this doesn't reflect your life it isn't too late to begin
 1. This is the beauty of the Gospel. The Gospel always offers repentance. It offers second chances.
 2. If you aren't walking in righteousness and seeking to lead others to walk in righteousness why not?

Conclusion:

1. How the church needs faithful leaders. Samuel followed God in righteousness and led God's people in righteousness. This demands effective leadership—leading by example. Leaders sent *from* God to lead the people *to* God. This is the ultimate model of Christ and it is the model of those He sends to serve in His church.
2. The benefits are endless.
 - A. First, there is the blessing of service to Christ. This is what drives us in the Christian life. Jesus is our motivation for obedience, for service and good works. We do everything for His glory.
 - B. There is the added benefit of added usefulness in the church. With faithful service comes increasing respect by the church.
Paul describes this regarding the office of Deacon
1 Timothy 3:13 NAU - "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."
The **KJV** translates the phrase well
"purchase to themselves a good degree,"
"good" - καλός - beautiful, excellent, surpassing, commendable
"degree" - βαθμός - of a grade of dignity and wholesome influence in the church
3. How we need such leaders in our church. We need many who serve without office or title who simply give themselves to the glory of Christ and the good of His church.