

1 Samuel 2:12-17,22-36

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[0 : 00] Last time we were together, we have introduced the man Samuel as being a bridge. Samuel, the man, is a bridge of biblical proportions, and we don't say that just because of his place in Scripture, but because of what he serves in Scripture.

He is the last judge, but unlike all the judges we meet in the book of Judges, he is a national judge. He judges the nation of Israel, not just a small portion of the nation, which is what we find when we open up the book of Judges, we find individuals who are asserting authority in different locales, but in Samuel we find an individual which is judging.

He is the last judge, and he is the first prophet. He's not the first person to prophesy, but he's the first person to hold the office of prophet. People would come to him and want to hear a word from God from him.

We will find out later when we get into the third chapter that in those days a word from God was very rare, because this is the period of the judges, at least when we open up the book.

It transitions us from the period of the judges to the period of the kings. There are three important people in the book of 1 Samuel, Samuel, Saul, and David. We understand that.

[1 : 13] These are three instrumental people, and everything else revolves around those three. It is Samuel who bridges the gap. He takes you from the time of the judges to the time of the kings.

In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, and then God raised up Samuel. And then there became a time when man wanted a king, so there was Saul.

Saul is the king of the people. It is what the people wanted, because he looked good on the outside, and he had it together, at least in appearance sake, because he was a whole head taller than everyone else.

And then there was God's king, that is David. David. The book of 2 Samuel focuses primarily on David. And it is in these two accounts that we see so much that is fundamental to our understanding of the rest of Scripture.

We see how God did this, but the person which God uses to bridge that gap is Samuel. But we cannot ever separate Samuel from his home. We cannot isolate the two, in particular because Samuel comes from a very unique setting, as do others in Scripture.

[2 : 20] And the one who was barren. And Hannah prayed, and God heard her prayers. And if you remember, the Lord that she prayed to had a specific name. It was the Lord of hosts, the one who goes before us.

So while she had a problem, there was also one who was present, and the one who was present answered her petition and gave her a son. She made a vow to the Lord. She said, if you will give him to me, I will give him back to you.

That's a major vow. And she did that. When we got into 1 Samuel chapter 2, we began to look at the structure of that ordered home. Worship was a priority.

And we know it was a priority because year by year, they would go back to the temple. And we don't have to say that, well, sure, that would be easy to do. But we need to put it in its text and in its context because this was the period of the judges when each man did what was right in his own eyes.

So as far as Samuel's dad was concerned, the thing that was right was to worship. And each year, he would go back. And each year, Hannah would bring back a little robe for her son, whom she left there at the age of three.

[3 : 26] And he was hanging out or living with Eli and Eli's sons, which are the second family. And we are introduced to that second family in direct contrast to Samuel and his family.

And so we pick it up in 1 Samuel chapter 2, starting in verse 12. We will read verses 12 through 17. And then we would go over to verse 22 and read to the end of the chapter.

Because the verses that are intertwined with them, those which proceed and those in the middle, speak of Samuel and Samuel's mother and father. But here, we're not focusing on the ordered home.

Actually, we're focusing, if you need a title, the sorrow of a disordered home. The sorrow of a disordered home. It says there, starting in verse 12.

Now, the sons of Eli were worthless men. By the way, the first time you're introduced in scripture, that's not how you want to be introduced. It literally means they were the sons of Belial.

[4 : 29] Belial being another word for Satan. Okay. Now, the sons of Eli were worthless men, and they did not know the Lord and the customs of the priest with the people.

When any man was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling and with a three-pronged fork in his hand. Then he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot, and all that the fork brought up, the priest would take for himself.

Thus they did in shallow to all the Israelites who came there. Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, give the priest meat for roasting, and he will not take bowl to meat from you, only raw.

If the man said to him, they must surely burn the fat first and then take as much as you desire, then he would say, no. But you shall give it to me now, and if not, I will take it by force.

Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men despised the offering of the Lord. We go down to verse 22. Now Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

[5 : 43] He said to them, why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? No, my sons, for the report is not good which I hear the Lord's people circulating.

If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor, both with the Lord and with men. Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, thus says the Lord, did I not indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?

Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?

Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded in my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by making yourselves fat with the choices of every offering of my people Israel?

[6 : 51] Therefore, the Lord God of Israel declares, I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before me forever. But now the Lord declares, far be it from me.

For those who honor me, I will honor, and those who despise me, I will lightly esteem. Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house, so there will not be an old man in your house.

You will see the distress of my dwelling in spite of all the good that I do for Israel, and an old man will not be in your house forever. Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from my altar, so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. On the same day, both of them will die, but I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and in my soul, and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before my anointed always.

Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, please assign to me one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.

[8 : 11] 1 Samuel chapter 2 verses 12 through 17 and then 22 through 36. If you needed a verse which clearly described the contrast between these two homes, it is the verse that is recorded for you there in verse 30.

The latter half of verse 30, for it says, For those who honor me, I will honor, and those who despise me, I will lightly esteem. Here we see the outcome of the homes.

Here we see the blessing of an ordered home and the sorrow of a disordered home. We have looked at the blessing of an ordered home. We've seen how it was both a blessing to the individuals and will eventually become a blessing to the nation because God will use the individual Samuel to do some astounding things.

Even some of the astounding things which we do not have recorded for us simply in the book of 1 Samuel. We know that he starts what is called the school of the prophets. And the school of the prophets are encouraged not to teach people how to prophesy, but to educate people in the things of God.

And they will educate one another in the things of God, teaching them to write and to learn scripture and to read scripture. And this tradition will keep passing on and passing on. And eventually we can ascribe even the recording and the preservation of the word of God to what Samuel starts.

[9 : 28] We see the blessing of an ordered home. But here we see the sorrow of a disordered home when we focus on the home of Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

And we will see the sorrow which comes upon a nation and the individuals as a result of a home whose structure is completely astray from what God had commanded it to do.

You know, I was asked this morning a question. And some of you maybe have seen it. Some, I think it's on one of the series now, The Chosen. It's also in the movie Ben-Hur, the original, not the remake.

If you ever watch it, which I don't have anything against either one of them. I just like the old one much better. You have to take a whole evening to watch it. I mean, it takes four or five hours to watch it. It's so long it has an intermission or interlude in the middle of it.

And I love that, right? You can get up and stretch your legs and all that other stuff. But if you ever watch Ben-Hur, you get to see it more than once. And I know it's in the series The Chosen. At least I was asked that this morning. It's when Judah Ben-Hur comes back to his home.

[10 : 29] You see it primarily at the end after being gone for so many years. And he walks and he touches a little box. We would call it like a little mailbox. It's on the side of his house. And when he'd do it, usually they would kiss it and do it or kiss their hand and touch it.

So someone asked me, what is that? And while those were traditions of the Jewish people, much like God had told them in the book of Deuteronomy, to write it upon the doorpost of their house, write it across their hearts, put it on their foreheads and on their hands, the Jewish people would put these boxes on the doorposts of their house.

And in those boxes, they would have a fragment of scripture. They would write scripture most of the time, the Shema, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might, with all your strength, and to teach one another these things.

They would have it. And by touching it, they were acknowledging this house stands on the word of God. That was just kind of what they were doing. It was part of the order and the structure. But what we see here is not all of the people of God were that way.

Because when the home was not set up the way it was supposed to be set up, problems arised in the home and also in the nation. This is what led, if we think about the period and the time that we are at, what is going on here with the household of Eli is what has led to the decay of the nation.

[11 : 39] Why do we have, when we open up the book of Judges, why do we have people who were to be serving the people of God going out looking for work? Why do we have Levites who are looking for work other places?

Why do we have people who should have been serving as priests or servants of the priests, serving around the tabernacle at that time in Shiloh, not the temple yet? Why are they traveling away from home?

Why are they no longer where they should be? It's because worship was not priority. And when worship was not priority in the home, then it was not priority in the nation. And when it became, you know, not even relevant in the nation, then the people started to degenerate.

We need to pay attention to this, by the way. Because these are the things that we're seeing repeated today. These are the things that we see being played over and over again. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us there's nothing new in the sun.

What has been will be. What has already been done will be done again. And we see these things, right? But here we see the first sorrow is a despised offering. Despised offerings.

[12 : 42] It tells us, now the sons of Eli were worthless men. It tells us right off the bat they were worthless men. This is a contrast, right? Eli the priest. You know, he who looked down upon Hannah for praying silently.

His sons were worthless men. And what's even scarier is what follows that description. They were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.

They did not know the Lord. The father was a priest serving at the tabernacle. People would come there and worship annually. And yet here we have these two sons.

Who are serving at least in a capacity of their father. Because they have a part in the offering. Who do not know the Lord. They don't know the Lord in any relational manner.

Because this name is the relational name. It is Yahweh, right? It is the covenant name for God. They may know him intellectually. But they do not know him relationally.

[13 : 44] They have no relationship with him. And here is where we begin to see the misery that they bring. Because in not knowing him, they despise his offerings. Now the custom was, and God had told the people of God in the book of Leviticus.

That when the offering was brought and it was bowled. That it was custom for the priest to stick a three-pronged fork in there. And to take out. And whatever meat was left is what they could eat on. Listen, God had prescribed a way for his people to eat from the offerings.

He had prescribed for the priests. Because they were to be wholly committed. They were to be completely given to the work of God. And God did not desire that they would be forgotten or forsaken.

So he prescribed even in the offerings that they would be provided for. We understand that. They were to be, the Lord was their inheritance. They had no inheritance in the land. But he was a good God.

So he had prescribed a manner for them to be well provided for and well taken care of. But we see here that they wanted a little bit more than what God had prescribed. Because they would take more than they should.

[14 : 52] And then they did the unthinkable. That when something was brought in, they would say, give us some raw meat. Because we don't want to always eat bold meat. Right? Sometimes we want it with the fat on it. Now the fat was to always belong to the Lord God.

It was to be his portion. Even that which was put up on the altar. And I know we say it and we don't say it. I know it seems like we're saying it haphazardly. But we're not.

That when it was put up on the altar, it was literally the fat was burned off. And then it was taken off. And it could be consumed. That was the fellowship meal or the rejoicing meal. The meal of thanksgiving.

And the priest. But every time the fat was to be consumed. Because that was a representation of the fullness of life. And God wanted that. And that was his. And here they said, we want the raw meat.

And they said, no, let the fat be burned off and you take whatever you want. And he said, no, we want it or we'll take it by force. Because see, they began to be more concerned with self than they did with sacrifice.

[15 : 49] Rather than seeing what God deserved, they began to look at what they wanted. And when the home doesn't allow God to take priority, the home becomes more concerned about what I can get rather than what he deserves.

Because if we don't know God, we really don't know what is his to begin with. And here is one of the sorrows of that home. Is their focus was no longer on worship.

But it was on themselves. It was on, this is what I want. It was their desires. And desire began to trump dedication.

Desire began to trump sacrifice. Desire began to trump worship. And what they wanted became more important than what he had called them to.

This, again, is not just an Old Testament problem. It's not. The sad reality is, is that the home that is disordered and does not allow God to have his proper place of priority is a home that functions more on wants than worship.

[17 : 01] It is a home. All men and all women, all boys and girls and all people of all ages, when left to themselves, will always look after themselves.

And here we begin to see they did not know the Lord. They had no desire for the things of the Lord. And yet they just wanted what they could get from the Lord and his people.

It says in verse 17, thus the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men despised the offering of the Lord. It would be like, as the Bible tells us in Hebrews chapter 6, crucifying again the Savior.

Despising the offering. These were to be for their redemption, their reconciliation, and their peace. But yet they despised it because all they could see was what they could get out of it.

What despised offering leads to the second thing, and that is a destructive testimony. Because when you don't know the Lord, but you hang around the Lord's people, and when you use the Lord for personal benefit before too long, people will take notice.

[18 : 11] We go down to verse 22, and we begin to see the destructive testimony. Now, Eli was very old. Now, pay attention to this, because we have a tendency to kind of cut Eli some slack.

You say, well, he can't be held accountable for the sins of his children. You're right, because the Bible says that a father should not die for the sins of his children, nor the children die for the sins of the father, but every man will die for his own sins.

Understand that, right? But here we see, now Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons were doing. He heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel. Now, knowing brings responsibility, especially as a priest.

Knowing brings responsibility. God had told his people that even if your own sons deny me, despise me, forsake me, you're to hand them over.

You're to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. He was to have a place of priority. Now, Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and he said to them, Why do you do such things, the evil things?

[19 : 24] Look at this, that I hear from all these people. Do you wonder why worship was so low in that time, when those who were serving in the tabernacle were doing such things, and everyone knew?

Everyone knew. A destructive testimony. He says, I hear it from all these people. No, my sons, for the report is not good. Look at what it says.

Which I hear the Lord's people circulating. This was the testimony that was being proclaimed. Even those in the tabernacle don't really worship the Lord.

This is what they're doing. Even those who were supposed to be officiating at the altar of sacrifice do not hold it in reverence. This is what they're doing. May we not blame the people of society when even those in the tabernacle couldn't get it right.

Because if we want to bring it to our day, the responsibility starts in the pulpit, and then moves to the pew, and then it finally makes its way to the streets.

[20 : 24] Because the testimony being proclaimed out there about what we do in here will dictate how they live out there. It will.

That's just a reality. And so many times that testimony is not good. The mega church all over the world had a horrific fall a couple years ago.

There's a great documentary out about that fall. You can watch it on Discovery Plus. You can see all of the dirty laundry being aired out there. You can see all of them. This is a mega church.

I'm talking about a worldwide mega church. I'm not here to promote it. I mean, I've watched it, yes. And you can hear everything that happened on the inside of the church. You can hear all the confessions that come from those who knew the pastors.

And you can find out what the pastors did. And you can hear it in their own words. You can hear their own acknowledgement of it. But probably the saddest reality of it is one of the lawyers that is currently enthralled in bringing a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the senior pastor who was once a person of faith made this statement and it made me mad.

[21 : 34] He said, because that's what every pastor does. In his estimation, every pastor's just like that.

Now, who did I get mad at? The lawyer? No. Because every pastor he met did the same thing. Me being an individual I am, I looked at my wife and said, yeah, because I wear \$5,000 shoes and \$20,000 shirts and I have it easy, right?

I mean, things are going great here. But the testimony is that this is what pastors do. They take advantage of you, they fleece you, and they use you.

Now, where does the greater responsibility lie? By the way, every accusation being brought against that senior pastor was first an accusation that had been brought against his father.

It was a disordered home. And this disordered home has led to a destructive testimony. And that testimony resonates more than just right there because the reality is, is all the people are talking about it.

[22 : 48] All the people. And it begins to be destructive to the people of God. Because he says there in verse 25, if one man sins against another, God will mediate for him.

Which means there's a mediator. I sin against you, you sin against me, there's a mediator. Job said it like this, oh, I wish there was an umpire to stand between us. There is an umpire. He is Jesus Christ.

There's a mediator. That's one of the great things about the people of God. We have a mediator. But if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? What can happen?

He said when the people start speaking of what you're doing to God, there's no one who can defend you. You can't even defend yourself. And we read this striking part of the verse says, But they will not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

Other translations say he intended to put them to death. It's not the desire of the Lord. God does not desire that any should perish. No, not one. But he will bring about consequences for sins.

[23 : 56] He is not passive. He will bring about consequences. There's the despised offering. There's the destructive testimony. And here's the third and final thing.

It's a diminished position. Eli and his sons were holding a pretty good position, even in that place of the world. Sure, worship wasn't what it should be. Sure, every man was doing what was right in his own eyes.

And society wasn't really being impacted by what was going on. At least it didn't appear to be so. But what was going on in the tabernacle of Shiloh. I mean, there were a few individuals. Boaz lives at that same time.

You know, Samuel's family is alive at that same time. God's always got his people. But, you know, things don't necessarily, they don't look like the people of God marching around the walls of Jericho anymore.

They're kind of being held captive by everybody else. But Eli and his sons are doing okay. They're doing okay. You know, they're eating well. We know that. We can see it.

[24 : 54] But then it says, then a man of God came. We don't know who he is. He's never named for us. And we don't need to know his name. Because God always has his man and his messenger. Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him.

Now, in case we were wondering if Eli had any responsibility or culpability to this. Here we have God himself declaring it to us. Thus says the Lord, did I not indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?

Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be my priests? To go up to my altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?

They're saying, did I not provide for you? Did I not give you sufficiency? This is what God's asking. And look at what he says. Now, he's addressing this to Eli, not just to his two sons. Why do you kick at my sacrifice and my offerings, which I have commanded in my dwelling, and honor your sons above me?

So he says, you're esteeming your sons more than you esteem me. Why? Because the home's in disorder. God should have been priority, but he was not. And look at what it says.

[25 : 59] In case you were wondering, and you need to understand this because I know some people think that I'm kind of hard on Eli. Talking about him being overweight and falling off his stool and dying. But look at what it says. How had he dishonored God?

By making yourselves fat with the choices of every offering of my people Israel. He was fat because he dishonored the sacrifices with his sons.

God said, I've given you enough. But you've made yourselves fat with my offering. You've gotten rich off of what was given to me. So you've robbed me. And this is where God starts holding him accountable.

And then God speaks of this position he holds, right? He says, you hold this. But God says, I will not be mocked. And we get over there to verse 30. Because those who honor me, I will honor. But those who despise me will be lightly esteemed.

He begins to speak of the tragedy that's going to come upon Eli's family. He said, behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength. And the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house. You know, the Bible says it's a blessing to be old.

[27 : 03] It says that it's a blessing to age and to see the generations coming up after you. And it's a sign of being honored and favored of the Lord.

He says, you're not going to have that. You're not going to see any old man in your house. You will see the distress of my dwelling in spite of all the good that I will do for Israel. You know how it happens, right?

When they write Ichabod. The glory has departed. Because the Ark of the Covenant is taken away. The distress of his dwelling. Who wants to go to an empty tent that doesn't even have the presence of God in it?

But there's a Samuel there, right? And then God begins to do good to his people. He says, you'll see this. He says, I will not cut off every man from yours from my altar.

So that your eyes will not fail from weeping. He says, I'm not just going to end it. I'm going to make you look at it. I'm going to make you sorrow in it. I'm going to make you mourn over it. I'm going to make you weep over it. And he says that this will be a sign to you.

[28 : 01] And it will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. On the same day, both of them will die. This is a sign. What is he saying? You have a place of prominence.

You have a place of ease. You have a place of my provisions. And this is everything that I have done for you. Did I not do this? But since you do not esteem me, I will begin to diminish your position.

I begin to take it away from you. I begin to take it away from you. And I will not be without, God says. Here, God reminds them, you need me more than I need you.

Because I'm going to diminish your position. Verse 35 says, but I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who would do according to what is in my heart and in my soul.

And I will build him an enduring house. And he will walk before my anointed always. Now, it's tempting to look at Samuel and say, that's Samuel. I caution you in that.

[28 : 59] Because Samuel is a prophet and a judge. We do not have him recorded as a priest. And Samuel's two sons, or Samuel's children, are not necessarily ideal either. One of the main reasons they ask for a king by the time we get to 1 Samuel chapter 8 is because the nation realizes that Samuel's sons are not necessarily following in the footsteps of their father.

So what we see here, God says, I will raise up a faithful priest for myself. What does it say? And I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before my anointed.

There's this word always, always, always. I think words in scripture are important. I think they're important. You know, we read this morning a reference to Psalm 110.

You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. God raises up some faithful priests throughout the years, but the faithful priest whose house will endure, who will always walk before his anointed, is Jesus Christ.

He always will be there. Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of bread, or a piece of silver, or a loaf of bread, and saying, look at this.

[30 : 19] They have went from being those who were literally saying, give me the prime cut of meat before you burn the fat off of it, because I want the taste of the fat. They've went from that person to these people.

Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread. See the diminished position. Friend, in this world, you do not necessarily have to have God in his place of priority in your life to at least gain some status in the world.

But God will not be mocked, and there will be a day of diminished position. When the home is in disorder, God will begin to set things aright. Those who were once fat will all of a sudden become lean.

Those who once had all, all of a sudden be in want. We see that it may not be in this life, but it will be in a life. And we see this reality. There's a contrast between a well-ordered home.

Here's little Eli. Right? I mean, little Samuel, who is living among Eli. And Samuel, it says, was growing in stature and in favor, both with God, with the Lord, and men.

[31 : 26] Literally means he was going on good and great. Going on good and great. And right beside Samuel is Eli and his sons. Samuel is on his way up, and they're on their way down.

It's amazing. The only influence that we can say over each one of those was the home. And the influence of the home has a great place of impact on society.

God will use Samuel. Now, is Samuel's home completely right later on? No. Because they're not. No, no, no. No one of them are perfect. We won't meet one that's perfect until we meet Jesus Christ.

But we see here. We see the contrast. And we see this sorrow of a disordered home. All right. 1 Samuel 2, 12 through 17, and 22 through 36.

Before we close in a word of prayer. You won't have any questions that are really just penetrating on your mind and heart. We've got about maybe 10 minutes. Anything you've got to know? Anything at all?

[32 : 33] All hearts and minds clear? Your pastor's wife's got a really good thing that she does for me every now and then. When we're driving down the road and she wants to.

Because she especially likes to do it on Sundays when she knows that sometimes I get in a fog and my mind is kind of overwhelmed. So she asked me, she says, what's one of your gems?

What's something sparkling in your text that you haven't seen before? What stands out to you? What's amazing? So I'm going to ask you that. What have you read this week? What have you studied? What's a gem? Give me a gem.

Something like that. That was good. Anybody? You need those. You need those. Right?

Anybody? All right. Okay. Okay. All right.

[33 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 32] Thank you.

Thank you.