

Lessons from the life of Samuel the Prophet

Objective

To examine the life of Samuel the Prophet and how can we apply his example to our lives.

Reference

The Holy Bible

Scriptural Verse

“But I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you” (1 Samuel 12:23-24)

Introduction

- Samuel was born to Elkanah and Hannah. His mother, Hannah, was barren yet God granted her a son.
- Hannah dedicated Samuel for service in the temple and he lived under the care of Eli the priest. However, Eli’s sons (Hophni and Phinehas) were corrupt priests.

Lesson Outline

1. Listening to God’s calling
 - (1 Samuel 3:1-10) Samuel was very quick to respond to the Lord’s calling. This is similar to when God asked Abram to sacrifice his son.
 - Do we delay or ignore when we hear God speaking? (i.e., put it off to tomorrow, it’s too difficult or unpleasant, He must be addressing someone else); Do we misunderstand who is really speaking? (i.e., God or Eli).
 - At the time, Samuel “did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him”. God can call us before we even know Him yet or feel equipped for the calling (i.e., Moses, Jeremiah).
 - Persistence in listening – Samuel responded to God’s call 4 times before God actually spoke to Him. How quick are we to dismiss the Word of God?
2. Speaking the unpleasant truth
 - (1 Samuel 3:12-14) Samuel spoke honestly to Eli, the words that God told him to speak (i.e., with honesty, without interpretation, without judgment and without fear of punishment).
 - We are often placed in similar situations, how do we respond? (i.e., we are worried about offending the feelings of the other, we worry about how will people think about us, we worry we are only one person standing against hundreds).

3. Considering other's sins as his own

- (1 Samuel 7:3-6) Samuel acted as though he were to blame along with the people, this is similar to Moses' example. Do we blame our sins on others? For example:
 - **Anger** - I wouldn't lose my temper if my co-workers were easier to get along with, or if my kids behaved better, or if my spouse were more considerate.
 - **Impatience** - I would be a very patient person if it weren't for traffic jams and long lines in the grocery store. If I didn't have so many things to do, and if the people around me weren't so slow, I would never become impatient!
 - **Lust** - I would have a pure mind if there weren't so many sensual images in our culture.
 - **Anxiety** - I wouldn't worry about the future if my life were just a little more secure—if I had more money, and no health problems.
 - **Spiritual Apathy** - My spiritual life would be so much more vibrant and I would struggle with sin less if my friends were more encouraging, or if Sunday school were more engaging, or if my church were more lively, or if the sermons were better.
 - **Insubordination** - If my parents/bosses/elders were godly leaders, then I would joyfully follow them.
 - **A Critical Spirit** - It's not my fault that the people around me are ignorant and inexperienced.
 - **Bitterness** - If you knew what that person did to me, you would understand my bitterness. How could I forgive something like that?
 - **Gluttony** - My wife/husband/roommate/friend is a wonderful cook! The things they make are impossible to resist.
 - **Gossip** - It's the people around me who start the conversations. There's no way to avoid hearing what others happen to say. And when others ask me questions, I can't avoid sharing what I know.
 - **Self-Pity** - I'll never be happy, because my marriage/family/job is so difficult.
 - **Selfishness** - I would be more generous if we had more money.
- Instead, like Samuel, we need to not only take responsibility for our sins, but also help our fellow neighbor with theirs "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1)

4. Trust in God more than man

- The people wanted a physical King, but this was against God's command but Samuel didn't want to be like all the other nations. God was their

King. His security was in God. Where is our security? (i.e., money, health, family/friends, work, social status) What do I feel I cannot live without?

5. Praying for those that reject us

- Samuel was rejected by the people as their leader. He did not take this personally nor hate them as a result. How do we respond in similar situations?
- We get offended when rejected because our identities are not completely built on God. (i.e., we have low self-esteem, we desire constant validation from others, we constantly want to prove we are right or good). We must learn to deal with loss and failure, and avoid self-pity.

Conclusion

Samuel taught us how to listen to God's calling, speak the unpleasant truth, consider other's sins as our own, trust in God more than man and praying for those who reject us.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. What are things that God may call us to do?
2. How does God call us?
3. How are ways that we can speak the truth in love to people?