

1 Samuel 12:1-25
He Is Faithful

1 Samuel 12:1-25 [12:1] *And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you. [2] And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day. [3] Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before 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? **Testify against me and I will restore it to you.**" [4] They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." [5] And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."*

[6] *And Samuel said to the people, "The LORD is witness, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. [7] Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous deeds of the LORD that he performed for you and for your fathers. [8] When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the LORD and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. [9] **But they forgot the LORD their God.** And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander 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. [10] And they cried out to the LORD and said, '**We have sinned**, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.' [11] And the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. [12] And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king. [13] And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you. [14] If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, **and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well.** [15] But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, **then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.** [16] Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. [17] Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king." [18] **So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.***

[19] *And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, **for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.**" [20] And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. **Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD**, but serve the LORD with all your heart. [21] **And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty.** [22] **For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.** [23] Moreover, as for me, **far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you**, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. [24] **Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.** [25] But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."*

Verses 1-5

Samuel presents himself for judgment before the people and before God. He demonstrates how we are to repent. He shows us that He has been obedient but he also shows us that if he has committed any sin against anyone, and this sin is unknown to him, he offers to repent and restore.

1. What a great example of repentance.

A. Know your sin: Acknowledge your error. See sin for what it is. See the truth of your own sin.

B. Ask God, and others, to show you your sin. Especially sin you are unaware of...

Samuel presents himself for judgment.

Before the people: He asks them if he has wronged them. He is not being arrogant and challenging them to find fault, he is asking so that he may make right that which he has defiled.

[5] And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."

C. Repent before God (all sin is a sin against God), and man... and make restoration.

Knowing your sin is not enough. Repentance is required. This is our act of obedience.

Repentance doesn't mean to just feel sorry for what you've done... it means to change your mind and your actions.

2. Don't go back and wallow in your guilt. Once you acknowledge your sin, once you repent and change...

Don't relive the tragic mistake, the "big one" that has soured your life. We are not to make ourselves **miserable by re-living the memory of our rebellion**, pushing the replay button and going over the whole messy thing in lurid and precise detail **as though such misery makes atonement. It doesn't!**

When Jesus says, there is no more guilt, no more shame... it's not because he is OK with our sin... it's because when we repent, it is over. Once and for all.

Psalm 103:9-13 [9] *He will not always chide,*

nor will he keep his anger forever.

[10] *He does not deal with us according to our sins,*

nor repay us according to our iniquities.

[11] *For as high as the heavens are above the earth,*

so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

[12] *as far as the east is from the west,*

so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[13] *As a father shows compassion to his children,*

so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

Why do we keep remembering? Why do we keep kicking ourselves over and over again? I think it may be connected to the fact that we don't forgive others.

A. We had an earthly sinful father. Our own earthly father was and is not God. We struggled to feel forgiven and worthy and loved unconditionally. Even if our father was or is a disciple of Christ.. his example of Godliness was flawed. And this is true of every earthly father. Satan wants us to use our own relationship with our earthly father as a substitute for our understanding of our heavenly father. **He wants to take our eyes off of Jesus and give us an earthly substitute.**

B. We don't forgive others so we assume others do not forgive us.

See, when we don't forgive others and "let their offence go"... we allow the thought in our own head that since I cannot forgive... then others must not forgive.

You ever meet a thief. Ever know a thief? A thief is a very suspicious person. They think they are being taken advantage of. They think that they are being stolen from or being belittled behind their back. Why? Because they do it themselves. And if they do it... they assume that everybody does it. See what I mean?

If you don't forgive, then how can you ever trust that you would be forgiven. After all, if I do it, then everybody must do it.

I think this is one reason that Jesus says if we forgive, we shall be forgiven as well. It is very far reaching even into our own daily thoughts.

Let me ask you this... do you feel unforgiven by God?

Do you think that your feelings of unforgiveness might have something to do with the idea that you are not a very forgiving person?

Unforgiveness is about control.

When we forgive, we give all rights of control back to God. We don't forgive others because it gives us a feeling of control and superiority. We can control our relationship and attitude and even in a weird way, feel like we are protecting ourselves from them. "I'll never let them hurt me again".

Think about Jesus and how He forgives. Think about how we continue to hurt Jesus with our sin and disobedience... yet He always forgives. Always restores. Always loves. He is the one who initiates forgiveness. He gave His all before we even were aware of our sin.

If God himself can do this for us... would it not be acceptable for us to initiate forgiveness towards others... even when the hurt they have caused is terrible? Just as terrible as the hurt we have caused our God?

3. We are to go forward in basic, simple fidelity to God from that point on. "

[24] Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.

How can God be like this? How can he say to us, Don't be afraid? Why will God still have relationship, love and blessing for those who have committed treason against Him? Because He keeps His word. He will never cast away His people. His decision has been to "have a people". And He will have us! He never goes back on a decision. His reputation is wrapped up in it.

4. Even though the people forgot the Lord, God will not forsake His people.

God is faithful even in our unfaithfulness. He is always reaching out to us. He is always the one who reaches out first. He is the one who brings salvation. Even though we rebel, forget and dismiss God. He remains faithful. God may punish, but He never forsakes. He will never leave us without the covering of His Love.

"You can't beat me up because You're my father"... STORY

We are commanded... We must see our great evil... and we must see God's great steadfast love for us. Only the latter can keep us from despair over the former. It is not only by Grace alone that we become God's people, but by grace alone we remain His people.

5. The man or woman of God, pastors, leaders in the church are here to root for you. To pray for the sinner. To support those that go astray. We all go astray, the question is... when will you go astray.

Samuel will not sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for the people.

The servant of God (pastors) are never allowed vengeance or revenge. They are never allowed to revel in the demise of God's people or even those that don't know God. They are always called to pray and hope for the best. To ask God for mercy on behalf of the people and their sin. They are called to lead the way in this regard. No delight can be taken in a sinner's folly and consequence.

The pastor or spiritual leader is not here to beat you down when you sin. We are here to lift you up. To pray for you, to root for you. To cheer for you. There is no condemnation, only forgiveness and restoration.

Too many churches and leaders take a tact of requiring penance out of people. Administering judgment and condemnation and requiring recompense.

Yes there are consequences for sin. Yes sin must be acknowledged and repented of. And sometimes people need a path to restoration. BUT... and this is a big BUT... Are we not followers of a forgiving God? Are we not the people that are to be the example of Christ? How can the people of God forgive when their leaders will not forgive?

Fear god and serve Him faithfully.

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Continue on and persevere in the faith. Do not be dismayed or swayed from your path of obedience.

If you do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.

There are consequences to sin. But God forgives. Let your sin drive you to the arms of Jesus. Let it drive you to the arms of the body of Christ.

When the king does wickedly, the king suffers but so do the people. When leaders do wickedly, not only does the leader suffer, but the people in that leaders charge suffer as well.

Pause:

Don't you want to be forgiven? Don't you want to know this perfect forgiveness? Don't you want to forgive others? Don't you want this life of love and joy and salvation. This life that is so restful, peaceful and abundant?

Ask God to show you your sin? Repent of your sin. Let God forgive you. Let others be forgiven by you.