

Message #26**I Samuel 12:1-25**

One of the most amazing things about God is that His grace and mercy are available to us every day. His mercies are new to us and fresh to us every day. Just think about that. Every day we may tap into the grace and mercy of God. Now here is what I know about every one of us. We are sinners and we need the grace and mercy of God. We need it not only for salvation, but for survival. Time and time again the Bible says if we will turn from our sin and turn to the Lord, we will experience His amazing grace.

At this moment in Israel's history, frankly she was a spiritual mess. She had mistreated Samuel, she had sinned, she had forgotten the blessings of God and she wanted to be like every other nation in the world in that she demanded a king.

Samuel was in the twilight of his life and what he does in this chapter is one of pure grace and forgiveness.

IN AN AMAZING DEMONSTRATION OF GRACE, SAMUEL COMMUNICATES TO ISRAEL THAT IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE REBELLED AND SINNED AGAINST HIM AND GOD, IF THE PEOPLE WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SIN, FEAR THE LORD AND OBEY THE LORD, THEY WILL EXPERIENCE HIS RICH BLESSINGS.

This is an amazing message that Samuel leaves with Israel. It is, as Dr. McGee said, Samuel's "swan song" (*I Samuel*, Thru the Bible, Vol. 2, p. 144). What a wonderful, encouraging, final speech he gives them.

In spite of their failures, if God's people would get back to the basics of turning from their sin and obeying the word of God, God would bless them. Even though they had done wrong in rejecting Samuel and going after a king, God would still bless them.

This is so good for us to see and know. When we have blown it, if we will face it and turn from it and turn back to the Lord, He will bless us.

Now there are six amazing realities in this section:

REALITY #1 – Samuel requests that the people judge his ministry. **12:1-5**

We may recall that the Elders came to Samuel back in chapter 8 and demanded a king because he was old and his sons were not spiritual (8:5). In some respects, he was being run out of ministry. Samuel did not forget that and before he died he wanted to set the record straight. He asks the people to honestly assess his life and ministry.

This is somewhat of an odd thing to do; however, this would accomplish at least three things:

- 1) It would clear him in view of his son's failures.
- 2) It would establish that he had been faithful throughout his entire ministry.
- 3) It would establish his Divine authority in view of what he was about to communicate.

Now Samuel brings out four facts in the first part of his discourse:

Fact #1 - Samuel had appointed Israel a King because of their request. **12:1-2a**

Samuel did not believe this appointment of a king was God's will and it certainly had not been his will (8:7-8). This was the people's will. The reason he appointed a king for them is because they asked him and God let him, but this was all contrary to the word and will of God. A democracy can be very wrong.

Fact #2 - Samuel had lived his entire life before these people. **12:2b**

The reason why Samuel brings up his age and his sons is because those were the two reasons they wanted him out of office (8:4-5). Samuel says you people have seen me since I was a young boy. You have watched me over the years. He says you have watched me age and watched my hair change color and you have seen my sons and you know I have lived my life with integrity from my youth.

Fact #3 - Samuel had never defrauded or taken anything that did not belong to him. **12:3-4**

Samuel says over the years I have made many judgments as a man of God and not one time have I done anything to defraud or oppress or bribe anyone. Samuel says I never once blinded my eyes to justice and if you can point to anything I took that wasn't mine, I will restore it to you. Samuel had been a man of integrity and according to **verse 4**, the people knew it. When he would leave this ministry, he would leave clean. They had nothing on him.

Fact #4 - Samuel demands that the people acknowledge this before the LORD. **12:5**

There is something to be said for corporate gatherings and corporate testimony. Samuel demanded that these people publicly admit that he had never done one thing to defraud these people. They are publicly admitting that it is true. He wanted this on the record before God.

REALITY #2 – Samuel reminds Israel of her unfaithfulness. **12:6-13**

Notice **verse 6** begins with the adverb "then." After Samuel established his faithfulness, verified by the people, he decided to present a little history lesson which begins when Moses and Aaron were used by God to deliver Israel from the Egyptians.

It appears to me that he wants to develop some important theological themes:

- 1) The theme of crying out to God and depending on God. **12:8a**
- 2) The theme of the sovereignty of God and the deliverance of God. **12:8b**
- 3) The theme of the failure and sinfulness of God's people. **12:9**
- 4) The theme of the negative consequences for sin and rebellion. **12:10**
- 5) The theme of blessings for repentance. **12:11**

We may remember that Jacob moved his family to Egypt because Joseph was there. After 400 years of captivity to the Egyptians, the Israelites finally cried out to God and God sent them Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land.

But it wasn't long until she forgot about God, so God permitted her to be oppressed by various groups, including the Philistines (**12:9**). **Verse 10** says they finally cried to the LORD and admitted their sin and God sent His men to deliver them, including Samuel himself (**v. 11**).

But look at **verse 12**. This verse makes it clear that they were not content with God's men leading them, but they wanted a king like the Ammonites had. They wanted a king like Nahash, who had just threatened to cut out their eyes. They did not want some Bible man leading them; they wanted a king so **verse 13** says God gave them one. They got their wish.

This entire king thing existed because of the unfaithfulness of the people. God permitted them to have their way which was not His way.

REALITY #3 – Samuel presents the various options and consequences for obedience and disobedience. **12:14-15**

The children of Israel could not undo the past, but they could make decisions in the present that would affect them in the future. There are two decisive options God's people have:

Decisive Option #1 - The decisive option to fear the LORD. **12:14**

- 1) Fearing the LORD means having a reverence and healthy fear.
- 2) Fearing the LORD includes serving the LORD.
- 3) Fearing the LORD includes the idea of obeying God.
- 4) Fearing the LORD includes the idea of not rebelling against God.

Now the end result for one who fears the LORD and does this is that God will permit the people and the leader to follow and obey His word.

Decisive Option #2 - The decisive option not to fear the LORD. **12:15**

There is a heavy emphasis on listening to the word of God. If one refuses to listen to the word of God and does not obey the word of God, God's hand will be against him. There is a close connection between fearing the Lord and loving and obeying the word.

King Saul needed to be willing to be under the word of God as did the rest of the nation. Too many people drift away from their commitment to God and His word. What really must happen if they want the blessings of God is that they need to intensify their commitment to God and His word.

REALITY #4 – Samuel asks God to miraculously confirm his message. **12:16-18**

Samuel asked God to send a sign from heaven to confirm what he had just said. It was early summer and time for the wheat harvest and thunder and rain were unheard of at that time. Samuel asked God to send thunder and rain in front of these people to confirm the fact that what he had been telling them was the truth. He specifically wanted them to realize that their turning away from him to wanting a king was evil and wicked. **Verse 18** says that God did send the thunder and rain and the people greatly feared the Lord.

REALITY #5 – The people finally acknowledge their sin. **12:19**

This was an amazing transformation. These people who wanted Samuel out of office are now begging him to pray for them. To this point, Samuel felt like a useless old man, but he meant more to these people than he could ever dream.

When people desire things contrary to God's word and will, they will not get God's blessings unless they make it right.

REALITY #6 – Samuel encourages the people. **12:20-25**

Samuel said to the people that you did commit evil but if you do not turn away from learning the word and obeying the word, you have nothing to fear.

Verse 21 warns God's people not to turn away from Him to things that are futile, which are of no profit.

Verse 22 is so critical. Samuel says God will not abandon His people on account of His great name. **God will never abandon Israel.** This is not because she has been faithful, but because He has called them to be His people and His name is on the line.

Verse 23 is a great verse because Samuel says I am old but I will not sin as a leader against you, which means I will do two things as a leader:

- 1) I will always pray for you.
- 2) I will always instruct you in the ways of God.

This is the job of a leader. A leader has a responsibility to pray for the people and to instruct the people in the word and ways of God and it is sinful if he does not do this.

In **verse 24**, Samuel says God's people need to do three things:

- 1) Fear the LORD.
- 2) Serve Him in the context of truth with all your heart.
- 3) Remember what great things God has done for His people.

Verse 25 makes it clear that if the people do wickedly, God will let bad things happen.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS:

- 1) **We all sin, but the key to blessings is to be honest and admit it and turn from it.**
- 2) **If God's people persist in rebellion, God will chastise them.**
- 3) **God's people need a leader praying for them and instructing them.**
- 4) **God's people must not turn away from God to things of no profit.**