

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 17 - 'A Gracious Promise' 1 Samuel 12



It is easy to get carried away in victory, and Samuel wants to make sure that the people knew the reality of the situation, and to hammer home the essential point that their future success depended not on Saul, or any other earthly king, but solely on Jehovah. The king was just a servant for God, the importance of obeying God's covenant remained unaffected, and essential to the future prosperity of the nation. Samuel firstly establishes his credentials to speak with authority, he rebukes the people, and then points them to the gracious promise of God. We can see:

1. Authority - When the people had made the royal request for a king, the people had ultimately rejected the leadership of God, and of Samuel, who would be the last of the Judges. He makes clear that he speaks with authority from the Lord, and also to make clear his faithfulness in his position, and that he was blameless before them. The reason why Samuel is able to speak in this manner is because he had been faithful in proclaiming and living by the truth. He had been faithful in speaking the truth and keeping his integrity. The people would lose a leader of this calibre to embrace Saul who would turn out to be a man of hypocrisy and duplicity.

2. Accusation - The clear emphasis of the message sees Samuel point to what the Lord had done for them through his grace and mercy. Samuel, as with a man with God's message, was not afraid to tell the situation as it really was and then challenge them to devote themselves to the Lord and his covenant. The Lord had displayed such kindness in exclusively making his covenant in the Old Testament with Israel, and Israel's obedience and upholding of the covenant made possible their enjoyment of God's promised blessings. Failure to obey would see the Lord's blessing withheld and discipline. They should have rested in the Lord in gratitude for His continued deliverance and provision. They should have looked to Him and trusted Him for the future. They should have shunned their unbelief and trusted him alone. Yet, they demanded a king, and they would exchange the leadership and provision of the great God of heaven for a mere sinful man. It is easy for us to slip into an easy attitude of unbelief. If they were complacent about the extent of the power of God, Samuel called on the people to stand and see the greatness of the Lord. It is an awesome demonstration, as Samuel's prayer, sees the Lord create a terrible storm in the midst of the dry-season. It demonstrated that God is not removed, or His power overestimated, but rather He is the living God, who holds all things in His hand, and can impose those realities at any time should He so wish. The result is that the people are very clear about their sin, and the specific nature of their sin. Only when God's people see their sin from a heavenly perspective will there be any desire to kill it, and turn from it.

3. Assurance - So the people are trembling before a holy God, and the demonstration of some of the awesomeness of God's power. However, this is a lovely thing, Samuel moves from the fear of the Lord, to the fear not that is found in His grace. He urges the people as they acknowledge their sin, to start afresh in the situation. The Lord would not forsake His people because of His promises, and His steadfast faithfulness. What is not in question is the faithfulness of God, He would be faithful, the issue was whether Israel would be or not. They had sinned, yet God in His mercy and grace would help them if they would fear and obey Him. He will not cast them away because He had been pleased to make them His own people. He does not negate or fail the promises he has made. This certainly applies to His people in this day, He will not forsake you. Why? His grace is greater than all my sin, all your sin. You might not be able to reverse the consequences of your sin, the people here couldn't, but you can humbly and gladly receive the fresh outpouring of grace that He longs to give. To start anew with Him, to look forward, not back. It is by His grace alone that we become the Lord's people, and it is certainly by His grace alone that we remain His people.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs