

Broomfield



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Volume 4 Issue 37

September 11, 2005

The Consequences of a Biblical Call

The Attributes of a Prophetic Call, Part 8

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

We live in a world where there are consequences for the decisions that we make.

Galatians 6:7, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

If we make foolish decisions as Christians, we will suffer consequences though we are forgiven in Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.”

Truly though we are in Christ and part of a church family, nevertheless Paul says that if we refuse to be responsible, we will go without food.

James 4:3, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

Truly as a general principle there are consequences for sin even when we are forgiven. And yet the converse also is true: If we sow to the Spirit, we shall from the Spirit reap life.¹

Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The one who lives unto Christ is promised provision from the Lord. If we commit our way to the Lord and pray for our leaders, we shall know “a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:2). Truly whatever we sow, we are going to reap!

This is an important truth when it comes to service in the Kingdom of God. The text at which we are

¹ Compare Hosea 10:12

looking details Samuel's call and service as a prophet of the Lord. Now as a young boy, he at first buckled under the pressure of such a calling. Rather than boldly proclaiming the message of the Lord, he withdrew fearing Eli.² Now based on what we have seen, you can imagine how the prophetic message must have weighed heavily upon him. When Jeremiah refused to speak God's word, he said "his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9).

I cannot help but to wonder if Samuel knew something of this burden! But then we read, "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him" (1 Samuel 3:18a). What relief Samuel must have known, and yet not only him, but everyone in Israel! For as we shall see, there were positive consequences that resulted from Samuel fulfilling his call.

And that raises these questions:

- What will happen if you and I prove faithful to the gifts and callings that God has given to us?
- What will be the result in this body and in the world in which we live?

We are looking at a text which details the consequences of fidelity to the calling of God. These are consequences that occurred not only in Samuel's day, but they are also ones that we can expect in our own day.

Well-being of the People of God

Let us consider the first consequence of faithfulness when it comes to God's call, the well-being of the people of God.

1 Samuel 3:18, "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good."

This is quite an incredible response. Notice that Samuel's fidelity as a servant of God placed Eli in the position of being a responder to the Lord! And whether you realize it or not, this is significant.

A major issue in Biblical studies revolves around the question: Is God the responder or is man? The one side says it is God that looks upon His creation and watches to see what His people or the nations are doing and then God reacts accordingly. The other side says that God is sovereign and He reigns over this world and calls man to respond appropriately to His person and work.

Man the Responder

It should be obvious, but it is the latter that is taught in Scripture. God is the one in control. Man is not in control. God is the actor; we are the reactor! Thus, when it comes to the incidental things of life, we read these words:

Matthew 10:29, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."

Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."

² Compare 1 Samuel 3:15

And when it comes to who and what we are we read these words in Scripture:

Exodus 4:11, “And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?”

Matthew 10:30, “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

When it comes to the boundaries of nations and the actions of kings, we read this:

Job 12:23, “He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.”

Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

When it comes our sin, we read the words of Joseph in response to his brother's sin.

Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

When it comes to trial and tragedy, we read this:

Isaiah 45:6-7, “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”

Amos 3:6, “ Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”

When it comes to repentance and faith, we read this:

1 Samuel 2:25, “If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? **Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.**”

After hearing about Peter’s experience among the Gentiles the early church fathers confessed this:

Acts 11:18. “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

When it comes to our eternal destinies, we read Peter’s words speaking of the non-Christian who never is saved:

1 Peter 2:8, “And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, **even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**”

When it comes to anything and everything in this world, we read this:

Psalm 135:5-6, “For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

Indeed! God is the Sovereign Lord reigning over creation. Accordingly, would you notice that we are at our best when we are in the position of “responder” to God. That is where God would ever and always have us.

James 4:6-7, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Because God is the Sovereign King of creation who upholds all things by the word of His power, the calling that rests upon each and every one of us is a simple one: **SUBMIT!** In other words, do not dictate, determine, nor seek to boss God around. In view of His greatness, simply submit!

James 4:13-15, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

The Psalmist's Declaration

Again, notice the relationship we ought to have with God: One of humble reliance. We do not tell God what we are going to do. Rather we consider His greatness and respond accordingly.

Psalm 99:1-3, “The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.”

Though we have never been under a king in the United States, nevertheless we know enough to realize that in the presence of a king one does not demand, seek to control, or endeavor to beat them to the punch. Rather in the presence of a king one must humbly speak when spoken to. One must listen and respond to what the king says.

This is man's relationship to God. The Psalmist declares that God reigns, and we must tremble. He states that God is highly exalted, and man therefore must praise His great and awesome name.

Isaiah's Example

Isaiah 6:1, 3, 5, “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. . . And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

What sticks out in this passage is the obvious humility and brokenness of Isaiah. He did not waltz into God's presence and demand this and that from Him. Rather, he took the position of the responder to the greatness of his God which left him on his face, bowed low before the Lord.

Solomon's Advise

Ecclesiastics 5:2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Solomon advised that the proper relationship between man and God is for man to be the responder. He recognized that God is highly exalted in the heavens and that man is of this world. Therefore when man comes into the presence of God, man's response must be with few words.

Now, I hope you see that in and throughout redemptive history man's proper role before God is that of the responder. As subjects of the King of kings, it behooves us therefore not to think that God simply exists for our pleasure, or that we are in a place to demand or even expect anything from the hand of God. God owes us nothing. Understand that we have been created for God's good pleasure, and therein we are at our best!

Our best is attained when we are placed in the position of responder to the Lord and when we react appropriately. That is what we see here in 1 Samuel 3.

Through the exercise of Samuel's gift/calling, Eli was placed in the position of responding to the Lord. And what a response Eli gave. Rather than griping against God's providence, or complaining about his circumstances, shifting the blame to his sons, or laying down the cosmic trump-card "But God, that's not fair" he simply said: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him"(1 Samuel 3:18b).

This is such a godly response all on account of the fact that Samuel proved faithful. How important it is that if we have been called by God unto a specific ministry that we prove faithful to that calling. The well-being of our brothers and sisters depends upon it!

And so we see the first consequence of fidelity when it comes to the gifts and callings of the Lord. The first consequence is that it places man in the position where he is forced to respond and dialogue with God unto spiritual growth in grace.

From this I hope you understand how important it is that you prove faithful to your callings, obligations, and siftings in the Lord. God is speaking to our world though His word. God is calling man to repentance. God is embracing His children. God is leading them with a mighty hand. God is drawing nigh to the bedside saying, "Peace! I am your salvation!" And God primarily is doing all of this through the secondary means of His people. As we prove faithful to the divine message; weep with those who weep; uphold each other in prayer; support each other with hugs, cards, phone calls, and acts of kindness; His face and affections are shown forth.

So what happens when the child of God shrinks back, chooses to ignore the body, and looks lightly upon his gifts and callings? In many respects the Lord is mute and the hurting Christian is left wondering why!

Think of it in terms of Eli. Had Samuel remained quiet the destruction of Eli's house would have occurred and the will of the Lord would have come to pass. BUT, Eli would have been devastated with little or no preparation to respond to God. And Eli would have been left to wonder why? He would ask where is God? He would say, "I thought God loved me."

But with Samuel's obedience to the divine revelation the dialogue between God and Eli continued. Eli knew the position of responder such that he could prepare accordingly. Samuel's faithfulness helped Eli

to respond Biblically to the Lord.

How crucial is it that we fulfill our calling- the health of the individual Christian depends upon it! And yet with this we gain insight into one of the primary ways that God embraces His children. James said, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Because this is true, don't miss a very important point: When we experience love from a brother or sister, you must see that we are enjoying the love of Christ. When we encounter compassion from another Christian, we know the compassion of Christ. When the child of God reaches out and holds our hand in the name of the Lord, we embrace the hand of God. This is one of the ramifications of Paul's declaration that, “We are ambassadors of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20)!

This is so important because in the time I have been in the ministry, I have heard people ask: Where is God when it hurts? They say, I know God is sufficient, but at times I need a shoulder to cry upon.

The embrace of the Lord comes primarily through the secondary means of the people of God exercising their gifts and callings. This results in loving the brethren, exhorting one another, encouraging one another, rebuking one another, comforting and caring for one another all in the name of Christ.

Accordingly, if you have known the love of the body, then you know the love of the Lord. When you have received a hug in the name of Christ, you have been embraced by God. When someone has reached out to you such that you could say, “I have been supported!” then you know where God is when it hurts!

But this is the irony: When we are hurting we typically withdraw from the body of Christ and then we wonder where God is?

The Corporate Body Blessed

From this I hope you see the first consequence of fidelity to the ministry: The well-being of the individual in Christ! And yet it is not just the individual- it's the entire body, corporately.

1 Samuel 4:1, “**And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.** Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.”

When I read this, I essentially read, “Thus all Israel was blessed!” And what a glorious truth this is! Don't forget that until now, word from the Lord in those days was rare or precious.³ Unlike today, where we have the completed word of God this was a time in redemptive history when the word consisted of only six or seven books. And very few people owned or possessed these books. But then came this incredible calling of Samuel whereby NOW God's word richly flowed not to just a few, but to the entire nation!

Doctrine of Inspiration

And just by way of footnote, don't get hung up by the phrase, “the word of Samuel came...” This phrase does not imply that Samuel was speaking presumptuously by shelving God's word so that he could speak on his own. Rather this indicates the manner by which God delivered His inspired word.

³ Compare 1 Samuel 3:1

How is it that we can say that Paul wrote Romans and yet it is God's word?

How is it that we consider Scripture to be both the word of God AND yet the word of a man?

Some have posited the “Secretary theory” in which they say that God dictated His word to the writer who then recorded God's revelation. Yet this doesn't do justice to passages like ours this morning. “And the word of Samuel came to all Israel” (1 Samuel 4:1a). Or where we read “The words of Jeremiah . . . To whom the word of the LORD came” (Jeremiah 1:1-2) showing prophet's word to be the same as the Lord's.

Rather it is from passages such as these that we are forced to conclude that the doctrine of inspiration is this:

“...the Holy Spirit acted on the writers of the Bible in... harmony with the laws of their own inner being, using them just as they were, with their character and temperament, their gifts and talents, their education and culture, their vocabulary and style. The Holy Spirit illumined their minds, aided their memory, prompted them to write, repressed the influence of sin on their writings, and guided them in the expression of their thoughts even to the choice of their words”⁴

And all of this occurred in such a way that it can be said that what is written in the Bible is God's word.

God's People Blessed

Through Samuel's willingness to prove faithful to the heavenly calling, God's word came to all Israel! Had Samuel shrunk back, the people of God would not have received such a blessing! The second consequence of fidelity in ministry is that the people of God as a whole are blessed.

Many have raised this objection to this view. “O.K. I see it when it comes to the ministry of God's word, or shepherding, or serving the brethren, but my gifts are not so noble or seen. Outside of personal benefit, what good are the unseen gifts and callings with which I have been entrusted?”

Brothers and sisters you must see that whatever may be your gifts and callings, they are noble and crucial to the body of Christ! Paul emphasizes this point in 1 Corinthians 12. Writing to a group of Christians who were seeking the “showy gifts” (prophecy, speaking in tongues, etc.) and holding them over the heads of the less gifted Paul wrote these words to humble the arrogant in the body:

1 Corinthians 12:17-18, “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

1 Corinthians 12:21, “And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

1 Corinthians 12:24-25, “For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

⁴ Louis Berkhof, Summary of Christian Doctrine, page. 20

Because we are a body, every member/part/person is important. Since this is the case, if you shrink back from service in the Kingdom of God, the body suffers! In fact, Ephesians 4 makes this clear.

Ephesians 4:16, “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

It is only as each member of a body functions according to their gifts and callings that the body grows and is built up in love. This means that if you prove faithful to your calling, it will be said in the ages to come: And all Israel was blessed!

And so we see the first consequence of fidelity when it comes to our heavenly callings: The well-being of the people of God — both individually and corporately.

Hurricane Katrina

Now whether you realize it or not, that brings us to a question that has been bantered about because of the devastation of September 11, the Tsunami in Asia, and Hurricane Katrina. Is this God's judgment against our nation?

Flat out, let me respond by saying “Categorically NO!

Now we say this for a couple of reasons.

First, Genesis 9:8-17 gives us the perpetual covenant sign of the rainbow which testifies that God will not judge the earth with water again.⁵ And 2 Peter 3:7 plainly tells us that the next judgment of the earth will be with fire. Therefore we can confidently declare that this is not God's final judgment.

However, this is not to say that these events don't show forth God's judgment against sin in general.⁶ However, in and of itself we cannot interpret this as judgment against our nation.

Secondly, Christ taught that natural disaster are not a sign of the judgment of God against a particular nation but rather a declaration of the Second Coming of Christ.

Matthew 24:4-8, “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

Thus as birth pangs to a woman, this disaster must remind us that Christ is coming again. We need to prepare the way of the Lord.

⁵ The rainbow has fiery colors in it, to signify that though God will not again drown the world, yet, when the mystery of God shall be finished, the world shall be consumed by fire. – Matthew Henry

⁶ Compare Luke 13:1-5, Jonah, and Isaiah 1-39

However to the many in our churches who must interpret this as judgment, I say, “Go ahead! But be careful!” For what institution today still is in covenant with God?

To suggest that 9/11 or this recent tragedy is God's judgment against America is to imply that as a nation we are in a covenant with God which we are not, nor have we ever been! However the church is in covenant with God, and indeed it is the body of Christ that has a special relationship with God. Therefore if we must interpret this as “judgment” against a particular entity, then we must conclude that the only object of that judgment is us — the body of Christ, the church in America.

If this is the case, could it be that the events in New Orleans are God's judgment against us — a people who have been blessed with so much by way of grace, mercy, love, compassion, gifts of the Spirit, and callings from the Lord and yet refuse to minister on account of laziness, worldliness, or hatred?

Is the message we ought to derive from Katrina is that God is not pleased with us when we live for ourselves, refuse to participate in His ministry, and shrink back in fear of man?

I am not declaring that the events in New Orleans are this, I'm merely raising the question in light of the insistence of so many that this is judgment. Whether this is judgment against us or not, this I know: The health and well-being of the body of Christ is furthered when we prove faithful to the divine calling that rests on our lives. So let us live and labor unto the growth of this body that we might be a holy and pure bride prepared for our wedding day which will occur at the 2nd coming of Christ.

Subscription Information

A subscription to the *Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is on a free basis. To subscribe or unsubscribe send a post card to *Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word*®, Post Office Box 691, Windsor, Colorado 80550. Or you may send your request by email to [Nels Nelson](mailto:Nels.Nelson@broomfieldopc.org). *The Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is published regularly.

VISIT US WHEN IN Broomfield, COLORADO

Feel free to visit Broomfield Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is located at Kohl Elementary School, 10th Street and Kohl, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

All our sermons can be accessed via the World Wide Web. There recording for this sermon can be found at [Consequences of Biblical Ministry](http://broomfieldopc.org/sermonaudio/Consequences_of_Biblical_Ministry.mp3). The web address for all sermons at Broomfield can be found out as follows: <http://broomfieldopc.org/sermonaudio.com>

About the Preacher

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on September 11, 2005. Greg is the Preacher at Broomfield Presbyterian Church.