



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Giver: Giver of the Breakthrough”

Ps. Jim Laffoon – Dec. 7, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What's a memorable sports victory that you especially enjoyed?
- Who is someone you admire who overcame great challenges?
- What is your favorite holiday celebration, and why?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org/media/>

1 Samuel 7:2-14 ESV From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, “Till now the Lord has helped us.” So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

This historical event reveals a progression to real, lasting breakthrough that is applicable to us.

- Crisis
- Consecration
- Confrontation
- Consummation
- Celebration
- Continuation

CRISIS - Israel needed a break-through. For twenty years they had been oppressed or harassed by the Philistines. They had had no victories against their enemies. The ark of God, representing God's presence, was not where God had intended. Israel was down-trodden. But God was about to help them.

CONSECRATION - God can turn a crisis situation into an opportunity for a break-through. To do so, God usually requires fresh consecration. Consecration involves acknowledging our sins and turning from them to follow God whole-heartedly. People needing break-through need to respond to their difficulties by consecrating themselves afresh to the Lord. God responds to such spiritual hunger, humility and faith.

CONFRONTATION - As people turn to God afresh, their spiritual enemies usually come against them with a renewed vengeance. Often things will get worse and become more difficult before they get better. But God is in control. We are not to fear the worst, but to trust God who is good and merciful.

CONSUMMATION - God accepted and responded to Samuel's offering and Israel's consecration. God thundered and threw the enemy into confusion, leading to a rout by Israel. God gives break-through. It was Israel's first victory over the Philistines in twenty years. God will do the same for us. He already has through the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. Now we can expect breakthrough over our spiritual enemies.

CELEBRATION - Though Israel didn't fully drive out the Philistines from all of Israel overnight, they still celebrated the victory they achieved. The tide had turned. We are to celebrate the progress we make all along the way to total victory. We are to rejoice and be thankful for what God has done so far.

CONTINUATION - Israel went on to progressively gain further victories over their enemies. They did not stop with the first key victory. They continued to pursue God's purposes. We must not grow weary of the fight. It will continue until the day we die and go to heaven. Until then God will give us many more victories as we continue to consecrate ourselves afresh.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- Are you in need of a break-through for yourself or for a loved one?
- What would a greater level of consecration to God look like in your life?
- What blessings or victories can you celebrate for the past year?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray prayers of consecration: confession of sin, commitment to follow God, trust in Christ, etc.
- Thank God and celebrate him for all he has done so far in our lives and circumstances.
- Ask for God's wisdom, grace, and help to continue to press for God's will to be done.