

A Man After God's Own Heart – 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 7:2-17

"This Far God Has Helped Us" – June 4, 2017



Introduction

When the ark of God got back to Israel, they too didn't know what to do with it. They knew they couldn't stand before a holy God on their own (6:20), but instead of asking how they could be right with God, they moved the ark to Kiriath-jearim where apparently, it collected dust in neglect. But 20 years of harassment from the neighboring Philistines took its toll and when chapter 7 opens, Israel is finally lamenting (crying, wailing) after God. They'd come to realize their problem was not a management problem (God got rid of the corrupt priests), nor a military problem (God defeated the Philistines on His own). Their problem was a God-problem. They'd drifted from God due to sin and idolatry...so how could they return to God?

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response.

Sermon Outline

How do we return to God?

- I. Repentance (7:2-6)
 - a. Confession
 - b. Turning from sin
 - c. Turning to God
- II. Trust (7:5-11)
- III. Remember (7:12-17)

Read & Discuss

1) Read [1 Samuel 7:2-6](#)

Samuel comes on the scene in v3 talking about how they can return to God. The Hebrew word for 'return' is the same word used in the for repentance. The nation was lamenting, but repentance is more than just tears. Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 where Paul talks about the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. What is the difference between feeling bad about what we've done, and true repentance? Why does Samuel talk about returning to God with "all your heart"? Why does God care about our heart when it comes to repentance? Is there an area of sin that you're struggling with right now? What would it mean to confess that sin and repent of that sin? Have you truly repented of this sin before or was there just remorse? What needs to change to break free from that sin?

Additional reading: Mark 9:42-50, Psalm 32

2) Read [1 Samuel 7:7-11](#)

Israel lamented after God (v2) and got rid of their idols (v4). We know they turned to God because in this section we see them trusting God by obeying God. What was different about Israel's approach to the battle in chapter 7 and their approach to battle in chapter 4? Since repentance means getting rid of 'plan B,' we're left to trust God *alone*. What role does Scripture play in biblical faith? How is faith different than wishful thinking? How can the fear or anxiety that comes with trials help us to rely on God? What burdens do you need to run to God with through prayer right now?

Additional reading: John 14:15, James 2:14-17, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:6-7

3) Read [1 Samuel 7:12-17](#)

Israel had drifted far from God and in the muck of their sin didn't know how to return to Him. God raised up Samuel as their judge to call them to repentance, intercede on their behalf, and lead them back to God. Once reconciled to God, Samuel raises an Ebenezer ('stone of help') to remind God's people, *this far God has helped us*. If God helped us in the past, we can trust Him to help us today and trust Him with our tomorrow. What are different Ebenezers you have – ways you remember God's past faithfulness? What are ways we can encourage and remind each other as a church family? Who are you helping to follow Jesus by reading God's word, prayer and being a loving example?

Additional reading: Romans 8:31-32, 1 Corinthians 10:6-11, Galatians 6:1-2

*Here I raise my Ebenezer; Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger, Interposed His precious blood.
O to grace how great a debtor; Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.
O that day when freed from sinning, I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen; How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry, Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry, Me to realms of endless day.*

From "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Prayer of Response

Spend time praying together in response to God's word for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistum.com/media.php?pageID=6>