

Eli and His Worthless Sons / 1 Samuel 2:12-36

4/25/21

The Book of 1 Samuel Series Part 2

BACKGROUND:

- 1 & 2 Samuel covers the period of Israel's monarchy (first two kings of Israel)
- 1 Samuel comes after the dark period of the judges, where "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." (Judges 21:25 ESV)

LAST WEEK:

- 1 Samuel begins with the story of barren Hannah, who prays for a son whom she vows to dedicate to the Lord. God grants her request by giving her Samuel.
- After Samuel is dedicated to the Lord, Hannah prays this powerful, prophetic prayer:

1 Samuel 2:9-10 (ESV)- ⁹“He (the Lord) will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. ¹⁰The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

THE STORY:

I. THE WICKEDNESS OF ELI'S SONS (vv12-17)

- “They did not know the Lord” (v12)= they knew *about* the Lord, but they did not *really know* Him. They did not respect / revere / love the Lord.
- The fat of the offerings belonged to the Lord (**Lev 7**). Eli's sons are taking for themselves what belonged to God. They are hindering / disrespecting the worship of Yahweh

II. THE WORSHIP OF SAMUEL (vv18-21, 26)

- While Eli's sons are sinning greatly before the Lord, Samuel is serving (v18) and growing (v21, 26) before the Lord.
- Samuel is the bright spot within a dark narrative.

III. THE WEAKNESS OF ELI (vv22-25)

- “Tent of Meeting” (V22)= the place where the holy, awesome, Almighty God of Israel would meet with Moses. The disrespect and shameless sin is growing in the hearts of Eli's sons.
- Instead of removing his sons from office, Eli merely rebukes them
- Eli's sons are scorning the very means that God provided for atonement (v25)

IV. THE WARNING OF JUDGEMENT (vv27-34, 36)

- The “house” of Eli is being brought down for their many sins.
- God will stay true to His promise in v30 (a house of priests to go in and out before Him forever), but it will not be Eli’s house, for those who honor God, He honors (v30)

V. THE WORD OF PROMISE (v35)

- This promise of a faithful priest is ultimately fulfilled in Christ
Hebrews 3:1-2, 5-6 (ESV)- ¹ Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ²who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house... ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

IMPLICATIONS

I. THE WARNING

- Eli and his worthless sons are to be warning to us, that this could happen to anyone
- The same seed of wickedness that was in their hearts, is also in our hearts

Hebrews 3:12-15 (ESV)- ¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵ As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

- We must continually (daily) repent, that our hearts may not grow hardened

II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT

- As we think about Samuel, woven into this dark story, as a little glimmer of light, we see that God is at work in the mess

Romans 8:28 (ESV)- And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is one thing that stuck out to you in the sermon, and why did that stick out to you? What did you learn from this? Is there something that God is trying to teach you? Is there something that you need to apply in your life this week?
2. The fact that the sons of Eli were totally wicked warns us that it is possible to harden your heart so much, that you no longer care about what God says. What is one area of your heart that you are hardening (not listening to God)? What steps can you take to repent of this in your life?
3. Eli failed to do the right thing of removing his sons from office because he

honored his sons above God (v29). What implications does this have on how we should raise our children? If you don't have kids, what implications does this have on your relationships with those closest to you?

4. When we take a step back and see the bigger picture of this story, we see that God is at work in the mess (growing Samuel as a little boy, raising up a faithful priest). Do you believe that this is true (that God is at work) in the mess of your own life? Why or why not? What can help you to trust that God is indeed at work in the mess?