

## Samuel's Address To Israel

“Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.”

1 Samuel 12:24

The occasion which prompted Samuel's remark was that of the Israelite's desire for a king. Although God allowed them to have their request, He was greatly displeased with them. The people were alarmed and confessed their sins in v. 19. They said, “Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.” Samuel then advises the people as seen in his remark in v. 24. This article will focus on both the duties which Samuel encourages as well as the powerful motive of God which Samuel uses as his impetus.

First, Samuel urged the people to fear the Lord. This is an absolutely indispensable part of true godliness. In the context, fear means to show respect or reverence. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Fearing the Lord is not a slavish dread nor a superstitious terror, but a holy respect of offending God. We must always walk and act with the consideration of fearing God. Psalm 19:9 says, “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Second, Samuel urged the people to serve God. We serve God with a voluntary devotion of the heart and life. Our service is constant and persevering. Our service is in public, setting an example for others, and private, demonstrating true devotion. No matter how deeply we feel toward serving God, our service is done in a way which He appoints. It does us no good to serve God in a way which He does not desire (Matthew 7:21-23). When Jesus taught His Sermon on the Mount, not only was arbitrary service rejected, but it also caused those people to be condemned. Be careful how you work in the Lord!

Third, Samuel urged the people to love truth with all their hearts. Our service is to be rendered from pure and sincere motives. This is truth. Hypocrisy has no place in the army of the Lord. We can never play the part and expect the Lord to be pleased. Our entire hearts must also be given to Him. Every faculty and power must be engaged in living as a Christian. Hearts which are divided are hearts which are powerless! A house divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:25). Likewise, a person who tries to live a double life and talk out of both sides of their mouth will never be a righteous disciple of Christ.

The motive Samuel gave for this deep devotion was based on what the Lord had done for them in the past. Certainly children of God can see what God has done for them in the temporal matters of life. The Lord has filled our cup daily with the most wonderful blessings. He gives us food, clothing, and habitations every day. He is so concerned for us, the scriptures state that every hair on our head is numbered (Matthew 10:30). Lamentations 3:22-23 says, “It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,

because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." The Lord's mercies are new every morning and undoubtedly we see this in His actions toward us.

The Lord has also been very good to us in His providential interventions in our lives. How often has the Lord worked in your life and guided you in danger and sickness? We know that God does not work miraculously in our lives, but we must admit He does do something. In the life of Joseph, God guided his life with a purpose. In fact, when all of it was over and Joseph was reunited with his family, he attributed all those dealings to God's providential care: "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" (Genesis 50:20).

Not only does God care for us in our material blessings and providentially, but He also has shown wonderful spiritual mercies. When we were lost in the predicament of sin, God called us from that despairing state through the gospel of His dear Son (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Our minds have been illuminated with the soul-saving gospel. Remember that from the time Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, God was under absolutely no obligation to help us. However, because of His great and matchless love (John 3:16), He blessed us with pardon and redemption from the bondage of sin and raised us to an equal and spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. Hebrews 2:11-12 says, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." God has never withheld any good from us. He has comforted, strengthened, supported, and preserved us spiritually through His extraordinary grace.

Finally, the Lord has given us a promise of glory. Not only has He done much for us in the past, but He has promised to do much for us in the future. To Paul, this promise of glory was so magnificent he was able to say that hardship could never compare to what lay ahead in eternity (Romans 8:18). For all those who love Him, God has prepared a kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12), crown (James 1:12), and eternal glory (Philippians 3:20-21). If we are faithful to God, He will keep us so we can lay hold of that promise (1 Peter 1:3-5).

We need to learn the true nature of religion. True religion includes both fear and service to God. Our obligations to fear and serve God are tremendous, and we need to realize the importance of these topics. Therefore, we look ahead and diligently work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:10). Abused mercies will be a fearful weight of judgment against us; therefore, listen to Samuel's address and further your own dedication to God.

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