

### Digging Deeper Samuel Week 2

We will be looking at 1 Samuel 2:12-11-36 and 1 Samuel 3 this week. As you may recall we left off our Digging Deeper last week with Hannah’s beautiful prayer. This week we will see what has happened to Samuel after being left with Eli to serve the Lord and we will see the Lord calling Samuel to be a prophet.

I am sure that when Hannah vowed to have her son serve the Lord all the days of her life, she thought that leaving him at the tent of meeting was one of the safest places to leave him. Samuel would be an apprentice to the high priest Eli so surely he would be raised to have tremendous faith and would be surrounded by priests who would show him the ropes. Unfortunately, we learn very quickly that the environment at the tent of meeting was less than ideal for one who wanted to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

*1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.*

How incredible that the sons of the high priest would not know the Lord. As I mentioned in the teaching, The Communicator’s Commentary says, ‘they did not know the Lord’ “more likely meant they did not have regard for Him or that they ‘never gave Him a thought.’”

When have you found yourself ‘not giving God a thought?’ What decisions have you made without consulting Him? What plans have you made or are you making with asking Him first? Write a prayer of confession and repent.

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Although Eli served as the high priest and may have known the Lord, it is clear that it was not the case for his sons. Many grandparents and parents have face but it is not the case for their children. What is the faith legacy that was passed onto you you’re your grandparents or parents – or was there one?

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What legacy of faith are you leaving your grandchildren, children, nieces and nephews, or any other children that you have the ability to influence? Ask the Lord to show you how to increase the legacy of faith that you are passing onto the next generation.

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Or perhaps you are a woman of faith and you have children who have turned away from the Lord or who have never walked with the Lord. It does not necessarily mean that the you have done something wrong – we are all responsible for our own faith. Nobody rides the coattails of another into heaven – not even their parents or grandparents. Write a prayer asking the Lord to draw that person(s) into a deep and abiding relationship with Him. Ask the Lord to show you what you can do to help foster that relationship – trusting that it may be to simply back off and let the Lord work.

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As parents, we have a huge responsibility to raise our children to know the Lord but, ultimately, they have to decide what they believe for themselves.

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

These directions to parents in the Old Testament were so steep. They were supposed to be talking about the Lord with their children and teaching them about the Lord when they sat, when they walked, when they lied down and when they rose – pretty much ALL the time. How would you rate on that – on sharing the Lord with others ALL the time?

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This is not something just for the Jewish people in the Old Testament, it is a call for all of us. We are called to share the Lord and what He has done for us with others.

*Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Who are you sharing your faith with? Who are you discipling? Put their name or initials in the comments so we can be praying. If you aren't discipling anyone – pray about who the Lord would call you to disciple? Who do you need to encourage in Christ today?

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1. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

The sons of Eli were so wicked and treated the sacrifices to the Lord improperly. They were serving as priests but did not follow the regulations prescribed by the Lord and even when they were corrected by people bringing their sacrifices, they did not relent.

*1 Samuel 2:15-16 Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." <sup>16</sup> And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force."*

If the man bringing the offering to the Lord knew more about how the sacrifice was to be handled, clearly Eli's sons were full of greed and not at all interested in doing what was required of them by the Lord. What kind of example were they setting for the people? We have all sinned and been less than a stellar example to others but serving as priests, Hophni and Phineas' sin was even greater.

Think about your life during this past week. Are there times when you were not setting a good example for those around you? Ask the Lord to forgive you and to help you set a better example.

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*1 Samuel 2:17-18 Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt. Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.*

These two verses demonstrate the drastic difference between Eli's sons and Samuel. Eli's sons were following their own ways and doing what they wanted to do and Samuel was following the Lord. It is a good reminder to us that ultimately serving the Lord is up to each individual. May we always choose to follow the Lord rather than our own ways. Is there an area in your life where you are following your own way rather than following the Lord? Is there an area of your life where you are not being obedient to the Lord? Is there an area of your life that you have not submitted to the Lord? Ask the Lord to reveal any area of your life that is out of alignment with His will and be willing to repent and make whatever changes are necessary.

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*1 Samuel 2:19 And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.*

I love how Hannah continued to care for Samuel in this way. Can you imagine how she felt as she was sewing this robe for Samuel? I know of people who make prayer shawls or prayer blankets and as they create them they are praying over them. I wonder if Hannah was praying over the robe as she made it for Samuel. It must have brought her great joy to see her son each year when they went to make their sacrifices. It must have been something she looked forward to doing – something she couldn't want to happen each year. And yet, it must have also been incredibly hard to leave Samuel. What a bittersweet time for Hannah. When have you looked so forward to something? When have you been excited with anticipation? When have you experienced a bittersweet moment with the Lord?

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I have been so excited to teach this Bible study. It has been a year since I've done a Facebook live Bible study and I have missed it so much. The studying and preparation is truly good for my soul. It is one of the things that really sustained my own faith and helped me continue to grow during COVID when we were isolated and locked down.

Being able to take care of Emily and minister to her and Scott and Adalyn has been a true blessing; hard at times but a blessing. This season for me has been full of bittersweet moments. I will never forget being in the emergency room at MD Anderson with Emily and being told that I couldn't go with her when she was taken up to the Leukemia floor. She had been diagnosed in the emergency room in Waco only hours earlier and we were still reeling from the diagnosis and in shock. I knew it was God's provision for her to even be at MD Anderson and to be able to receive treatment there. However, due to COVID restrictions, they were on lock down and visitors were not allowed. I will never forget leaving her and her so desperately wanting me to stay – the look of fear and uncertainty in her eyes is something I will never forget and as a mom to leave your child like that is unimaginable. And yet, God was there in the midst of it – providing the best care for her and saving her life. It was a very bittersweet moment.

*1 Samuel 2:20-21 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." So then they would return to their home. Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.*

Once again, we see that Eli's petition/blessing came to fruition. I would imagine that the tabernacle at Shiloh would hold great memories for Hannah. It is where she prayed for Samuel and Eli prayed her request would be granted. It is where Eli prayed that she and Elkanah would be blessed with additional children. What place that holds special memories for you – one perhaps that you can remember where the Lord specifically spoke to you or answered your prayers? Or perhaps there is a place that you go where you experience the Lord.

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My favorite time of the day is the morning – I am definitely a morning person. There is nothing I like better than to watch the sunrise. The best place to watch the sunrise for me is the beach. There is something amazing about being in God's creation and

watching the dawn of a new day starting. It has always reminded me that His mercies are new each day. I don't live near the beach – in fact the closest one is about an hour and half away. Before Emily went in for her stem cell transplant a couple of my sweet friends planned a trip for us to go watch the sunrise on the beach. We left at about 4:15 in the morning and spent time walking on the beach and watching the sunrise. It was especially meaningful because not all of the ladies who went are morning people – to get up at 4:15 was a sacrifice – that is true friendship, women who will do whatever it takes to encourage one another and to uphold one another. I hope you have sisters in Christ who do that for you and I hope you are that for someone else. It was such a special time of fellowship and prayer. It was something that I looked back on many times throughout Emily's treatment as a reminder of how good God is and how there is something to be grateful for each day.

*Lamentations 2:22-23 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

*Psalm 118:24 This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

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Can't you just imagine Hannah rejoicing each time she went to make sacrifices and was able to see her precious child? What reminds you that God's mercies are new each day? Each day is a gift from the Lord to us, how can you rejoice and be glad today? Who do you know that might need to be reminded of God's mercies and the joy that we are to find in each day?

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In this next section we see Eli comes to the realization that his sons are not honoring the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Eli 'kept hearing' – this was something that was not new to Eli. It is clear that he was aware of the evil doings of his sons and yet they continued to serve as priests in the

tent of meeting. As a parent, Eli should have been holding his sons accountable but it is hard to do. It is easier to ignore than to call out. When have you ignored the behavior of someone when perhaps you should have called it out?

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Eli's sons were such poor witnesses for the Lord. Their sinfulness was on display for all to see and no one was doing anything about it.

*Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

We are all sinners and we are only saved by the grace of God from our sinfulness. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession..." Are there areas of your life where you are living on cheap grace? Do you want others to forgive you and yet you are holding onto grudges? Do you want the Lord to forgive you and yet you are unwilling to repent? Are you happy for Jesus to be your Savior but not your Lord?

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We are in the season of Lent – in the Ash Wednesday service in the ACNA BCP 2019 there is actually an invitation to participate in Lent:

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and alms-giving; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

Will you accept this invitation – will you submit yourself to the Lord during this season and allow Him to examine your heart – will you be willing to repent – to literally turn from your sinfulness – from your ways of doing things to follow the way the Lord would have you do things – will you spend time in prayer and fasting and give to those in need, will you spend time not just reading a verse a day but reading and meditating

on God’s Word? If you are willing to accept this invitation, write a commitment to the Lord below.

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Eli ‘kept hearing’ about the evil doings of his sons and we see that he finally addresses them.

*1 Samuel 2:23-25 And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.*

The evil doings of Eli’s sons were being talked about by the people and they were not setting a good example. One of the reasons people don’t come to church is because of us – because of our hypocrisy. We say one thing but do another, we preach grace but don’t show it to others, we preach forgiveness and yet are stingy to give it to those who hurt us. Where are you being a hypocrite in your life? Ask the Lord to reveal it to you, seek His forgiveness and commit to changing with the power of His Holy Spirit. Remember we are not walking this life alone, we are not walking without great power. We have His Holy Spirit dwelling within us to empower us to live the life He created us to live.

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We see in 1 Samuel 3 the rise of Samuel’s ministry.

*1 Samuel 3:1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.*

Samuel was probably around 12 years old at this time so we have jumped forward from when he was brought to Eli at about the age of three to Samuel now being about



12 years old. The KJV says 'the word of the Lord was precious' where the ESV says it was rare. How do you treat God' Word? Do you treat it as precious or do you take it for granted?

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If you haven't had a chance to watch the video of a group of people in China receiving the Bible for the first time, watch the video and then re-evaluate how you treat God's Word. What are your thoughts on watching this group receiving their Bibles?

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*1 Samuel 3:2-3 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. <sup>3</sup> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup> and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup> And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." <sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.*

Even though Samuel had been serving the Lord, he did not know his voice. Jesus tells us in John 10 that He is the Good Shepherd and that His sheep know his voice . How well do you recognize the voice of the Lord over all the other voices? When was the last time you heard the Lord speak to you?

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*1 Samuel 3:8-10 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup> Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."*

'Speak, for your servant hears' – maybe that needs to be the way we approach the Lord – especially during this season of Lent. Are you really willing to hear what the Lord has to say? Spend some time in prayer and approach the Lord the way Samuel did and record what you hear from Him.

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*1 Samuel 3:10-14 Then the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup> On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."*

I'm pretty sure that is NOT what Samuel was expecting to hear – the Lord telling him the judgment he was going to bring down on Eli and his household. Can you imagine how Samuel must have felt – he had been in the service of Eli for 9 years at this point and he has just been told that the sins of Eli's household would not be atoned for – yikes!

When we tell the Lord, "Speak, for your servant hears" we have to be willing to actually HEAR what He has to say to us and we must be willing to be obedient to what He calls us to do. Are you being obedient to what the Lord is saying to you? What might you need to change in order to follow through with obedience? Remember delayed obedience is disobedience and partial obedience is disobedience.

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*1 Samuel 3:15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.*

I don't think Samuel got much sleep that night – it says he lay until morning not that he slept until morning. Is there something that is causing you to lose sleep? Pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you anything you need to know and be obedient in whatever He says.

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1 Samuel 3:16-18 *But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." <sup>17</sup> And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." <sup>18</sup> So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him."*

This could not have been easy for Samuel but he did it. When have you had to do something difficult that the Lord called you to do?

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1 Samuel 19-21 *And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.*

FB Myer in his book "Samuel the Prophet" says this, " Will you believe then that God may be coming very near you, and is about to reveal Himself to you int eh Lord Jesus, as not unto the world./ He is about to transform your life, and lift it to an altogether new level so that though you may have to face the old circumstances, it shall be from a higher standpoint, as the spiral staircase is always returning to the same view-point, though always at the elevation of some few additional feet."

When we have an encounter with the Lord, even though we are still facing the same circumstances, we are doing it from a higher vantage point, from a stronger place of faith. We are in the same circumstances but our view, our vantage point, our perspective is not the same.

FB Myer goes on to give us a charge in his book, "Samuel the Prophet", "Let us live our best in the power of the Spirit of God, and prove that the God of Pentecost is living still."

Are you living a life like that? Do you know someone who is? What might you need to change or sacrifice in order to live a life that shows the world that the God of Pentecost is living today?

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