The Effects of One Faithful Life

1 Samuel 7

October 27, 2024

The message today is going to be out of 1 Samuel chapter 7. It is a theme of faithfulness today, and I have titled this message The Effects of One Faithful Life.

The Effects of One Faithful Life. We're gonna look at 1 Samuel chapter 7, which really summarizes Samuel's life and ministry in Israel, and then we're gonna note some of the effects that his life had on the nation of Israel, and then throughout, I'll just note where I've seen some of those same things here at our church. But before we read that, I need to remind you of the historical setting, and I hear you turning pages in your Bible.

If you want to go somewhere right away, go to the book of Judges, the end of the, or actually the end of Joshua. I just want to fill in some of the historical setting for where we're going to be at this morning, but I'm going to begin with just

the end of Moses' life. So Moses, the end of his life, after having led Israel out of Egypt and then through the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, he leads Israel right to the front door of the promised land, but because he sinned, the Lord barred him from entering in.

So he passed the mantle of leadership on to Joshua. Joshua, he faithfully leads Israel across the Jordan into the promised land. He conquers the major leaders, the strongholds in the promised land.

They divide up all the land, and then Joshua commissions all the tribes to finish driving out those who inhabit the land. Those wherever they lived, they were to drive out, finally drive out the last few who remained, but flip to the end of Joshua to read this. Joshua leads them to reinstate their commitment to the covenant with Yahweh that their fathers had made, confirming that they would serve him faithfully.

Look at Joshua 24. I'm going to read 14 to 24. "So now, fear Yahweh and serve Him in integrity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. If it is evil in your sight to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, which were beyond the river,

or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. And the people answered and said, far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods."

"For Yahweh, our God, is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery, and who did these great signs in our sight, and kept us through all the way in which we went, and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. And Yahweh drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve Yahweh, for he is our God."

"Then Joshua said to the peoples, you will not be able to serve Yahweh, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he will return, he will turn and do you harm and consume you after he has done good to you. And the people said to Joshua, no, but we will serve Yahweh. And Joshua said to the people, you are witnesses against yourself, that you have chosen for yourselves Yahweh to serve Him.

"And they said, we are witnesses. So now put away the foreign gods which are in your midst and incline your hearts to serve Yahweh, the God of Israel. And the people said to Joshua,

'We will serve Yahweh, our God, and we will listen to his voice.'"

But for a variety of reasons, they failed to drive out the other inhabitants of the lands completely. And after this generation passes, flip over just a page or so to Judges chapter 2. After Joshua passes and the generation that made that commitment passed on, we find this in Judges chapter 2, look at verse 10. "And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers.

"And there arose another generation after them who did not know Yahweh, or even the work which he had done for Israel. Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh and served the Baals. And they forsook Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed themselves down to them.

"Thus they provoked Yahweh to anger. So they forsook Yahweh and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. And the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel and he gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them. And he sold them into the hands of their enemies around them so that they could no longer stand before their enemies."

So the people that they failed to drive out entirely, after a generation or so, the people began to worship their gods as their own god, forsaking Yahweh. So Yahweh handed them over to these people in servitude. And this becomes a cycle for the whole book of Judges; the people they serve and worship other gods. And so God sends oppressors to oppress them.

And Israel cries out to God for help and God sends them a judge to save them and drive out their oppressors. And then when that judge dies, the cycle happens over and over again. It's a cycle in the book of Judges that just progresses.

This cycle of spiritual degradation and depravity just continues to grow worse and worse with each cycle. The people become more sinful, more depraved with each cycle, to the point when you get to the last judge mentioned, Samson. Samson is the hero.

Samson, many, many Sunday school teachers struggle teaching Samson as a hero. And that's right. Samson, he's a, was a womanizer who often acted like a petulant child throwing tantrums, except he has super strength.

It's not a good combination. He's not a righteous man, but the culture has grown so dark that Samson, that's, that's what

their heroes look like. It indicates a spiritually corrupt and dark nation.

A wicked society has heroes like Samson. And in case we miss this literary cue, we sure don't miss the scene that follows. If you're familiar with the book of Judges, the tribe of Benjamin has become so corrupt that they're really in a mirror image of Sodom and Gomorrah from Genesis.

There's a scene where the town of Gibeah of Benjamin is so depraved that the men seek to seize a visitor, someone visiting to the town, and they seek to treat him wickedly. But instead, they settle for his concubine. They treat her so horribly that she dies.

But this leads rightly to all of Israel rising up to destroy the entire tribe of Benjamin because the Benjaminites of Gibeon, they get all their brothers of Benjamin together. They all defend Benjamin. And so all of Israel goes to war against Benjamin for their wickedness. And nearly the entire tribe of Benjamin is wiped out. Just a few hundred men are spared to keep the tribe from extinction. But it is a very dark time spiritually.

So dark that the end of the book of Judges is characterized by "everyone doing what is right in their own eyes." It was a time of spiritual darkness, moral relativism, moral degradation, "everyone doing what's right in their own eyes." Israel had become wicked, corrupt to the core, even worse than the nations that they drove out.

And that's what we see when we begin reading in the book of 1 Samuel. If you want to flip over there, we'll read that in just a few moments. But the moral corruption had gone so deep that even the priests over the temple, Eli and his sons, they're so wicked and corrupt that they extort worshipers. Really, they beat them and steal their offerings. They don't want the people to boil them. They don't want boiled meat.

I mean, we all like grilled meat over boiled meat, right? But they go to the point where they're willing to beat people and steal it from them so they don't have to have boiled meat. They want grilled meat. They extort the worshipers. They steal from them. And then they lay with the women out in front, who serve at the temple. These are the priests.

They're supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the country following the law of Yahweh, walking in righteousness. But after generations of spiritual darkness and moral depravity, even

those who are supposed to be the most spiritual are despicably immoral. But these priests, these leaders, they reflect the general moral outlook of the nation. They were the leaders that the people deserved because that's how immoral they were. The people have become so corrupt. These are the kind of leaders they deserved.

But in the midst of this dark, dark spiritual time, a light dawns. In the midst of this scene of darkness, we see in the book of Samuel that there is still a remnant of God's people who are faithful to him. There's this couple by the name of Elkanah and Hannah among this remnant.

They have a son whom they dedicate to the service of the Lord at Shiloh with Eli. As Samuel is a small boy, right after we read of the wickedness of Eli's sons, Yahweh visits Samuel and calls him into service as a prophet in chapter 3. This breaks a long, long period of spiritual darkness, a long duration of time where there wasn't much revelatory light coming from Yahweh. There wasn't much communication from Yahweh to his people.

The book says the word of Yahweh was rare in those days. But with Samuel, light dawned in the darkness. The word of

Yahweh came to Samuel and it says it was with him all of his days.

Many people, when we read through the books of Samuel, I think we talked about this when I was teaching through this in Sunday school or equipping hour, they rightly make connections between David and Christ. David is a type of Christ, a foreshadow of Christ, and I agree with that. But many people see David as the primary character, which he is.

But then we just kind of brush Samuel off to the sidelines as a secondary character. And because of this, many people have asked, you know, why isn't the book of Samuel named after David if he's the main character? And this kind of gets around to the point we're getting to in the sermon today. And that is, without Samuel, there is no David.

No doubt David is a massive character in the redemptive story, in redemptive history. But without Samuel, there is no David. And I actually think there's more parallels between Samuel and Christ than even David and Christ. For one, Samuel was of the priestly line. He was called by God as a prophet. He was Israel's judge.

Samuel, in one person, was prophet, priest, and judge. Jesus came as prophet, priest, and king. It was through Samuel that light dawned in a very, very spiritually dark time, just as when Christ came. And Samuel was the rightful, faithful leader of Israel, who was summarily rejected by his people. So there are many parallels to the life of Christ. But for our purposes today, we want to look at the effects of Samuel's life on the nation of Israel.

I think this is a good lesson for us to remember, because the cultural wind of our day is to kind of despise anything that's come before us, as if, you know, history really began with us. But in reality, we stand on the shoulders of all those faithful men who have come before us. If we put this in the context of our own church, if Travis hadn't come 10 years ago, I wouldn't be here.

I might be, but I wouldn't be preaching good sermons. But he stood on the shoulders of faithful men who came before him, trained at the Master's Seminary as John MacArthur was faithful. John MacArthur stands on the faithful shoulders of men who came before him.

I think we all recognize that we stand on the shoulders of Martin Luther and the Reformation, but we really stand on the

shoulders of every faithful man throughout history, leading up to us, all the way down the line to us. And we mustn't think that we evolved out of a vacuum. Yes, God is sovereign, but it was because of Samuel's faithfulness.

One faithful life, that so many blessings came to the nation of Israel, and that is our subject for today. If you're sitting there thinking, well, that's great, but, you know, what does that have to do with me? I mean, Samuel, I already mentioned, prophet, priest, judge, you know, how can I measure up to that? I can hardly do what he did. I can't have the same effect he had.

Well, maybe you can't have the same widespread effect, but you can seek to walk faithfully. The Spirit can affect the same changes in your own life that we're going to see from this chapter. If you're a husband or a father leading a family, if you seek to walk in faithfulness to all of God's commands under the authority of this local church, the Spirit can bless your individual family with these same effects.

Samuel didn't devolve out of a vacuum either. He had faithful parents. He had a father who gently corrected the emotions of his mother Hannah, shepherded her faithfully. Hannah

taught Samuel the rules and regulations of priestly faithfulness. They trained him to be the man he grew up to be.

So moms and dads, your life can have the same effect on your family that we're going to talk about today if you seek to walk faithfully before the Lord. And should he be pleased to grant such a blessing. Or if you're just a single person here today, these blessings can be wrought out in your own life and in the life of this church as we all seek to walk faithfully together.

These effects in this chapter, many of them have seen and I hope to continue to see grow in our own church. So what are they? I'll give you the outline up front, then we'll read the chapter. The effects of Samuel's faithful life, the effects of one faithful life. Point number one, wholehearted repentance. Point number two, cultural transformation. Point three, covenant blessings. And then point four, generational faithfulness.

The effects of one faithful life, Samuel's life on the nation of Israel, wholehearted repentance, cultural transformation, covenant blessings, and generational faithfulness. But let's begin reading 1 Samuel chapter 7. Verse 1, and the men of Kiriath-Jerim came and brought the Ark of Yahweh up and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill

and set apart Eliezer, his son, as holy in order to keep the Ark of Yahweh. Now it happened from the day when the Ark remained at Kiriath-Jerim that the time was long, it was 20 years, and all the house of Israel lamented after Yahweh.

Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you are to return to Yahweh with all your heart, then remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and set your hearts towards Yahweh and serve him alone, and he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines. So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served Yahweh alone. Then Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mitzpah and I will pray to Yahweh for you.

"And they gathered to Mitzpah and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh and fasted on that day and said there, 'We have sinned against Yahweh.' And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mitzpah. Then the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mitzpah and the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.

"And then the sons of Israel heard it and were afraid of the Philistines. So the sons of Israel said to Samuel, do not cease to cry out to Yahweh our God for us that he may save us

from the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a burnt offering to Yahweh.

"And Samuel cried out to Yahweh for Israel and Yahweh answered him. Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But Yahweh thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them so that they were defeated before Israel.

"So the men of Israel went out to Mitzpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them down as far as below Beth-kar. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mitzpah and Shen and named it Ebenezer. And he said, thus far Yahweh has helped us.

"So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel from Ekron even to Gath. And Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. So there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

"Thus Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mitzpah.

And he judged Israel in all these places. But his return would be to Ramah for his house was there. And there he judged Israel and he built there an altar to Yahweh."

So the first blessed effect we see from Samuel's ministry is that of wholehearted repentance in verses 1 to 3. But let me catch you up on where we left off. We talked about Samuel being called as a prophet.

But shortly after that Israel decides that it would be a good idea. Samuel is at the temple with Eli and Israel is at war with the Philistines. And they thought it would be a good idea to take the ark of the covenant out into battle.

They thought that if they took the ark that it meant that God was with them. What they failed to understand was God was with them, but he was not for them. He was in the camp but he was there to destroy them.

So God destroyed Israel with the tool of the Philistines and then the Philistines take the ark. They destroy Shiloh where the tabernacle was. The Lord eventually brought the ark back to Israel to where we picked it up in Kiriath-Jerim there. It was housed there.

Samuel had apparently escaped the destruction of Shiloh and returned home to Ramah. But verse 2, the text notes a certain period of time when something happens. Look at verse 2. "Now it happened from the day when the ark remained at Kiriath-Jerim that the time was long. It was 20 years and all the house of Israel lamented after Yahweh." So the author of 1 Samuel notes that there was a 20-year period of time.

Something happens to culminate in this period of time. The thing that happens after 20 years is all the house of Israel lamenting after Yahweh. This word for lamenting, lamentation, is the emotional response of grief, weeping and wailing.

But the author doesn't tell us why. Why are they lamenting now? What is the source of their lamentation? What's the cause of their lamentation, this emotional response that they're having? And as I have studied the book of Samuel, I've noticed something the author likes to do in the book of Samuel, and that is give you a little bit of information that keeps you wondering and keeps you reading. He withholds a bit of that information to keep you going and anticipating the answer later on.

It's a literary device to keep us interested in what the answer is to the question we have. Why did they lament generations of spiritual darkness and now they're lamenting

after Yahweh? Why? Well the answer to the first two verses is found in the last two verses, kind of as a bookend, and the author of Samuel likes to do this. So look at the last two.

Why are they lamenting? Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mitzpah, and he judged Israel in all these places, and then he would return to Ramah. As prophet, priest, and judge, Samuel went on circuit teaching, preaching, and judging Israel.

After some time, we know it was 20 years from the time that the ark rested in Kiriath-Jerim. It was 20 years. We don't know how many years of those Samuel was on circuit preaching and teaching, but a good number of those years. He was traveling, preaching, and teaching Israel what God had declared in his word. He was teaching them the covenant. He was teaching them all of the statutes.

And after some time, the people began to lament after Yahweh. They began to feel the sting on their conscience of all of their sin. There begins to be a spiritual awakening from the preaching of Samuel. The people begin to have this emotional response, but Samuel knew that weeping and wailing didn't necessarily mean anything. There were professional wailers.

There were those who lamented the effects of their sin, but they didn't really fear God or lament sinning against God.

Saul is a perfect example of this in the book of Samuel. So, Samuel addresses this emotional response with some further instruction. The emotional response is good, but there has to be some more that comes after that. Look at verse 3. "Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, 'If you are to return to Yahweh with all your heart, then remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and set your hearts towards Yahweh, and serve him alone.'"

The word for return there is the word often translated as repent. Samuel tells them that if they are wholeheartedly repenting, if they are returning to Yahweh with all their heart, if they are wholeheartedly repenting, then they will not stop at the emotional response of wailing and weeping and lamenting, but if their repentance is wholehearted, they will result in a changed life.

Wholehearted repentance biblically involves the emotions, the thinking, and the will. Samuel addresses all of these here. They have the emotional aspect, but then he addresses the thinking aspect or the intellectual aspect.

"He says, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and set your hearts toward Yahweh." This word translated as, set, is a word that refers to being intent on something, resolved, or determined. You only get firmly resolved in something by reasoning through it, thinking about it.

So he tells them, I think this would be better translated as, set your minds on Yahweh. He tells them that they must be resolved in their mind to serve Yahweh. It cannot just be an emotional response. They are to set their minds on Yahweh and what is true. So he addresses the emotional aspect of the heart, the intellectual aspect, but then he tells them to enact their will. Serve him alone.

If any three of these elements are missing, it's not genuine repentance. Samuel tells them, your emotional response, that's not wholehearted repentance. If you're fully, wholeheartedly returning to Yahweh, set your mind to serve him alone.

Put those other gods aside and serve him alone. Wholehearted repentance is what Samuel's teaching them here. You know what's amazing about this? And this speaks to the consistency of Scripture, but this is really the same pattern

that Paul teaches us in Ephesians chapter 4. In verse 22, he says to put off, lay aside the old man, the sin.

Verse 23, he tells them to renew their minds. And then in verse 24, he tells them to put on the new man and walk in obedience to God. That's the same pattern that Samuel is teaching them here. Put off the foreign gods from among you. Set your mind, set your hearts on Yahweh and put on serving him. Walking in obedience to the covenant.

Paul, in Ephesians 4, he wasn't teaching anything revolutionary. He wasn't teaching something God hadn't already revealed long ago. He used Samuel to faithfully instruct the people of Israel the same thing. Wholehearted repentance. Putting off, renewing our mind, and putting on. All that to say, wholehearted repentance is something that any faithful minister teaches his people.

Wholehearted repentance is a staple of any faithful life and any faithful ministry. And it's no accident that in this summary of Samuel's life and ministry, that this is put at the forefront. There is no, where there's not genuine wholehearted repentance, then none of these other blessings will follow.

And this is really where every faithful ministry starts. If you don't start here in your own life, you won't be fruitful. I still remember one of, I don't know how long Travis was here, but I remember him teaching through Ephesians 4 and teaching on genuine repentance out of Ephesians chapter 4. And I remember that being revolutionary.

It's such a simple thing, but we were never taught here. I remember him going through, when is a thief no longer a thief? Well, it's when he stops stealing, of course. Everybody knows that. No, it's actually when he works hard and he gains wealth to be generous and give to others. It was revolutionary. This idea, this truth of wholehearted repentance, this pattern is the basic building block of a faithful life and ministry.

If you don't know how to work out wholehearted repentance, you might as well not try anything else. You have to start there. But we have learned that, if anything, from Samuel here this morning, but faithfully here at this church.

If you have learned it by God's grace, keep working it out in your own life, every area of your life. Teach your kids, help your family, help your friends come to this realization of genuine wholehearted repentance, how to work it out. And as we do this, as Samuel did this with the people of Israel, it led to

a cultural transformation, which is point two, cultural transformation.

Another effect of Samuel's faithful life. When Israel heard and applied Samuel's teaching of wholehearted repentance and they put it into practice, that led to a cultural transformation. Look at verse 4. "So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served Yahweh alone."

We read this as 21st century listeners, and we miss the significance of it. I just generally read things like this, and I think, oh, they gathered up all their little trinkets, all their little idols, and they threw them in the trash can, and that was the end of it.

Kind of like when I got saved, I took all my secular music CDs, and I threw them in the trash can, and I was just dusted our hands, moved on. But this is much more than that. The Baals and the Ashtaroth here, it refers to a pantheon of deities, and this doesn't just mean more trinkets and more idols to collect, to throw out.

These different deities, they had different feast days, different holidays. The people of Israel would have spent time worshiping and celebrating. The pantheon of deities meant that

the people were busy on a daily or a weekly basis with celebrating all the variety of gods.

These things were a part of their daily, weekly routine, their flow of life, their habits. Just think about your daily routine. You know, you get up, you kind of check your phone, you read the newspaper, see if anybody posted anything interesting to social media.

It was kind of similar in their day. They would get up, maybe offer a small sacrifice to this god, maybe prayer, pray something to this god. As they go throughout their day, various things that they would do to these various, for these various gods to gain favor with them.

These idols were embedded in almost every aspect of everything they did. Kind of like our phones have embedded themselves into every aspect of our own lives. But it was more than just something we carry along with us, like a phone. It was more than that. It was holiday celebrations. It was things you arranged your life around.

Entire days and weeks devoted to worshiping and celebrating. They'd be giving up traditions that they have loved for the last generations. So it's hard for us to wrap our minds

around what this actually all entails, but I think if we import this same kind of cultural transformation into our day, I think one way this might look, but I think it's more significant than this even, I think one way that this might look is if our country lamented what the Lord's day had become so much that our country as a whole said, you know what? No more football.

But this is actually more significant than that. Can you imagine America doing that? There's no way. Football is the religion of America. Sunday is the day of football. It's not the Lord's day. But I think what it describes here in verse 4 is even stronger than if America gave up football, returned to church on Sunday.

I think it indicates an even greater level of cultural transformation. I think for us to understand the full weight of this cultural transformation, we might need to read this verse as something like this. If we were to import this into our day, the sons of Israel removed all sports and worldly entertainment and served Yahweh alone.

Now, I'm not saying sports and entertainment are inherently sinful, but they are the idols of our age. My point in this is to illustrate the level of cultural transformation that Israel

repented of at this time. It would be tantamount to our country getting rid of all sports and all worldly entertainment.

It is a drastic cultural transformation. Samuel's faithfulness to teach the people, to teach them God's covenant, what God expected of them. For him then to teach them about wholehearted repentance. They worked that out in their lives individually and collectively and that led to this massive cultural transformation.

And I have seen, maybe not the same level, but I've seen the same thing happening here at our church in the last 10 years. If you had walked into our church 10 years ago on this Sunday, 10 years ago, you would have found, you know, probably half the people, a good number of the people wearing Broncos jerseys.

And we were happy to come to church, but we were also just as happy to depart as soon as possible to go over and worship at the altar of the NFL. That's just one obvious way the culture of this church has changed under the faithful teaching here. A drastic cultural change.

But I think we can still excel more in this area, devoting in particular the Lord's Day worship of Yahweh to fellowshipping

with his people, worshiping him rather than spending it like the rest of the world, entertaining ourselves to death, working ahead on things that we didn't do because we spent Saturday relaxing or doing something else we wanted to do, but really devoting the Lord's Day to the Lord. And we are ever being conformed into the image of Christ. And it is as we each, as individuals, work out repentance in our own hearts, then collectively the culture of the church is transformed to reflect the culture of heaven.

And as we seek to do this, working out repentance in our own hearts, changing the culture of our own homes, reflected in the larger culture of the church, when we do this, we will enjoy covenant blessings. And that's point number three. Another effect of one faithful life is covenant blessings.

When we walk in obedience to the commands of God, there is always blessings that follow. Maybe not physical blessings, but spiritual blessings. Within this point, I see three blessings here that I want to expand upon.

These are sub-points if you're taking notes. Three blessings, three Ps, propitiation, protection, and peace. Propitiation, protection, and peace.

Let's look at the first covenant blessing in propitiation. Look at verses 5 to 9 again. "Then Samuel said, gather all Israel to mitzvah and I will pray to Yahweh for you. And they gathered to mitzvah and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh and fasted on that day and said there, 'We have sinned against Yahweh.' And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at mitzvah.

"Then the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to mitzvah and the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. Then the sons of Israel heard it and were afraid of the Philistines. So the sons of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to Yahweh, our God, for us that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.' And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to Yahweh. And Samuel cried out to Yahweh for Israel and Yahweh answered him."

I've labeled this blessing as propitiation because it's a P, it's alliterated, and the rest of them. But it's probably more, it's more than just satisfying the wrath of God. That's what propitiation means. We might also tag on to this the benefit of reconciliation with God, forgiveness, living before God with a clear conscience, knowing you have been forgiven.

These people under the old covenant, they needed a priest to mediate the covenant, perform sacrifices, atone for their sin. As priest, Samuel does that faithfully here. They confess their sins to God and Samuel offers a burnt offering for their sins. He wants them to know that they have been forgiven before God.

The answer to their prayers and sacrifice are going to be answered in the affirmative in the next few verses. But the benefit of the effect of Samuel's ministry to these people is propitiation and reconciliation with God. The people here get to know that they have been, their sin has been atoned for.

They confess their sin. They get a walk with a clear conscience before God. We shouldn't underestimate this. We shouldn't underestimate the value of having a conscience unburdened. Our whole society is bearing the weight and the guilt of suppressing the truth and unrighteousness and this is crushing their hearts, crushing their consciences. You can see it as half our country, I think, is on anti-anxiety meds, anti-depression drugs.

We know this is not a physiological problem because none of the things they come up with actually help anything. That's coming out more and more now. None of these drugs actually do

anything to help people. They can't find any medication that works because it's a spiritual problem. And with all the sin in our country that is paraded around, it's no wonder why their consciences are weighed down. Their consciences are crushing them.

They're just trying to escape this pressure somehow. But the only way to find relief is to confess your sin, repent, and receive the covenant blessing of a clear conscience before God. I remember there was a dear saint here who was so encouraged to be taught about the complete forgiveness in Christ in the new covenant.

That once you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, that there is now no condemnation for you. Christ took all the punishment for sins, past, present, and future. That for all those who believe, our lives are hidden in Christ. We're covered in his righteousness. That when God looks upon us, he sees Christ and his righteousness. Positionally, we are declared righteous before God.

This is a truth that is often distorted in our day and age in false Christianity. But the faithful teacher, as Samuel does here, he makes sure the people know that their sins have been forgiven. But this leads to a second covenant blessing.

As a result of a faithful teacher, you have protection. Second covenant blessing of protection. Look at verses 10 through 12. God immediately answers Samuel's offering of atonement, their confession. Sorry, I turned one too many pages. "Now, Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel.

"But Yahweh thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them so that they were defeated before Israel. So the men of Israel went out of Mitzpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them down as far as Beth-kar. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mitzpah and Shen, and he named it Ebenezer. And he said, 'This far Yahweh has helped us.'"

I want you to see the faithfulness of God in this. Turn just briefly to the book of Deuteronomy with me. The Lord spelled out for Israel in the covenant the blessings and curses for the people. If they obeyed, they'd receive the blessings. If they disobeyed, if they turned to other gods, they would receive the curses.

We know from what we've already talked about this morning that they were in the curses part of this. The people were

overrun by their enemies. They were put in subjection to their enemies. They were oppressed by their enemies for generations.

And I just want to stop and note how quick the Lord is to forgive and keep his promises. Look at Deuteronomy 28, and we're going to be in verses 1 to 7. Moses tells them, "now it will be if you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I am commanding you today.

"Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God. Blessed shall you be in the city. Blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the offspring of your body, and the produce of your ground, and the offspring of your beasts, and the increase of your herd, and the young of your flock.

"Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. Yahweh shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you. They will come out against you one way, and will flee before you seven ways."

I just want to stop and marvel at how quick the Lord is to forgive and keep his promise here. They come to the Lord. They confess their sins. I mean, Israel was unfaithful for generations. They had totally forsaken him, built their lives around other deities for centuries. But when they come to the Lord, they confess their sins. They repent and seek to save. They serve him alone. There is no delay on God's part to forgive, even to give them immediately. I mean, immediately.

The Samuel's offering the sacrifice, and God confuses them with thunder. He immediately gives them covenant blessing. He immediately tells them, your sacrifice is accepted. Your sins are forgiven. And then he gives them the protection that he promised them in the covenant blessings. We, as new covenant Christians, we have similar promises in the New Testament for protection, but we understand that our enemy is not physical.

Our enemy is spiritual in nature, the sin, the flesh, and the devil. 1 Peter 3 or 1 Peter 1:3 through 8. Peter says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you, who are protected

by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." We are being protected by the power of God through faith.

Our salvation is secured in heaven by God and cannot be corrupted in any way. Our inheritance, our salvation, it can't fade in any way. If we are quick to repent, confess our sins, walk in obedience to God's command, then he promises to protect us ultimately from spiritual failure, from spiritual apostasy.

That is our promise as Christians across the board. But he has also promised to free us from the power of sin and protect us from the evil one. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 says, "but the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen and guard you from the evil one."

As we continue to seek to walk faithfully, the Lord protects us from sin, from the evil one. As we are faithful, even in this church, even one-on-one to perform church discipline, to be obedient to Christ, confront sin, he protects our church, our individual members from further corruption. But if we compromise in what he has commanded, if we take our own sin less serious, and we take the sin of others, we don't take it seriously, we let things go, then it continues to corrupt and defile.

And that is not the kind of church that the Lord will protect from the evil one. Satan will come in and ravage it. So, beloved, we must seek to root out sin in our own lives, as the Israelites did, casting out idols, serving the Lord alone. As we seek to do that faithfully, he will protect us.

Finally, the third blessing, peace. Look at verses 13 and 14. 1 Samuel 7. Oh, I am in 2 Samuel. That makes a whole lot of sense. So, the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel.

"And the hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. So, there was peace between Israel and the Amorites."

As New Testament Christians, God hasn't promised us peace in a few days. In fact, Jesus says that if we follow him, that we will be persecuted by the world. We'll have anything but peace. But, in the midst of trial and tribulation, he will give us a peace of mind and a peace of heart. Just look briefly with me at the book of Philippians. This is a familiar passage to many people.

Most of you, many of you have a portion of this memorized. It's a familiar passage that people go to when struggling with worry, anxiety, when they don't have peace. Philippians 4:4 through 9, Paul tells the Philippian church, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice. Let your considerate spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

"Be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is dignified, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, and if anything worthy of praise, consider these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

As you seek to walk faithfully, no matter the trial that the Lord brings into your life, you can have the covenant blessing of peace. And we may need to return to this passage, and as he tells us here, to put off anxiety, to put on thinking whatever is true, right, noble. Again, that pattern of putting off, renewing our mind, and putting on.

As we seek to walk faithfully, the Lord will give us peace, no matter what trials or tribulations he brings into our lives. All of these covenant blessings, the assurance of forgiveness, protection, peace, these are the effects that a faithful shepherd has upon those under his care. And as someone who's been here, I did go to seminary for a few years, but I've seen all these things borne out in our church in the last 10 years.

But we've got one more effect to look at. The final effect of Samuel's life is generational faithfulness. This gives us something to aim for in the future, strive for in the future. But if you go back to Samuel, 1 Samuel, not 2 Samuel; 1 Samuel 7:15 to 17 kind of summarizes the end of Samuel's life. "Thus Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mitzpah, and he judged Israel in all these places.

"And he would return to Ramah, for his house was there, and there he judged Israel, and he built an altar to Yahweh there. Thus Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." This was the pattern of Samuel's leadership. He would go on circuit, teaching, preaching, judging Israel.

After years of faithfulness doing this, there was this national wholehearted repentance spiritual revival among the

people. The word of the Lord went out all into all the country by the mouth of Samuel to the effect of a cultural transformation. It led to faithfulness to the covenant, which resulted in immediate blessings, forgiveness from God, protection, and peace.

And then as we go on in the book of Samuel, we tend to read the next three verses and think that, well, Samuel's legacy died with him. Look at the next three verses in chapter 8. "And it happened when Samuel was old that he appointed his son's judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah, and they were judging in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after greedy gain, and took bribes, and caused justice to turn aside."

We read that, and we tend to think, well, Samuel's legacy ends with them, two deadbeat sons. But that would be a mistake. We must consider the implications of Israel's national repentance at the ministry of Samuel, their return to worshipping Yahweh, the spiritual revival that happened. The next generation following those who were spiritually revived by the preaching of Samuel is the generation of David.

And as I mentioned earlier, without Samuel, there is no David. But I want to extrapolate even further on the

implications a bit more. Turn with me to the book of 1 Chronicles. 1 Chronicles chapter 7. I don't know. This is actually the passage that sparked the idea for this whole sermon. I don't know how many of you like reading the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles, because it's nine chapters of names.

But right here is a reason why you should really pay attention to these lists of names as you're reading them. It is not insignificant. 1 Chronicles, I think I said chapter 7. Chapter 6. 1 Chronicles chapter 6. I'm going to read 31 through 48.

"Now these are those whom David caused to stand over the service of song in the house of Yahweh after the ark rested there." So David, he becomes king. He brings the ark to Jerusalem. He has it rest there. These are whom he puts into service in the house of Yahweh after it rests there. And they ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting until Solomon had built the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

And actually, these same men are inaugurating the temple that Solomon builds. We don't have time to go look at that, but they're still there at the time of Solomon. They stood for their service according to their custom.

"These are those who stood for service with their sons. From the sons of the Kohathites were Haman, the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toa, the son of Zeph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasiah, the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, the son of Tehath, the son of Asir, the son of Abi Asaph, the son of Korah, the son of Ischar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. And then it goes to another line of Levi.

"Haman's brother Asaph," not actually his brother, but his brother in Israel, he comes from another family, but it indicates the closeness of relationship. "Haman's brother Asaph stood at his right hand. Even Asaph, the son of Barakiah, the son of Shimei, the son of Michael, the son of Baaseah, the son of Malkijah, the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adiah, the son of Ethan, the son of Zima, the son of Shimei, the son of Jehath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.

"And on his left hand, on the left hand of Haman, were relatives of the sons of Merari, Ethan, the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malak, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Amzi, the son of Bani,

the son of Shemer, the son of Malhi, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi." Their relatives, the Levites, were given over unto all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God. Did you catch the significance of Samuel's influence? When David rises to power, he has the ark brought to Jerusalem, he sets these up to in charge of it.

The person, the central figure in charge of all that worship is Haman, Samuel's grandson. And we know he's in charge because it says that Asaph, his brother, was his right-hand man, and Ethan was on his left. Haman's in charge with these two men on either side of him, his associates.

I think we could call Haman at this point the choir director. He's the chief singer, he's the one directing everything. And as we read this, I just want to consider the implications of Samuel's life, the effects of Samuel's life, even on our own life and worship.

So who are these guys? Haman, Asaph, and Ethan? Well, they're all authors of psalms. Asaph, he wrote 12 psalms. He has 12 psalms attributed to him. Ethan has one, and Haman has one, but put a little asterisk next to Haman only having one psalm to his name, because look again at his genealogy. Look at verse 33.

"These are the sons, those who stood for service. Haman, the singer, the son of Joel, son of Samuel."

But then go down to 37. The son of still his lineage, "the son of Tahath, the son of Asir, the son of Ebiezeth, the son of Korah." This is the same Korah who rebelled against God, against Moses, and was killed. But some of his descendants survived, and Samuel comes from his line. Haman comes from his line.

And for our purposes here, the point in bringing up Korah's name is in connection with Haman is because there are 11 psalms attributed to the sons of Korah. One of those psalms is also the psalm that has Haman's name appended to it, which is Psalm 88. I wanted to read that psalm at the beginning of the service, but it's a very depressing psalm.

It wasn't appropriate, but it's still a good psalm. Many of the psalms of the sons of Korah that I think Haman had a part in are beloved psalms. Psalm 42. "My heart, I thirst after Yahweh, like being in a weary and parched land." It's not much to consider that the choir director, Haman, son of Korah, had a part in the psalms written by the sons of Korah, he and his brothers, his cousins, maybe even his brothers, his other grandchildren of Samuel.

But if this is the case, we just consider the generation that followed Samuel and his faithful ministry, the psalms written by David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, and Ethan, the number comes out to 99. 99 psalms from our psalter coming from the generation that followed Samuel's ministry. So, without the ministry of Samuel, do we not only, not have David, but we don't have 99 psalms that are in our Bible. The effects of this one man's faithful ministry have had ripple effects that have even reached us.

Over three millennia later. So, did Samuel's life and legacy die with his two deadbeat sons? No, it did not. His grandson Haman listened to his teaching, learned from him, and sought to be faithful, learned to be a great singer that served in the temple all the way through David's ministry, all the way through David's reign and into Solomon's reign.

But Samuel's faithfulness resulted in generational faithfulness. And I don't know about you, but I don't really care how big our church grows or how small it might shrink to. What I want, what the other elders here want, what we want is to be faithful, to pass what we have learned, the true faith that we have received, pass it on to the next generation.

We want our grandchildren's grandchildren walking in faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ, should the Lord tarry. We have seen these effects, I've seen these effects in our church. We've talked about today because of the faithful shepherd that the Lord brought 10 years ago.

We know, we were praying this morning, we know it is all the work of the Lord, but he does use broken vessels, such as us. We've already seen many of these same effects wrought out in our church. We've seen wholehearted repentance taught and worked out.

We've seen cultural transformation in our church. We've seen covenant blessings worked in our hearts, minds, and in this body of believers. But this last effect of generational faithfulness, well, this is our goal for the future, beloved.

This is what we want to see happen here. And how we achieve that is just continuing to do what we have been doing, what we have been doing. Continuing to work out repentance in our own hearts, helping others around us in our family, others in the church, work out genuine repentance.

We must continue to reform the culture of our own homes and families to be centered around God and the scriptures. Continue

to be reconciled to one another and to God. And as we work these things out together, beloved, we take one more step in our goal of passing these things on to the next generation, should the Lord be gracious to do this work in our midst.

We may not have the same effect Samuel did, but we can have similar effects. On our small community to perpetuate the faith should the Lord be, see favor to bless us with that. We can have similar effects on our own community if we set our hearts to worship him and him alone. These blessings are ours for the taking, beloved. Let's determine in our hearts to do this. Amen.

Join me in a word of prayer. Father, our hearts are full this morning as we reflect on your faithfulness, as we think that the God of the universe has carefully cared and shepherded our insignificant church in Greeley, Colorado. But it is not insignificant to you.

All those who seek to be faithful, you have your close, caring hand of shepherding upon. Lord, we want to, more than anything, we want to see your gospel proclaimed. We want to be faithful to that.

We want to see our children and our grandchildren and great-grandchildren and those who follow them. We want to see

them walking in faithfulness. We have the pattern right out of 1 Samuel 7. I pray, Lord, that we would seek to work wholehearted repentance in our own lives daily. That these things might come about for our children and our grandchildren. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.