

## The Lord Addresses Sin in Shiloh

**Text: 1 Samuel 2:27-36**

**Introduction:** We all have likely experienced situations in our lives that seemed hopeless. Perhaps the hopeless situation in which you found yourself was the terminal illness of someone you love. Perhaps you experienced the sudden death of a loved one. Perhaps you have found yourself in financial ruin with no way out. Maybe you have lost a job or experienced rejection by someone you cared for deeply. We could go on and on listing possible seemingly hopeless situations.

Well, today in our text we are faced with what appears to be a hopeless situation. Eli's sons have sinned greatly. Eli has not dealt appropriately with their sin. And now God is determined to bring judgment. But here in our text this morning, God speaks and provides hope.

Last week, we saw the sin of Eli's sons. They chose to neglect the commands of God in favor of pursuing their own selfish desires.

- Rather than taking the portions of the offering that had been prescribed for the priests in the Levitical law, they were sticking a three-pronged fork into the pot and taking whatever the fork would bring up.
- As if that were not enough, they began to take the raw meat, including the fat portions, and roast it for themselves before it was ever offered to the Lord.
- And if the people bringing sacrifices didn't approve, Hophni and Phinehas would take it by force.
- And as if that were not enough, they used the temple servants to satisfy their sexual desires. And in doing so, they treated these women as less than human and broke the moral law of God.

We also saw what we considered to be Eli's soft rebuke of his two sons.

- What took him so long to finally intervene?
- And why did he go so soft on them when he finally rebuked them?
- They should have been removed from their roles as priests, and steps should have been taken to right the wrongs they had done.

Now, in the midst of the chaos, we have a word from God. That brings us to our text this morning in verses 27-36 of 1 Samuel 2. Go ahead and turn there if you haven't already.

(Read 1 Samuel 2:27-36...Pray)

God sent a prophet to confront Eli and his sons in their sin and call them to repentance. Tragically, the text gives no indication that they repented and turned back to the Lord.

But how should you respond to God's message through His prophet to Eli and his sons?

### I. Remember God's past faithfulness (1 Samuel 2:27-28).

#### A. The prophet called on Eli to remember God's past faithfulness to him and his ancestors. (Read vs. 27-28)

1. **We're not told anything about the prophet other than that he was a "man of God" (vs. 27a). The emphasis here is not on the man delivering the message. The emphasis is on the message and the God who is behind the message.**
2. **The specific events of God's faithfulness that God recounts here through his prophet are found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.**
  - a. **He first reminds Eli of the Exodus from Egypt. The Lord says, "Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh" (vs. 27b).**
    - 1) *God is referring to Aaron as Eli's father because Eli is a descendant of Aaron.*
    - 2) *The first half of Exodus records Moses and Aaron's role in leading the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt.*
    - 3) *The Exodus from Egypt was a pivotal time in the history of God's people. The promise that God had made to Abraham to make a great nation of Abraham's descendants seemed to be in jeopardy.*
    - 4) *God's people were enslaved and lived under the tyrannical reign of Pharaoh.*

- 5) *But God had not forgotten His people. He raised up Moses and Aaron to deliver them from slavery. In delivering them from Egypt, God demonstrated His faithfulness to His people.*
- 6) *And whenever they were in trouble after that or doubted God's faithfulness or provision for them, He reminded them of the Exodus.*

b. Then God reminds Eli of the choosing of Aaron and his descendants as priests. The Lord says, "Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? (vs. 28a).

- 1) *We know from Exodus that Aaron was set apart. Aaron and his sons were ordained as a perpetual priesthood. The Lord told Israel in Exodus 29:9, "And you shall gird Aaron and his sons with sashes and bind caps on them. And the priesthood shall be theirs by statute forever. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons."*
- 2) *What a privilege it was for Aaron and his descendants to be chosen by God to serve as priests! They experienced God's goodness to them in this act of grace. They didn't DESERVE to be chosen as priests. It was an act of His grace that He would choose them.*
- 3) *There were three duties of the priest that we see here in verse 28 of 1 Samuel 2.*
  - a) "Go up to my altar" – This was to bring the people's sacrifices before the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins.
  - b) "To burn incense" – This speaks of the priest's ministry of intercessory prayer.
  - c) "To wear an ephod before me" – This was the garment worn by the priests especially when officiating before the altar.

- c. Then in the second half of verse 28, the Lord reminds Eli of the provision made for the priests to eat of the sacrifices. He says, "I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel" (vs. 28b).

B. The point is that God's faithfulness in the past should impact the way we live in the present.

1. That's why God reminds Eli of His past faithfulness. Eli and his sons had essentially forgotten the Lord. They were living as if the Lord didn't know or care what they were doing.
2. But the Lord did know. And the Lord did care.
3. Take a moment and think about the Lord's faithfulness in your life. How have you experienced His faithfulness to you? Maybe you were in a situation that appeared to be hopeless, but the Lord carried you through. You didn't know what to do. You didn't know which way to turn. But the Lord was faithful to you.
4. Shouldn't that impact the way you live your life now? Shouldn't that be a reminder to you that the Lord knows everything about your life? Shouldn't that be a reminder to you that the Lord cares for you?
5. Because of the way they were living their lives and the way they were conducting themselves at Shiloh, Eli and his sons had apparently forgotten God's past faithfulness. That's why the Lord starts His rebuke with a reminder.
6. May we never forget God's past faithfulness. We can remind ourselves of His faithfulness by reading the Bible's many accounts of His faithfulness. We can also remind ourselves of His faithfulness by reflecting on His sovereign hand in our own lives.

You should remember God's past faithfulness. You also must...

## II. Repent of your present sin (1 Samuel 2:29).

- A. The call to repentance is really the central element of the Lord's message to Eli and his sons through the prophet. (Read vs. 29)

1. **God essentially says, “In light of all that I have done for you. I established an eternal priesthood from your family. I provided for your physical needs. How could you desecrate my sacrifices and offerings in this way?”**
2. **Now, think about this. Who had actually desecrated the sacrifices and offerings? Eli’s sons, right? Hophni and Phinehas.**
  - a. **But who is the prophet speaking to? He’s speaking to Eli, isn’t he?**
  - b. **Does he say that Eli’s sons had scorned the sacrifices and offerings? No, the Lord, through His prophet, accuses Eli of scorning the sacrifices and offerings.**
  - c. **Woah! Pay close attention parents.**
3. **Eli was guilty of honoring his sons over God. (Read vs. 29)**
  - a. **Eli knew the commands of God.**
  - b. **Eli knew his sons were not obeying the commands of God.**
  - c. **Eli had been given spiritual authority over them.**
  - d. **HE SHOULD HAVE STOPPED THEM.**
  - e. **But the text says that he honored his sons over God.**

**Application:** Do you feel the weight of that as a parent? I do. God is not here holding Eli responsible for the actions of his sons. He is holding him responsible for his own actions. He is holding him responsible for how he responded to his sons. He didn’t stop them! And because he did not stop them, it was as if he himself had stolen meat from the people and from God. It was as if he himself had lay with the temple servants.

Parents, you have been entrusted by God with spiritual authority over your children. But too many parents do not want to actually parent their children. It’s almost as if the kids are in charge. The parents are afraid of exercising their God-ordained authority in the lives of their children.

But the truth is that God will hold us accountable for the way that we parent our children. I’m not talking about being mean to your kids. I’m certainly not talking about being abusive to your children. I am talking about correcting them when they are wrong as God does us. I’m talking about training our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We do need to be careful in shepherding the hearts of our children. Paul warns us about provoking our children to anger in Ephesians 6:4. But there should never be any doubt who is the authority in our homes.

God has given us the perfect example of a Father who perfectly exercises His authority in our lives. God is not mean to us. He is not abusive to us. But He does not allow us to continue in our wayward ways without intervening in our lives. Sinners would love it if God would embrace their sin. But if God embraced our sin, He would strip us of any hope of being brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- f. **Sadly, Eli cared more about what his sons thought of him than he did about what God thought of him.**
- g. **The sad thing in all of this is that Eli wasn’t actually honoring his sons.**

- 1) *He was directing them down a path that would only lead to God’s judgment.*
- 2) *He was leading them down a path that would lead them straight to hell.*
- 3) *The book of Proverbs tells us that we are to discipline our children so they will not die.*

**B. The Lord’s confrontation of Eli reminds us of the need for repentance in our lives as well.**

1. **God is holy. He does not tolerate sin.**
2. **The call for us is to repent of our sin. To walk in righteousness before the Lord.**
3. **God is faithful and just. He will forgive us our sin. He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
4. **But it has to start with repentance. It has to start with us turning from our sin and turning back to the Lord.**

5. **Sadly, there's no indication in 1 Samuel that Eli repented of his sin. There's no indication that he took the message he received from the Lord and went and called his sons to repentance.**
6. **I wonder how differently their story would have ended with repentance.**

Sadly, there was no repentance. And when there is no repentance, God's people should...

### **III. Beware of God's future judgment (1 Samuel 2:30-34, 36).**

- A. **In verse 30, the prophet repeats God's promise to Aaron and his descendants (vs. 30).**
  1. **God promised Aaron's house the privilege of serving as priests forever (vs. 30a). (Read vs. 30a)**
    - a. **But this promise was not without obligations on the part of Aaron's household.**
    - b. **We should not understand this to be God going back on His promise.**
    - c. **God had given a very clear demonstration that the priestly role was not without clear expectations when He struck Nadab and Abihu dead for offering strange fire to God.**
  2. **God says that He honors those who honor Him (vs. 30b). (Read vs. 30b)**
    - a. **Though they were not without sin, we see this with Moses and Aaron. They were honored by God.**
    - b. **We see this with young Samuel who is seen in verse 26 as growing in favor with God. Samuel honored God. And God honored him.**
    - c. **The truth is that obedience matters to God.**

**Illustration:** Perhaps you've heard the story of Eric Liddell, a Scottish Olympian who won the gold medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris. He was one of the best runners to come out of Britain. Liddell was a favorite to win the 100-meter race in 1924. The only problem was when Liddell discovered that the championship race was to be held on a Sunday. Because Liddell was convinced by Scripture that he should not compete on the Lord's Day, he refused to participate.

Though he experienced a lot of backlash due to his decision, he held firm based on his convictions. So, a compromise was reached in which Liddell would instead run in the 400-meter race because it had no heats on Sunday. He had not trained for this event, but it was his only opportunity to win at the Olympics. As he prepared that morning, a member for the British training staff approached him and handed him a piece of paper with 1 Samuel 2:30 written on it: "For those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

With the piece of paper in his hand, Liddell ran the race and won the gold medal. Britain went wild with excitement and adulation of Liddell. But Liddell was committed to going back to China as a missionary where his family had served when he was a young boy. When he left for China, the crowd seeing him off was so large that more than a thousand people were unable to be admitted to his farewell. Twenty years later he died in occupied China at the end of WWII. All of Scotland mourned as a result of his death. Liddell honored the Lord, and God honored his name. His story is even told in a movie made in 1981 called *Chariots of Fire*. God honors those who honor him.

3. **But God also says that He dishonors those who dishonor him (vs. 30c). (Read vs. 30c)**
  - a. **Eli's sons had dishonored God.**
  - b. **Eli had dishonored God in the way he handled the situation.**
  - c. **They would be lightly esteemed for despising God.**
  - d. **Eli's sons preferred their own fleshly desires over obedience to God.**
  - e. **Eli preferred his sons over God.**

4. **And God promised judgment for their sin (vs. 31-34). (Read vs. 31-34)**
  - a. What does the judgment entail?
  - b. Eli's family would be cut off from the priesthood.
  - c. Eli's descendants would experience untimely deaths.
  - d. Only one would be spared as a witness of God's judgment.
  - e. And ultimately, he would die too.

**B. Too many people doubt the judgment of God. But the story of Eli and his sons is a call to beware of God's judgment.**

1. I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:10-12, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!"
2. Do you see what Peter says there? The coming judgment of God should impact the way we live our lives. It should cause us to live lives of holiness and godliness.
3. Just because in His loving kindness God delays His judgment, doesn't mean that judgment isn't coming.

And we should beware of God's future judgment. Finally, let us...

**IV. Trust in God's everlasting promise (1 Samuel 2:35).**

**A. God promises a faithful priest (vs. 35). (Read vs. 35)**

1. Sin and wickedness would bring God's judgment on the house of Eli, but judgment would not be God's final word.

2. God promises that He will still accomplish His purposes. And He will do so by raising up a faithful priest.
3. The text says that the faithful priest would act according to the heart and mind of God.
4. God would build him a sure house.
5. Verse 36 says that the only hope for Eli's household would be to come to this faithful priest and beg for something to eat.

**B. But who is the priest that God is referring to?**

1. The first and most obvious answer to this question is Samuel.
  - a. Samuel would grow up and become a priest to the Lord.
  - b. He would also do the Lord's will as Israel's prophet and judge.
  - c. We will see more about Samuel as we continue through our study of 1 Samuel.
2. In the longer term, we might view Zadok as the fulfillment of God's promise to raise up a faithful priest.
  - a. The book of 1 Kings introduces us to Zadok. Zadok served as priest during the time of King Solomon.
  - b. Zadok replaced Abiathar as priest, who was a descendant of Eli.
  - c. In fact, Abiathar was the last of Eli's descendants to serve as priest and was removed from the priesthood by Solomon.
  - d. 1 Kings 2:27 says, "So Solomon expelled Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh."
  - e. And 1 Kings 2:35 says that "The king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar."

3. **But looking further ahead than Samuel and Zadok, and knowing that the whole Bible is a book about Jesus, we can't help but recognize that Jesus is the faithful priest whom God finally raised up.**
  - a. **Hebrews 2:17 says that he became "a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."**
  - b. **Eli and his sons profaned the sacrifices that were brought by the people to God. They used the sacrificial system to benefit themselves. But Jesus didn't take. He gave. He gave Himself. He laid down His own life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Your sin. And mine. Jesus died in our place. He gave His life for us.**
  - c. **Because like Eli and his sons, we have rebelled against God. We deserve the judgment that God promised to Eli and his sons.**
  - d. **We are not better than they were.**
  - e. **And the call upon our lives is the same as the call upon the lives of Eli and his sons in this passage: repent!**
  - f. **We must repent of our sin. And in faith, we must cling to Jesus, our Great High Priest!**
  - g. **Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

**Conclusion:** Remember God's past faithfulness. Repent of your present sin. Beware of God's future judgment. And trust in God's everlasting promise through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.