

Orphans and Sons

There was a certain man whose name was Elkanah. He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord.

Hannah was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord." And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her to the house of the Lord at Shiloh.

And Hannah prayed and said,

"My heart exults in the Lord;
my horn is exalted in the Lord.

My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.

"There is none holy like the Lord:
for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.

The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

The Lord raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.

The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.

Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man. 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. 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. Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!"

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."

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."

The Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. Obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

Saul then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude.

Saul waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came.

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord."

And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel."

As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."

Then the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"

And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep."

And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle and there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.

And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,

"Saul has struck down his thousands,
and David his ten thousands."

And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul eyed David from that day on.

The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice.

Now David fled and escaped Samuel and told him all that Saul had done to him.

Then Saul sent messengers to take David.

Then David fled and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies." And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul. And David rose and fled that day from Saul.

Then Saul went to seek David. And he came where there was a cave.

Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'"

Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed."

Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king! Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'? Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.'"

As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah.

Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon?" So Saul arose and went down to seek David in the wilderness.

Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

So David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head.

So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. And David called to the army. Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake."

So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel.

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him. Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor."

And they came to the woman by night. Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." And the woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul."

The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe."

And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

Then Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Moreover, the Lord will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The Lord will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."

Saul and his men rose and went away that night.

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

1 Samuel as "Fall"

Scholars have pointed out that 1 Samuel is a book that begins with a barren mother and ends with the death of a faithless son.

In many ways, 1 Samuel is a tragedy.

But the tragedy of 1 Samuel is is not the end of the story.

The death of Saul, the faithless son, leads to the rise of David, the faithful adopted son.

1 Samuel is a "Fall Narrative" because Saul's fall in is an expansion of Adam's fall.

Saul is a type of the first Adam, a fallen son of God.

But David is a type of the last Adam, the faithful Son of God Jesus Christ.

Replacing the Older Brother

But 1 Samuel doesn't simply expand on Adam's fall from Genesis, it expands on one of the central themes in Genesis, the replacement of the firstborn son.

Throughout Genesis, the older son and older brother is replaced by the younger.

It is Seth, not Cain.

It is Isaac, not Ishmael.

It is Jacob, not Esau.

In 1 Samuel the same pattern emerges but a little differently.

Samuel replaces Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas.

But Saul replaces Samuel's sons Joel and Abijah.

And then David replaces Saul's son Jonathan.

In these replacements it is an adopted son who replaces the biological son.

If Genesis taught that the "Promised Seed" will only come through God's promise,

1 Samuel teaches that the "Promised Seed" won't come through fleshly descent at all.

Rather, the "Promised Seed" must come from outside of fleshly means.

The "Promised Seed" must come by the Spirit.

1 Samuel preaches the gospel because it proclaims that the messiah, God's anointed one, must replace his older fallen brother in order to save God's people.

The Gospel

As we conclude this sermon series through 1 Samuel, I want you to reflect on these things:

First, apart from God's grace we are all like the faithless sons found throughout 1 Samuel.

We are like Eli's Sons, Samuel's sons, and like Saul.

But second, because of God's grace, a faithful son has come to forgive you and restore you from your faithlessness.

As God raised up David to save Israel, so God has raised up a greater David, to save the true Israel, the Church of God.

And third, because of that faithful son, you have been restored to your heavenly Father.

Jesus does not merely save you from your sins, he restores you to God.

Because of Christ, you too are now a son in God's house.

Not a servant, a child who is loved by your heavenly Father!

The story of Samuel is a story of fathers and sons.

Israel is the wayward son and the Lord is the faithful Father who restores his child.

We, like Israel, have been faithless.

Like the prodigal son, we have fled from the presence of our good Father.

But because of Christ, the true Son of God, we have been restored.

And our Father, just as the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, sees each of us, even when we are a long way off, and feels compassion for us.

In Christ God runs to us and embraces us.

In Christ God's kisses us and puts a ring on our hands and shoes on your feet.

And in Christ, God throws a feast in celebration of our salvation.

A feast that is thrown each Lord's Day at this table.

So come to feast this morning, robed in the righteousness of God's Son and embraced by the love of the Father.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!