

1 Samuel 12 - Text and Theme

- **Occasion:** Father's Day
- **Main idea:** Samuel models what it means to finish well as a spiritual father, leader, and man of God.
- **Central burden:** Fathers, grandfathers, mentors, and spiritual leaders should desire not simply to start well, but to finish well.

I. Introduction: A Father Who Finishes Well

1. Connect the sermon to Father's Day.
2. Introduce Samuel as an aging spiritual father to Israel.
3. Explain the setting: Samuel is stepping aside as Saul becomes king.
4. Frame the message around finishing well, not merely starting well.
5. Pray with gratitude for men of integrity who point others to God.

II. Samuel Steps Aside with Integrity

1. Samuel acknowledges the people's request and presents Saul as their king.
2. Samuel notes his age and his sons' presence among the people.
3. Samuel removes his corrupt sons from leadership, contrasting him with Eli.
4. Application: Godly leadership chooses faithfulness to God over favoritism toward family or friends.
5. Illustration: "God, Give Us Men!" reinforces the need for honorable, truthful, faithful men.

III. Samuel Opens His Life to Examination

1. Samuel asks Israel to testify against him if he has taken, cheated, oppressed, or accepted bribes.
2. The people affirm that Samuel has not wronged them.
3. Samuel's life demonstrates servant leadership rather than self-serving leadership.
4. Contrast Samuel's "Did I take?" with the king's pattern in chapter 8: "take, take, take."
5. Application: Children should recognize and thank faithful fathers who serve quietly and consistently.

IV. Samuel Rehearses God's Faithfulness

1. Samuel shifts attention from his leadership to the Lord's righteous acts.
2. Example one: Israel cried out in Egypt, and God sent Moses and Aaron.
3. Example two: Israel forgot God, suffered oppression, cried out, and God sent deliverers.
4. Example three: When Nahash threatened them, Israel demanded a king instead of crying out to God.
5. Main contrast: In earlier crises Israel looked to God; in this crisis Israel looked to man.
6. Application: We all face "Nahash moments" when we are tempted to trust our own alternative plan instead of God.

V. Samuel Warns Both People and King to Obey the Lord

1. God gives Israel the king they asked for.
2. Samuel makes clear that both the people and the king remain accountable to God.
3. If they fear, serve, and obey the Lord, there is hope.
4. If they rebel, God's hand will be against them.

5. Application: No one is the exception to the rule; rebellion always carries consequences.
6. Side note: Samuel's words reinforce the principle that rulers are morally accountable and cannot hold unchecked power.

VI. God Confirms the Seriousness of Their Sin

1. Samuel calls on the Lord to send thunder and rain during wheat harvest.
2. The storm is supernatural because it comes during the dry season.
3. The people are shaken by the power of God and recognize the evil of asking for a king.
4. Application: God sometimes uses unmistakable moments to awaken us to the seriousness of sin.

VII. Samuel Gives Gospel Hope After Failure

1. The people repent and ask Samuel to pray for them.
2. Samuel replies, "Do not be afraid."
3. He is honest about their evil but calls them not to turn away from the Lord.
4. Main gospel emphasis: One wrong turn does not put someone outside God's plan forever.
5. Application: We cannot change the past, but we can repent, receive forgiveness, and walk faithfully now.

VIII. Real Love Tells the Truth and Continues to Pray

1. Samuel warns them not to turn aside to useless idols.
2. He models fatherly love by correcting, warning, guiding, and disciplining.
3. He assures them that the Lord will not reject His people for the sake of His name.

4. Samuel commits to keep praying for them and teaching them what is good and right.
5. Application: Even when leadership roles change, faithful men can continue to serve through prayer and instruction.

IX. Closing Charge: Fear the Lord and Serve Him Faithfully

1. Samuel calls Israel to fear the Lord, serve Him faithfully, and consider His great works.
2. Clarify the fear of God: not terror of punishment, but trembling at the thought of losing or grieving the One who has been so good.
3. Illustration: Tim Kimmel's three pictures—birthplace, cemetery, and family—frame what matters between beginning and end.
4. Key statement: The best way to save a nation is to save the next generation.
5. Honor the men who serve as "Samuels" in the city and church.
6. Invite prayerful reflection: thank God for a father figure and ask God to raise up father figures for children who need them.