May 17th, 2026 Pastor Josiah Maddox

After God's Own Heart

Returning to Repentance
1 Samuel 7:3-12

Over the past few weeks we've begun the journey through 1 & 2 Samuel with the goal of growing more and more as people After God's Own Heart.
We've talked about…

- Being Persistent in Pursuit of God
- Discerning God's Voice
- Resisting Spiritual Superstitions

Repentance - *"Biblical repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change in direction."*

If we are to be After God's Own Heart, it's important for us to know what it means to Return to Repentance.

*"And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, 'If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.' So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only. Then Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.' So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, 'We have sinned against the LORD.' And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the people of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.' So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, 'Till now the LORD has helped us.'" **1 Samuel 7:3–12***

Main Idea: People after God's Own Heart Return to Repentance
3 Realities of Biblical Repentance from 1 Sam 7:3-12

1. **Repentance Requires Action (v3-4)**

*"And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, 'If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.' So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only." **1 Samuel 7:3-4***

Direct your heart to the Lord: No more superstition or half-hearted religion.
*"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." **Galatians 2:20***

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." **Galatians 5:22–25***

Put away the foreign gods: Turn from idol worship.
*"An idol is a substitute for God — anything that we trust and serve in place of the Lord. The Jews gave themselves to idols of wood, stone, and metal, but most believers today have more subtle and attractive gods: houses and lands, wealth, automobiles, boats, position and recognition, ambition, and even other people…Idols in the heart are far more dangerous than idols in the temple." **- Warren Wiersbe***

And the Ashtaroth: No more Jesus + (__*fill in the blank*__) type of faith.
He is Lord of your life or He is not.

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2. **Repentance is Good for You (v5-11)**

"Then Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.' So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, 'We have sinned against the LORD.'"
1 Samuel 7:5-6

a) **Repentance Aligns Our Hearts with God's Heart**

Confession Before God
"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight…"
Psalm 51:4

*"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" **1 Timothy 2:5***

Confession Before Brothers and Sisters

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." ***James 5:16a***

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness." ***Galatians 6:1a***

"Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush." ***Jeremiah 6:15a***

b) Repentance Restores Us to Intimacy with God

"And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the people of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.' So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him."
1 Samuel 7:7-9

"but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear." ***Isaiah 59:2***

"If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."
Psalm 66:18

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." ***Psalm 51:18***

c) Repentance Invites God to Work in Our Lives

"As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car." ***1 Samuel 7:10-11***

"But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion" ***1 Samuel 7:10b***

"The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven." ***1 Samuel 2:10a***

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3. Repentance Fuels Gratitude (v12)

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, 'Till now the LORD has helped us.'" ***1 Samuel 7:12***

"The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed." ***1 Samuel 2:10b***

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." ***Psalm 103:11–12***

The cross is our Ebenezer - the reminder of "God's Help Thus Far" and the assurance of His faithfulness forever. Look to Jesus daily in repentance and faith!

"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." ***Luke 5:32***

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." ***Mark 1:15***

The time is now! Turn from your sin and turn to Jesus in repentance and faith.

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The New American Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel* – Robert D. Bergen (1996)
- *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* – J.D. Greear & Heath A. Thomas (2016)
- *1 Samuel for You* – Tim Chester (2014)
- *ESV Study Bible* – Crossway (2008)
- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- *https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-important-is-it-to-confess-my-sin-to-someone-other-than-god*
- *1 Samuel: How One Godly Man Changed a Nation* - John MacArthur (2000)
- *Commentary Critical & Explanatory on the Whole Bible*- Jamieson, Fausset, Brown (1997)