

Sermon Title:

“Faith in the Quiet”

Text: 1 Samuel 7

Main Idea: When God’s people trust His unseen presence, He brings victory and peace.

INTRODUCTION – Setting the Stage

Now, before we dive into our text today, I want to throw out the following question:

How do you respond when God seems invisible?

It’s easy to trust God when we can see what He’s doing...when things are measurable, predictable, and in control.

But what about...when that’s not the case?

When there’s no visible movement?

When life feels like it’s spiraling out of control?

In the first hour class with the High School boys that Josue and I have been leading...

We’ve been talking about Faith and what that really means...what it looks like.

And Scripture gives us a simple but profound definition:

Hebrews 11:1

Hebrews 11:1 says:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Faith isn’t believing in the *visible* — it’s learning to trust the *invisible*.

Faith is confidence in what we cannot see.

And if that’s hard for you...you’re not alone. Because Israel struggled with the same thing.

In the days of Samuel, Israel was caught between two worlds — a nation that *knew* God’s presence...but they still wanted something they could *see*.

Chapters 6 through 8 capture that tension — the great transition from **theocracy**, meaning God's direct rule, to **monarchy**, meaning human kingship.

And that shift raises a timeless question:

Will we trust God's unseen presence and promises... or will we trade them for visible substitutes?

And I submit to you this morning: **that we're not so different from Israel.**

We like things that are **tangible, manageable, and predictable.**

We *say* we trust God, but deep down, we'd rather hold on to something we can see. Something we can get our hands on or wrap our minds around.

Speaking of which...

Does anyone know what bitcoin is? Ever held a bitcoin? Me neither!

It's not hard to believe in something we can see...*because* it's right there in front of us.

But faith asks for something deeper.

Faith asks us to trust what we *can't see*...to believe that God is working even when we can't trace His hand.

And that brings us to the heartbeat of our message today:

When God's people trust His unseen presence, He brings victory and peace.

Before Israel ever lifted a sword, God was already fighting something deeper — not out on the battlefield, but inside their hearts.

So this morning, we're going to look at 1 Samuel chapter 7... and see how God teaches His people to trust Him again.

REVIEW: How We Got Here

But before do this, let's take a quick step back and remember *how Israel got here*...because their story didn't start with strength; it started with struggle.

In chapters 4 and 5 as Pastor John took us through last week, Israel had lost the ark—the symbol of God's presence.

If you remember, they thought the *ark* itself would guarantee a win, but they learned the hard way that **the presence of God cannot be manipulated**.

In fact, the main point from last week's sermon was: **"God's character demands worship, not manipulation"**

We saw that the Philistines took the ark, and it wreaked havoc in their cities—so much so that they eventually sent it back.

And then as we saw in chapter 6, after the ark arrived at Beth-shemesh, some men *irreverently* looked inside and were struck down.

They learned the lesson that the presence of God is **holy**—and not to be taken casually.

That was one of the big points from last week.

And now, as we move into chapter 7, God begins to turn the hearts of His people back to Himself.

CHAPTER 7 – THE REAL BATTLEFIELD

As we'll see when we get to chapter 8 next week...Israel's going to request and demand a king to fight their battles...but here in chapter 7, God's going to show them that they don't *need* a king.

Israel had spent years under Philistine pressure—decades of conflict and loss. They're worn out, defeated, and ready for something different. (I think we can relate)

And into that weary moment Samuel steps in—his first major appearance since chapter 3.

And he doesn't come in with a political solution or a military strategy. He comes in with one simple message, a spiritual message.

And it's found in verse 3...

1 Samuel 7:3

"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.'"

This verse is the spiritual hinge of the whole story and our first point:

Returning to the Lord requires removing our idols

It's not *just* a call to repentance—it's a call to *realignment*

Samuel's saying, in essence, "If you'll get your heart right vertically, God will take care of things horizontally."

So, let's slow down and look at what he told them to do:

"Put away your idols"

Here, specifically, he calls their idols "foreign gods"... and the "Ashtaroht"

"Foreign gods" were the deities Israel had adopted from the Canaanite nations around them—primarily Baal and Ashtaroht.

You might be asking, what is Ashtaroht?

Ashtaroht was the Canaanite goddess of fertility and sensuality.

Now, "foreign" here doesn't just mean "non-Israelite", it means affections brought in from the outside...loyalties that belonged somewhere else.

You see, Israel didn't stop believing in Yahweh; they just added other gods

The foreign gods were really just false supports they had borrowed from the world around them...things that promised success, fertility, and safety, but always left them empty.

In other words, they didn't renounce God...they divided their attention and devotion.

And that's really what idolatry is...divided loyalty.

It's trying to mix what's holy with what's cultural...to keep one eye on God and the other on the world.

Now, we might not have statues of Baal or Ashtaroht sitting on our mantels today, but that doesn't mean we don't have idols.

Because idolatry isn't just about statues—it's about substitutes.

It's *anything* that tries to share the throne of our heart with God.

For Israel, the danger came from foreign gods.

For us, it's the slow drift—the pull of the world's values, priorities, and pressures—that quietly compete for our devotion.

Paul warned us about the same thing in Colossians 2:8:

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deception, according to human tradition... and not according to Christ.”

You see, the world still offers its own “gods”—just dressed up differently.

There's the **idol of comfort**, when we choose what's easy over what's right.

The **idol of control**, when we'd rather manage outcomes than trust God's timing.

The **idol of approval**, when we care more about fitting in than standing firm.

The **idol of image**, when we're more focused on being seen than being faithful.

And the **idol of information**, when we let every new voice online shape our thinking more than Scripture does.

These aren't carved in stone—they're carved into our habits, our screens, our calendars, and our hearts.

And here's the truth: the danger isn't that we'll stop believing in God—it's that we'll start blending Him with everything else.

Half God, half world... and completely divided.

And Samuel's message still rings true:

“If you are returning to the Lord with *all* your heart, there can't be a shared throne”

God doesn't want partial loyalty...He wants undivided worship

Because when God's people trust His unseen presence, He brings deliverance...but only when divided hearts are turned *fully* back to Him.

ISRAEL RESPONDS IN FAITH

And to *their* credit, Israel did exactly that.

For the first time in a long time, their response matched their repentance...

they didn't just *agree* with Samuel's words, they *acted* on them.

Verse 4 tells us...

1 Samuel 7:4–6

4 So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only.

That single verse marks a spiritual turning point. The same people who had divided loyalties finally made a clean break.

They didn't just *say* they were returning to the Lord...they *showed* it.

What follows in verses 5 and 6 paints one of the clearest pictures of genuine repentance in the Old Testament.

It's not loud, it's not dramatic, but it's real...humble hearts, honest confession, and renewed dependence on God

Verse 5

5 Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you."

6 So they gathered at Mizpah, drew water, poured it out before the Lord, and fasted, saying, "We have sinned against the Lord." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

Look at the pattern of their response:

- They were told to remove idols, so they **removed** idols.
- They **fasted**. (Now, we're not told if this was the "I'll skip dessert" kind of fast... or the full "nothing but water for three days" kind.)

Either way, the point wasn't diet—it was devotion.

- They **confessed**..."we have sinned against the Lord"

Confession is acknowledgement. Israel acknowledged their sin before the Lord

Verse 7...

1 Samuel 7:7

7 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 it makes sense that they would be afraid...

In the battles back in chapter 4, Israel had lost 4,000 men and *then* another 30,000.

I'm not sure how their confidence could be anything other than *really low*

And because of their recent experience, they called out to Samuel...probably with a little trepidation.

And who could blame them?

They're being told that if they're truly serious about returning to the Lord, then they would put away their idols...serve Him only.

And so they agreed...at least outwardly, as we saw in verse 4.

But agreeing is easier than believing.

How many times do we say we're going to walk confidently in obedience, while deep down, we're thinking..."I hope this works"

Meanwhile, the Philistines are marching forward...confident, organized, maybe even a little arrogant.

They've beaten Israel before, and from where they stand...nothing's changed.

But what they can't see is that this time, Israel's strength isn't in their swords...it's in their surrender.

And even though they'd done everything Samuel told them – removing their idols, fasting, praying, confessing...

When the threat became real...fear came rushing back.

And isn't that just like us? We obey...pray...do all the "right" things...thinking we're ready for the next battle.

But when the pressure rises, the old fear creeps in...

1 Samuel 7:8-9

So they cry out to Samuel:

8 “Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.”

In other words, “Samuel, don’t stop praying! We’re trusting God...but *please, you* keep talking to Him for us!”

They’re desperate. They’re done pretending they can win this one on their own.

And in that moment, Samuel steps forward – not with a sword in his hand, but with a sacrifice in his arms.

Verse 9...

9 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.

I want you to notice what’s missing:

With the Philistines threatening...

They didn’t sharpen their swords—they **softened their hearts**.

They didn’t prepare militarily—they **prepared spiritually**.

This brings us to point # 2:

Trusting God means crying out instead of gearing up

Notice they turned to God by trusting Samuel. They asked him to intercede...they asked him to “cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us!”

It’s funny—after all their ups and downs with the Lord, suddenly He’s “our God.”

Kind of like how some sports fans are only “*our* team” fans when the team’s winning.

When things are going great, it’s “*We’re* unstoppable!”

But the moment they start losing, it’s “*They’re* terrible.”

Here, Israel’s finally back to saying, “He’s *our* God!”

As in, He’s the one and only God...we’re choosing to focus our attention, our plea, our cry out to Him and Him *only*...we’ve forsaken all those foreign gods because we believe in this one.

We believe in this one, out of all the other gods, *enough* to claim Him as “*our* God”

Also notice that when the pressure was felt...when the heat got turned up...when the Philistines had gathered and came up against them, what did they do?

They realized they couldn’t fight this battle alone.

They needed someone to stand in the gap for them.

And that’s exactly what Samuel does...crying out to God on their behalf.

I think this is a good lesson for us that when trials and sufferings are at *our* doorstep...we need to be crying out to God *and* asking others to cry out with us.

You’ve probably heard the Holy Spirit being described as a “parakleet”. This comes from the Greek word παρακλητος that means “the one called alongside”

So, when we cry out to God...we’re never crying out alone...

Romans 8:26

In fact, Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

You see, the Holy Spirit is always with us, carrying our prayers to the Father...even when we can’t find the words

But the Spirit isn’t the only one who intercedes for us.

Jesus Himself knows what it’s like to walk in our struggles.

He doesn’t just understand our pain in theory...He felt it in His own body.

Hebrews 2:18

“For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to *help* those who are being tempted.”

This verse reminds us that we have a Savior who walks with us through the fire.

Now, there are actually a few different words in the Greek language for “help”.

The one used here in this verse is especially vivid.

A combination of two words...one means “to cry” and the other means “to run”.

Do you see the picture?

When we cry out to God, He doesn't hesitate or stand still...He doesn't walk...He *runs* toward us with grace and mercy.

So when Israel cried out that day, God wasn't slow to respond.

He was already thundering toward them.

Now let's see how God responded to all of this crying out...

GOD RESPONDS WITH VICTORY

1 Samuel 7:10–11

¹⁰“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.

¹¹ And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

Can you imagine that sound?

The roar of God's power rolling across the sky.

No swords...no strategies...no king...*just God*

God fought *for* them.

The Lord thundered—and Israel triumphed.

The thunder wasn't just noise...it was God's voice breaking into human fear.

It was His way of saying, “I've heard you, and I'm still your defender.”

And this brings us to...

Point # 3:

We fight battles we can see by trusting the God we can't

THE BATTLE IS SPIRITUAL

You see, beneath every visible battle is a deeper, invisible one...and God meets us there.

They hadn't formed a strategy or drawn up a battle plan.

All they did was surrender...and God did what no army could.

Because the battle was never really about strength...it was about trust

And when they gave Him that, He fought for them

Where did God settle this battle?
Not on the ground, but in the heart.

Now, this doesn't minimize the fight we can see...it *names* the place where God begins.

And that's a lesson we forget just as easily.

Don't *we* often get confused about *where* God says the battle is taking place?

In fact, in Ephesians 6, Paul talks about putting on the whole armor of God.

Listen to how he describes our tools for the battle:

He says to "stand firm, having fastened the belt of truth"

He says we have "put on the breastplate of righteousness"

We've "put on the preparation of the gospel of peace, as our shoes"

We've "taken up the helmet of salvation"

We have "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"

And part of that passage that is less-often quoted is "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication"

So, why does he describe our armor and weapons in this way?

Because in verse 12, he tells us *where* the battlefield is.

Ephesians 6:12

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present
darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

You see, the “armor of God” is described in *spiritual* terms—truth, righteousness, peace,
salvation, the Word of God, and prayer.

These are heart-level weapons for an invisible war.

We think our only problems are external—people, circumstances—but God says the battlefield is
unseen.

Remember back in verse 3 where the essence of what Samuel was saying was, “Heart first...then
the rest”

Does that mean He’ll make all of our bad circumstances good?

Will all of our problems disappear?

Well...

If we get our mindset right, meaning we realize that we *have* the full armor of God, our external
problems simply become “opportunities to trust Him”

Philippians 4:11-13

The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 4 verses 11-13

¹¹ “Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to
be content.

¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I
have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need...IN FACT...

¹³ I can do *all* things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Notice how he said that he has *learned* to be content. I think we often, with pure motives,
encourage each other to just simply be content with what we have.

We can sometimes get frustrated that we’re not content with our lives. Even when we have so
many material blessings.

Paul says he *learned* to be content, so if you feel like this is never going to happen for you, just know that Paul wrote this about 30 years *after* his conversion.

That tells us something...contentment isn't instant...it's learned.

It's the product of trust built over time.

Over the years, faith moves from being a feeling to being a foundation.

Our faith becomes a fixed attitude.

Not "I hope God will come through"...but..."I know He will, because He always has."

That's what Paul learned. That's what Samuel called Israel to learn.

When we get spiritually aligned, God fights for us.

He gives victory and peace.

But what do we mean by victory and peace?

Well...as Paul had discovered through experience, the more his heart aligned with God, the more he *realized* that he could go through *any* circumstance with contentment.

The dictionary definition of contentment is "*to be in a state of easiness of mind...quiet...satisfied*"

Can you imagine this?

Can you imagine being in a state of quiet...of satisfaction...that God's got this?...

Imagine saying, as the well-known hymn says, that "It is well with my soul!" no matter the situation.

This doesn't just happen automatically when we become a believer.

It's something we *learn*.

It's the ongoing work of sanctification.

We are given an opportunity to trust God through some trial, suffering, or need...He proves Himself faithful, again and again...and *over time*, we *learn* to trust Him more deeply.

So how does this play out in our lives today? Let me paint a picture of what walking by faith really means...

It's not pretending everything is fine—it's believing God is still good when it's not.

Walking by faith means obeying God's Word even when the results aren't instant.

It's praying when you feel like your prayers aren't working.

It's forgiving when your heart still hurts.

It's giving thanks before you see the outcome.

Vertical first.

Walking by faith means trading panic for prayer, and control for surrender.

It's saying, "Lord, I don't understand this, but I trust You anyway."

It's living today as if God will keep every promise He has ever made—because He always has.

Faith doesn't erase the uncertainty—it reorders it.

It puts God's character above your circumstances,

and lets His promises shape your *perspective* instead of your fears.

So when you wake up tomorrow and life feels ordinary,

or when you're facing something you can't fix—

that's where walking by faith begins.

And as this process goes along, we can say more and more that it is becoming "weller" with my soul. I know that's incorrect. 😊

In fact, in the book of Romans chapter 8 verse 29, it says that we believers, are predestined to be conformed to the image of His son, Jesus.

And this is a description of that conformity process.

It's definitely not an easy one, by any stretch of the imagination. It actually takes some effort to become convinced that we can trust Him.

What do I mean by this?...

2 Timothy 2:15

In the 2nd chapter of 2 Timothy, verse 15 says to "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

The Greek word that's used in the command to be diligent is the word...and it's a little funny sounding...σπουδαζω (spoodazō).

It's a word that means diligence, but at its root, the word means to "hurry up". As in, come on, let's get going in the process of presenting yourself approved to God...and then he gives us a picture of how we should be understanding that concept. He says "as a workman who does not need to be ashamed".

The way a workman would be shamed, in those days, would be to do the *opposite*...to be lazy...to *not* hurry up...to *not* be diligent...

You see, it takes effort. We need to be in His word, and the more we're in it, the more we learn to *trust* it. And *that trust* draws us into deeper connection with Him.

And that deeper connection...that *right* relationship with Him...is where victory is found.

Because when your heart stays aligned with His, He keeps you *steady* in His peace.

THE EBENEZER MOMENT

And speaking of peace...

There on the battlefield, the thunder faded...the dust settled...

And for the first time in a long time, Israel stands in peace.

And in that holy silence after the storm, Samuel does something beautiful...

Something deeply human.

He bends down, lifts a stone, and sets it in the ground.

1 Samuel 7:12

¹² 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.'"

That stone wasn't meant to *decorate* the ground...it was meant to *declare* God's faithfulness.

It was Samuel saying, "Let's never forget this. Let's mark this moment so that when the next battle comes, we'll remember *Who* won the last one."

Because gratitude is the bridge between God's victory and our next season of faith.

Samuel called the stone, *Ebenezer*, which means "*Stone of Help*."

We sing the hymn "Come thou fount" all the time in church.

Ever wondered about the line...”here I raise my Ebenezer”

Now, be honest with me, and by a show of hands, did anyone think we were trying to resurrect a guy named Ebenezer...? ☺

I’ll be honest with you and tell you that at one point in my life, I thought that’s what it meant. Now I won’t tell you at *which* point in my life...that might be embarrassing. ☺

You see, Samuel “raised” an Ebenezer stone.

It was a physical memorial to remind Israel of a spiritual truth...“Till now the Lord has helped us.”

That phrase...”till now”...is worth pausing on.

It’s not just a marker of the past...it’s a declaration of ongoing faith.

Samuel isn’t saying, “Well, that was nice while it lasted...”

He’s saying, “God has helped us up to this point...and remember that gives us confidence for tomorrow.”

1 Samuel 7:13

And we see that truth affirmed in verse 13...

¹³ “So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

You see, Samuel knew this wasn’t going to be the last time they’ll encounter the Philistines...and definitely not the last time they’ll need God’s help.

But he’s affirming that God *did* indeed help them...and will again.

So, why are Ebenezers important—because *we* are sometimes quick to forget. We move from *gratitude* to *entitlement* faster than we realize.

Here’s a challenge for you...Every time God helps you, mark it down. That “till now” moment becomes your proof that the unseen God is real and faithful.

You know what’s fascinating?

This isn’t the first time we’ve seen the name Ebenezer in this book.

If you’ll recall back to last week, when we looked at chapter 4...the Israelites fought the Philistines at the place called Ebenezer.

But what happened there?
Defeat. Twice.

Pastor John talked about how we can sometimes look for a formula...some sort of equation...to back God into a corner—to get Him to do what we want Him to do.

Well, today I want to show you a few formulas of my own—but not *that* kind of formula. These aren't ways to manipulate God; they're ways to *illustrate* how He moves when His people are aligned with Him.

So as a reminder of what happened at this place called Ebenezer, I want to present some “Ebenezer equations.”

You might say, Brian, it was my understanding there'd be no math... (you might be old enough to understand where that joke started)

Don't worry—no calculators needed! This is the kind of math even I can do.

1 Samuel 4:2

“The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle.”

Now, in this scenario, Israel was not walking in fellowship with the Lord. Nor did they have the ark with them.

So, let's look at our first equation...

- **Equation #1 – 1 Samuel 4:2:**

No fellowship + No ark = Defeat
Self-confidence + Disobedience = Defeat.

They went out to battle without consulting God, they relied on their own strength and four thousand men fell.

Self-confidence + disobedience equals defeat.

That got Israel thinking...and you might recall this from last week...

After their first defeat, the elders asked, “*Why has the Lord defeated us today?*”

But instead of asking God for direction, they came up with their own solution.

They said, “*Let’s bring the ark from Shiloh — that way it can save us.*”

So they sent for the ark — the very symbol of God’s presence — and when it arrived in camp, the people shouted so loudly that the ground shook.

The Philistines even panicked, saying, “*A god has come into the camp! We’re doomed!*”

But instead of running, they rallied and said, “*Be men and fight.*”

So, here’s the scene:

Israel thinks having the ark guarantees victory...

the Philistines think it guarantees disaster...

and both sides are about to find out who’s really in control.

Then comes verse 10

1 Samuel 4:10

“So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell.”

So, let’s look at our second equation...

- **Equation #2 – 1 Samuel 4:10:**

No fellowship + Ark = Even greater defeat

Now, this time, they tried to bring God along as a symbol – a good-luck charm.

They shouted, they cheered, they *had* the ark...but they didn’t have fellowship.

And then...silence.

Between that crushing defeat in chapter 4 and the renewal we see in chapter 7...nearly 20 years pass.

20 years where the ark sat in the house of Abinadab...present, but neglected.

20 years of living under Philistine pressure...doing life their way while God waited for their hearts.

But those 20 years weren't wasted...God was using the waiting to prepare His people for returning.

Sometimes the longest gaps between battles are the seasons where God quietly realigns our hearts.

And that brings us to the turning point...the final equation.

Here in chapter 7, the nation is finally walking in fellowship with God...their relationship has been restored.

And what happens next?

1 Samuel 7:13-14

“So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.”

So, here's the third equation...the one that finally worked.

- **Equation #3 – 1 Samuel 7:12-14**

Fellowship with God = Victory and Peace

Same battlefield name.

Same enemies.

But this time, their hearts were right.

A completely different outcome — Why?... because the equation changed.

You can feel the difference, can't you?

The name *Ebenezer* doesn't just mark a place...it marks a pattern.

The first two Ebenezers were marked by **self-reliance**...and they fell
the final Ebenezer was marked by **God-reliance...and they stood**

That's the shift.

That's the lesson.

The difference *wasn't* their strategy...it *wasn't* their strength...it **was** their surrender.

They stopped relying on themselves, their religious symbols, their idols...and started trusting God to fight for them.

They put away their mixed devotion to foreign gods and trusted the One True God, just as Samuel instructed them to do.

That's why Samuel said, "Till now the Lord has helped us."

Not "till now we've figured it out"

Not "till now we've gotten stronger"

But "till now the Lord has helped us"

And just like Paul had learned contentment...the Israelites had learned that an invisible God fought their battle for them and gave them victory.

Now this sentiment won't last long, as we'll see in chapter 8 where they're going to ask for a human, visible king...and why, why would they do that?

Didn't God just prove Himself to them?

It's a lesson they learned well in chapter 7—but in chapter 8, we'll see they're looking for a visible substitute.

And here's the tragedy: chapter 7 ends in victory, but chapter 8 will begin in rejection.

And in between...is that fragile space where faith must keep walking...even when sight goes dark.

You see, Israel's story didn't fall apart when the Philistines attacked.

It fell apart when the thunder stopped.

When the noise of God's deliverance faded into the quiet of normal life... that's when they started looking for something *visible* again.

And that's where many of *us* live — between thunder and quiet.

Between the moments where God's power is obvious, and the seasons where His presence feels invisible.

When life grows quiet — when the next step isn't clear, when prayers hang in the air, when everything in you wants a visible answer — that's when faith has to decide if it will keep trusting the invisible God.

“Maybe I just need a better plan.
I just need to fix this myself.
I just need something I can see.”

But that's the moment faith gets tested.

When sight demands proof, faith whispers, *“He's still here.”*
And that's where we learn that trust doesn't depend on what we can see — it depends on who He is.

He is the object of our faith.

Faith says,
“Even when I can't see Him working, He is.”

Faith says,
“Even when it's quiet, He's still present.”

Faith says,
“I don't need a visible substitute — I have an invisible Savior.”

And here's the beauty of it:

The story doesn't end with our unseen faith reaching toward an invisible God.

No, the story turns...because the invisible God reached down toward us.

The God we could not see took on flesh — so that we could know once and for all that His presence is not a theory, it's a Person.

It's not just promised...it's personal.

He fought our greatest enemy — sin and death — not with swords and armies, but with a cross and an empty tomb.

And He now rules and reigns with authority...still fighting for His people.

So maybe today, God is calling you — like He called Israel — to *put away the foreign gods*, to *redirect your heart*, and to *trust Him only*.

To say, “Lord, I don’t need a visible fix. I need a faithful heart.”

Because when God’s people trust His unseen presence, He brings peace...the kind that feels like victory even before the battle ends.

So the call for us is simple...to remember the God who fights for us, even when we can’t see the battle.

CONCLUSION

And that brings us back Samuel’s Ebenezer and...

Point # 4: **Raising an Ebenezer means remembering God’s faithfulness**

Picture it — the battlefield still quiet, the echo of God’s thunder fading over the hills.

Samuel bends down, lifts a stone, and sets it in the ground.

And he says, “Till now, the Lord has helped us.”

That rock wasn’t magic — it was memory.

A monument of mercy.

A visible reminder of an invisible faithfulness.

And that’s what God still calls us to build today.

Because we are a forgetful people.

We move from gratitude to anxiety faster than we’d like to admit.

We praise Him in the thunder and doubt Him in the silence.

But Samuel reminds us...the same God who thundered for you once, still stands with you now.

So let me ask you:

Where are *your* Ebenezers?

Where can you look back and say,

“God helped me there.”

“God forgave me there.”

“God carried me through *that* season.”

Every one of those moments is your “till now.”

And if He’s been faithful *till now*, why would He stop today?

So before you reach for control this week, reach for surrender.
Before you look for something visible, remember the invisible.

Raise your Ebenezer — not a stone, but a story.
A testimony that says, “Till now the Lord has helped me.”

Aligned hearts...steady steps...

Not just in the battlefield around us...but in the battlefield *within* us