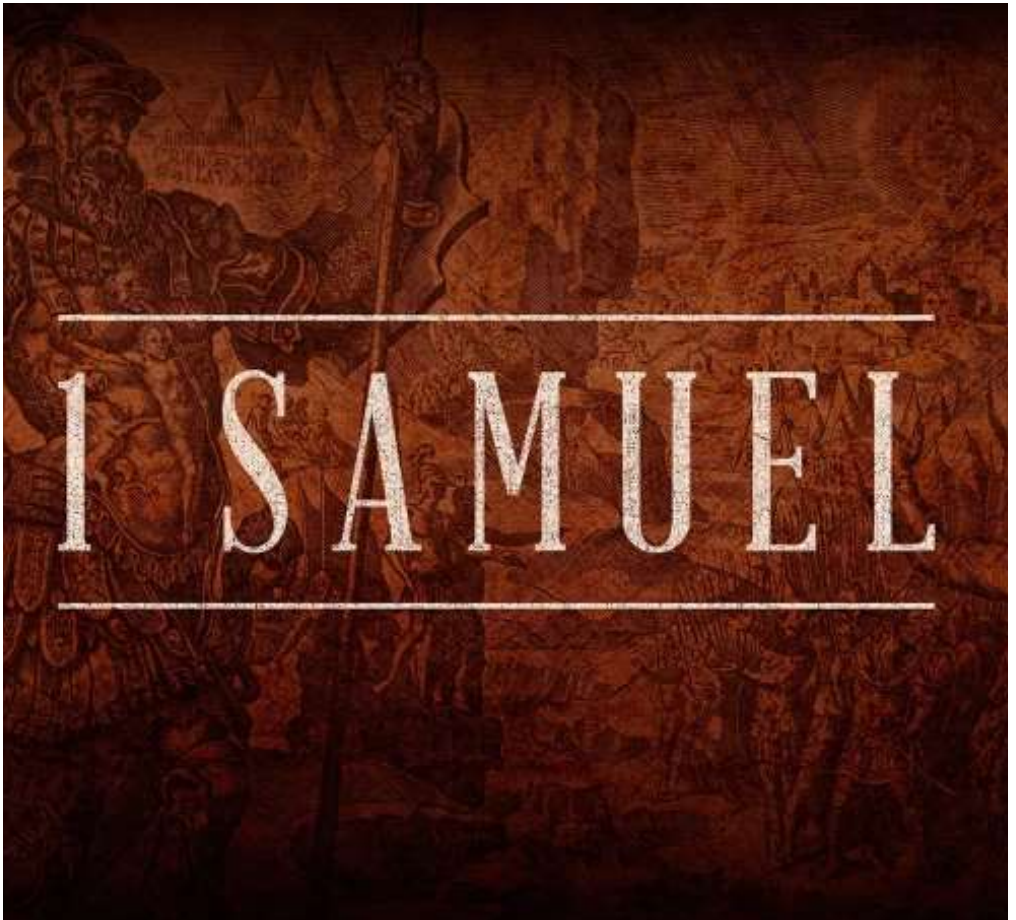


Let's Worship God

20th-25th April 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - Judges 17:1-6: Who Will Rule?

We are now going to be looking at the book of 1 Samuel with notes written by Rev. Joel Loughridge.

If the news is anything to go by, the identity of our leaders is important. Before the current wall to wall coverage of the fever, we had feverish coverage of elections. For months we'd been tracking the Democratic nomination - Bloomberg splashing the cash, Biden bouncing from nowhere, Bernie burning out. In the UK, we were desperate to know if Boris could bring Brexit or would Corbynomics revitalise "the many, not the few". We all wanted to know the answer to this question: who would rule? The winners would potentially make decisions and spend money affecting millions of people in their daily lives. Personal safety, living standards, global security - all impacted by the answer to this question. Blessing or prosperity, trouble or trial - hinging on this question: who will rule?

It was ever thus. This is one of the key issues in 1 Samuel: who will rule God's people? A ruler is needed, as we've said, for the blessing and prosperity of the people. They wield power that will affect lives on a day to day basis. At this time there was no King in Israel. Every one did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6 and 21:25). It was a time of immorality, depravity, wickedness, tension and turbulence, as illustrated in the confusion and idolatry of our passage today. Read on in Judges and it gets even worse. Israel was not a nice place to live, and was in danger of being overrun by her enemies. They needed a king. A king to rule for God in justice and uprightness, bringing blessing, prosperity and peace. 1 Samuel is the story of how God gives them that King. It is a story of God's plan to bless his people in times of trouble, by sending a King to bring blessing & prosperity. This is God's plan. Not just for Israel, but for the world. It was ever thus.

Questions

1. Scan quickly through Judges 17-21. How do these incidents show the danger of there being no King in Israel, and everyone doing what was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6 and 21:25)?
2. Where do you see this being played out in our culture - everyone doing what is right in their own eyes?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would show people their need of a good ruler, and the limitations of all earthly rulers.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 72:st 1-3; 9-11 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 1: 1-8: A Longed For Son

1 Samuel picks up almost where Ruth left off - focusing on one particular family in Israel, and the problem of childlessness. A man, Elkanah, has 2 wives. One, Peninnah, has children, One, Hannah, does not. It is possible that Hannah was his first wife, and when she didn't bear children he took a second wife. In the Old Testament, childlessness was a social, economic, and religious disaster. To be childless (in that culture - not now), was to have your family name and land disappear. It carried the stigma of being under a curse, almost as if you were dishonoured by God, with no part in the promise of Genesis 3:15. This is what poor Hannah has to bear - the pressure & shame of failure. To make matters worse, Peninnah taunts her. You can almost hear her at bedtime, making a great show of hugs & kisses for mummy. On journeys, counting each child out. Every time she's expecting another she takes the names Hannah likes. Loudly complaining about her tiredness and soreness. Asking Hannah: "do you not want to have kids? Do you not love Elkanah?"

Every year they head to Shiloh, to the Tabernacle, for a family feast. There's something about this that aggravates Hannah's pain. Perhaps it is just the big family occasion. At times like that those that are obnoxious can be just a bit more obnoxious. Hannah sees all Peninnah's kids sitting all round the table. Peninnah's been poking and prodding, ribbing and rubbing it in. Every year, year upon year, this goes on. And her husband Elkanah doesn't help matters. He's well meaning but clumsy - "Am I not more to you than ten sons" (v8). It's frustrating.

Perhaps some of you have been in this position. You know the the excruciating pain of childlessness. The helpless longing, the sense of hopelessness, a slow uncertain death of dreams. There's perhaps no pain as deep, hidden, and personal. But here's the point - God's plan to bless his people begins with a deeply personal problem and the domestic struggles of an insignificant family. God is at work here.

Questions

1. Where else in the Bible did God work though childlessness? This is a thread that weaves the whole way through the Bible.
2. Deeply personal problems and domestic struggles of an insignificant family - where might God be at work in your life?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would show himself at work in our personal problems and domestic struggles.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 1:9-16: A Prayed For Son

At one of the annual feasts, after Peninnah's been poking Hannah's wound repeatedly, it gets too much for Hannah. She can't take it anymore. Her soul is bitter, she's in pain and agony and her heart is breaking. As she sobs uncontrollably she pours out her heart to God (v11). She makes a vow: "If you will look upon me, remember me and not forget me, but give your servant a Son (let me play my role in your plans), I will give him to you - all his life. He will be devoted to your service. No razor will touch his head (a mark of consecration)." She is so longing for a son, she'll return him to God. Her prayer is so passionate Eli the priest thinks she's drunk and warns her to stay off the bottle. Read again her answer in v15-16 and feel the depth of her pain.

But look at how she addresses God in her prayer: "the LORD of Hosts." This is a common name for God in the Old Testament, but 1 Samuel is the first time it's used. We're being introduced to the LORD of hosts. It means, as one author puts it: "the God whose universal rule encompasses every host, force and army - heavenly, cosmic and earthly - the God with the total resources of the universe at his command." It stresses the bigness, glory and power of God.

Hannah, this poor, shame-filled, heart-broken woman from the Hill country of Ephraim (the rural sticks of Israel) addresses the cosmic ruler about her personal family problem.

When did you last direct your deeply personal problems and domestic struggles of your insignificant family to the God whose universal rule encompasses every host, force, and army - heavenly, cosmic, and earthly? To the God with the total resources of the universe at his command? Maybe you did take them to him, but you lost sight of the reality that this is who He is. Isn't the LORD of Hosts able to do all we need?

Questions

1. How would you explain the title "LORD of Hosts" to a child?
2. When did you last pray with Hannah's pain and passion?

Prayer Points

1. Take Hannah's prayer in verse 11 and adapt it to your situation
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 24 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 1:17-18: The Peace Giving Priest

On the surface, these verses are a bit strange. Hannah leaves the doorposts of the Temple no longer sad. She seems to have received some sort of assurance. Why? Because God's priest has spoken to her (v17).

It was Eli's job as God's High Priest to bring the people before God and to pray for them to God. He stood as God's representative to the people. And as such, he gives assurance to her. This is, as it were, God himself telling her to go in peace.

Every priest in the Old Testament is a picture of the Lord Jesus. They offered sacrifices to atone for the people's sin. Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice to atone for His people's sin. They prayed for and interceded for the people in the presence of God. Jesus lives forever in the presence of God to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). Priests knew their interceding was heard by God and answered by God. Jesus is heard by God and answered by God. After Hannah prayed, the priest told her to go in peace. Each week after we worship, the Lord Jesus through his Minister tells us to go in peace, in His grace, in the love of God the Father, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Hannah left her praying assured of being heard and answered. We can leave our praying assured of being heard and being answered. We might not receive Hannah's answer, but we will get the best answer. We can with confidence draw near to his throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-15). Jesus is the peace giving priest.

Questions

1. What does Hebrews 7:22-27 say about Jesus the great High Priest
2. How does our great High Priest tell us to "go in peace"?

Prayer Points

1. Thank God for a High Priest interceding for us, who knows our weaknesses and our needs.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 85: st 3-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 1:19-28: A Given Son

The LORD remembered Hannah (v19). That doesn't mean He'd forgotten her. It's the writer's way of saying he acted positively towards her. She bears a son. He gives her a son. After he is weaned (around the age of 3 or 4, as fresh water was a scarcer commodity) Hannah fulfils her vow and takes him up to the Tabernacle to be devoted to the service of God.

This little boy - given for the service of God - spends his days helping Eli the priest and worshipping God. He will grow into a spiritual giant in Israel. This consecrated boy will lead the people in worship, will bring God's word to the people, will judge and rule the people, will lead them into battle and on to victory. His birth marks a new era. He will be the Kingmaker. He will mark out God's chosen King, the one who will bring blessing, peace, and prosperity. He will be the prophet who precedes the King. A giant on the pages of Israel's history.

Where did he come from? The Hill country of Ephraim (nowhereville). The barren womb of a woman bullied by her husband's other wife. The domestic struggles of an insignificant family.

You see, this story is NOT just a story about a devout woman whose prayer was answered. The main thing we take away should not be "pray like Hannah". The main lesson is that an insignificant, childless woman was used by God to bring about a new chapter in His story. God is going to provide a King to rule, bless, and prosper. He starts with nothing - a barren womb. He starts with our helplessness - a woman in the grip of infertility. He starts with the everyday and mundane - the domestic struggles of an ordinary family. He starts with a situation corrupted by sin - Elkanah should not have had two wives! This is how the God of grace and power works. The helpless, the hopeless, the insignificant, and the ordinary are his preferred tools.

Questions

1. What are the main aspects of your "ordinary life"? What does God call you to in each one, and how might He work?
2. Do you need to stop looking for and waiting for "the significant" in your life, and look to see what God is doing in the seemingly insignificant?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to show you how He is working in the ordinary of your life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 113A - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 1: How God sends his King

This whole chapter sets before us God's way of working. His plan is to bless His needy and rebellious people with a King who would bring peace, blessing, and prosperity. The whole story has a very ordinary beginning. God works to send his king through the domestic problems of an insignificant family. A childless woman (Hannah) gives birth to a prophet (Samuel) who will precede the coming King (David), prepare God's people, and anoint the King. The King will bring deliverance from their enemies and peace and prosperity. This is God's way of working. It's the way he worked 1,000 years later when a childless woman miraculously (Elizabeth) gave birth to a prophet (John) who preceded the coming King, preaching and preparing the people. The King himself, the great prosperity bringer and peace maker, the true King, was miraculously born to an insignificant woman (Mary). His rule brings rescue from sin, Satan, and death, and great blessing to his people. God works through the ordinary to send the blessings of His King.

God still works the same way today. And that's good news. As I look at myself I see someone pretty ordinary, with plenty of domestic problems (most of them coming from me!). Life doesn't seem to have much spark, fizzle, and bang. But God's ways, most of the time, don't have obvious spark, fizzle, and bang. What a wonderful encouragement in outreach - you don't need to be highly trained experts in specialist programmes. God works in ordinary people through ordinary lives. So much of our outreach focuses on events and programmes. We try to create un-ordinary things to reach out through. And we spend so much time on the un-ordinary that we neglect the ordinary, everyday relationships. God works extraordinarily in the midst of ordinary life - through relationships forged in team or work place, or over a garden fence. He works extraordinarily in family relationships and family events, through cups of coffee, acts of kindness and friendship. God sends the blessings of his King through ordinary people in their ordinary lives.

Questions

1. What are the parallels between Samuel and David, and John and Jesus?
2. Do you need to focus more on ordinary opportunities for outreach?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to work in your ordinary spheres of life - work, home, neighbourhood.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
Judges 21:25

Praise: Psalm 19 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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