

God's Faithfulness

1 Samuel 12:1-25

¹ Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you.

² Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. ³ Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these things, I will make it right."

⁴ "You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand."

⁵ Samuel said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand."

"He is witness," they said.

⁶ Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up out of Egypt. ⁷ Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the righteous acts performed by the LORD for you and your ancestors.

⁸ "After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

⁹ "But they forgot the LORD their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them. ¹⁰ They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.' ¹¹ Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety.

¹² "But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'—even though the LORD your God was your king. ¹³ Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the LORD has set a king over you. ¹⁴ If you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the LORD your God—good! ¹⁵ But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors.

¹⁶ "Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes! ¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call on the LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the LORD when you asked for a king."

¹⁸ Then Samuel called on the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel.

¹⁹ The people all said to Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king."

²⁰ "Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹ Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. ²² For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. ²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴ But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. ²⁵ Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish."

Samuel: A Faithful Minister

1. Samuel takes the stand and invites the people to bring their accusations against him, if there was any misconduct on his part. Israel had none to offer. Samuel was a faithful leader who represented God well.
2. Samuel takes a parting shot at Israel. As a leader, he did not take anything from the people. The king they asked for will not treat them the same way. The king will take and make demands on the people.

1 Samuel 12:2-5	1 Samuel 8:10-15
<i>Whose ox have I taken?</i>	<i>The king will take your sons</i>
<i>Whose donkey have I taken?</i>	<i>The king will take your daughters</i>
<i>Whom have I cheated?</i>	<i>The king will take ... your fields and vineyards and olive groves</i>
<i>Whom have I oppressed?</i>	<i>The king will take a tenth of your seed crops and vineyards</i>
<i>From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes?</i>	<i>The king will take your male and female slaves, your cattle and donkeys</i>
	<i>The king will take a tenth of your flocks</i>

3. Reflect upon Samuel's fine record of integrity in leadership. Why is this so important and much needed in leadership? What does it tell you about God's righteousness in the Old Testament?

An Unfaithful People

The Old Testament does not hide the failings of God's people. God elected Israel to be a light to all nations. He elected and appointed Priests and Kings to represent Him. Sadly, the very people He elected turned against Him and abused the authority and position given to them. Israel in turn craved for power and glory and pursued foreign gods and kings.

The Priest Were Unfaithful

<p>1 Samuel 2:17 <i>This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD'S sight, for they were treating the LORD'S offering with contempt.</i></p>
<p>1 Samuel 8:3 <i>But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.</i></p>

The Priest failed in the duty to represent God to the people and the people before God. In fact, they took advantage of the people, and stole from God and the people.

- Reflect on the fact that people do use their God-given gifts and appointments for personal gain. The ministry given to them was neglected and the authority bestowed upon them was abused. Why does this happen?

The Nation Was Unfaithful

1 Samuel 12:6-12

⁶ Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up out of Egypt.” ⁷ Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the righteous acts performed by the LORD for you and your ancestors.

⁸ “After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

⁹ “But they forgot the LORD their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them.” ¹⁰ They cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.’ ¹¹ Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety.

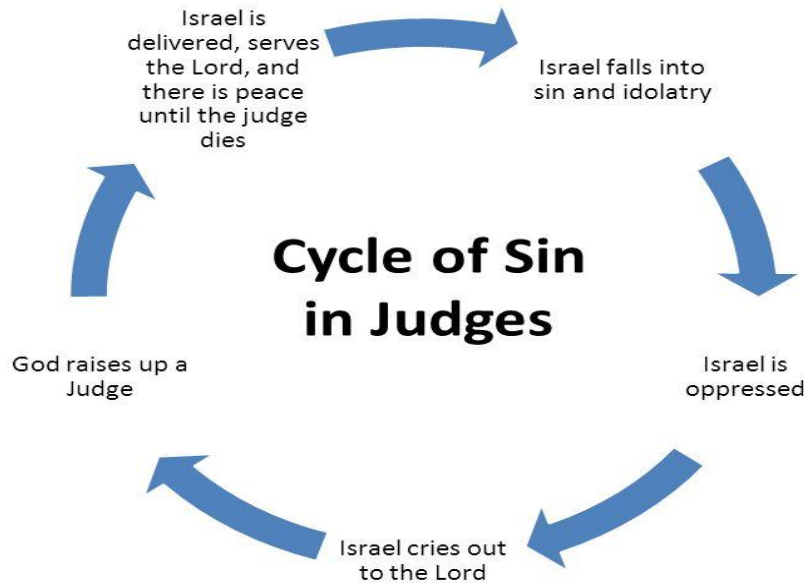
¹² “But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the LORD your God was your king.

1. The book of Judges records what takes place after Israel has settled in the Promised Land.

Israel	God
In Egypt they cried to the Lord	God sent Moses and Aaron to bring Israel out from Egypt into the Promised Land
They forgot the Lord their God	He sold them to Sisera, Philistines, etc.
<i>They cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you. (v. 10)</i>	<i>Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety. (v. 11)</i>
¹² <i>“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’ (v. 12a)</i>	<i>even though the LORD your God was your king. (v. 12b)</i>

After Joshua and the early leader died, Israel started to worship idols. In his speech, Samuel reminds the people how they treated God even though He was righteous in all His ways. He was making a case against the people, confronting them with their sins and unfaithfulness.

2. God’s righteousness and Israel’s unfaithfulness
3. Israel demanded for a king so that she could be like the surrounding nations. Israel was comparing herself with her surrounding nations. In doing so, she felt it would be better to have a king rule over them. A king would do a better job in strengthening and protecting Israel from her enemies. Before Israel asked for a king, the nation was always fascinated with the gods of the surrounding nations. Israel would worship idols and indulge in the spiritual practices of her neighbouring nations, because she believed they were greater than the Lord their God. This was the nature of Israel’s unfaithfulness; she would easily forsake God to pursue other rulers and gods.



4. God has always confronted Israel with her sin, but Israel was stubborn in her ways. This led Israel to be caught in a cycle of sin. Israel's sin would lead her into oppression, she would cry to the Lord and He would rescue her. Then she would again return to her sinful ways.
5. Samuel makes a case against Israel. God has been faithful and righteous where else Israel was unfaithful. It was their sin that led them into oppression and it was the Lord who rescued them because of His righteousness. It was an open and shut case. The people could not dispute the facts presented to them. The sad truth of Samuel's case against Israel was: God has always been righteous, faithful and true to His covenant with His people, but Israel still wanted a king to rule over them.
6. The Israelites needed some convincing on the gravity of their sin.

1 Samuel 12:16-19

"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes!¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call on the LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the LORD when you asked for a king."

¹⁸ *Then Samuel called on the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel.*

¹⁹ *The people all said to Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king."*

The Lord had to send thunder and rain during the dry season as a sign of His presence and His displeasure. Israel asked Samuel to intercede on their behalf. They did not want to die but they still wanted a king. This was how Israel treated God, yet the Lord remains righteous and true.

7. The one way we can understand sin is by understanding God's displeasure of sin. The thunder and rain revealed God's wrath and how He could easily destroy. It was the revelation of God's wrath that made Israel understand the nature and the rightful consequence of the sin. Yet, in all this God is merciful.
- How can we learn to hate sin? What does the wrath of God teach us about sin?

The Grace of God

²⁰ “Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.” ²¹ Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. ²² For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. ²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴ But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. ²⁵ Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king.

1. Samuel invites the people to return to God and to stop turning to useless idols, who “can do you no good, nor can they rescue you because they are the useless”.
 - Pray, reflect, and ask God if there are any useless idols in your life that you must turn away from.
2. Reflect on the following verse:

1 Samuel 12:22

For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.

Israel has failed God again and again, and yet God says this about His people.

- What does this tell you about the heart of God?
3. Reflect on the words of Samuel to Israel. He tells Israel that he will never fail to pray for her. Today, who stand before the Father as our faithful intercessor?

Hebrews 7:24-25

²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Prayer Items

1. God's Faithfulness

- Learn to put our trust on God's faithfulness
- Pray that wealth, power and worldly pleasures will not rule over our lives
- We will be empowered to embrace the humility displayed in the life of Jesus
- God will shape us to be a church that will faithfully represent Him
- We will be faithful in prayer and intercession

2. Life Church

- A church dedicated to Prayer, Word and Worship.
- Families – salvation
- Wisdom to represent Christ, to speak the Gospel, stand for truth in our schools, marketplace and in our neighbourhoods
- Open doors - the surrounding community.
- Deepen our love for one another and make us eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit.

3. Ministries:

- Life Explorers
- Redeeming Roses
- Destiny Kids & Teens
- Sunday School
- Lifeline
- Worship

4. Healing

- Si Yun & Jayden
- Bro. Harold (Connie and Mel's Dad)

5. Covid-19 Pandemic

- Protection
- Vaccine
- Those affected: sick, foreigners, poor & those who have lost their jobs

6. Malaysia

- Churches
- Leaders
- Unity