

1 Samuel

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[0 : 0 0] I'll ask your attention with me to the chapter we read and to the 20th verse in 1 Samuel chapter 12 reading verses 20 and 21 and Samuel said unto all the people fear not ye have done all this wickedness yet turn not aside from following the Lord but serve the Lord with all your heart and turn ye not aside for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver for they are vain.

The background to this word is quite clear and simple you will I'm sure immediately realize something of it the people of Israel wanted to have a king like the countries round about them they had not before had a king they had been ruled by judges since those days of Moses and Joshua who succeeded him that had been the pattern it was God's appointment but the people felt and earnestly desired that they might have a king we read that that first king

Saul was appointed in the anger of God he gave them a king in his anger and took him away in his wrath the great and underlying cause was that they might be like the countries round about the world and why would they wish that the Lord said to Samuel plainly it was because they had departed from him the living God they did not recognize God as their king they did not turn to him as their leader as the one who could defend and deliver them as the one who alone could guide them keep them and provide for them in peace and in danger no they wanted a human king one that they could see he set over them well Samuel we see if you look back was very reluctant he argued with the people against this but they prevailed and God said to Samuel hearken to them make them a king they have not rejected you it isn't so much that they are against you of course Samuel felt it because his sons were not good sons the word of God plainly tells us it does not disguise the fact that Samuel's sons did not follow in the way of their father and they were not good men so the people did have a complaint in that way but the Lord discerns the heart he said to Samuel it wasn't just that it wasn't only that that was not the greatest reason they had not just rejected Samuel but they had rejected him the Lord there were troubles we read that Nahash the Ammonite came up the beginning of chapter 11 and encamped against Jabesh Gilead there had been those various enemies of Israel who had come against them as today Israel is in that precarious position humanly speaking with enemies around marvelously the Lord has defended we see so in those past days constantly they had their enemies around about them but the Lord had promised them that protection and deliverance he had at various times intervened in a marvelous way to deliver them from their enemies but now they had this idea that a king would be able to lead them and deliver them in a more effective way they wanted a king they wanted a king well this is the background then to the word and that is why Samuel gathered the people together and he spoke straightly and faithfully to them

he said before them he said before them he said before them something of their history in a very brief way he reminded them of the times when as a people they had rebelled against God and their enemies had been suffered to come against them and oppress them the times many times the times many times that God had delivered them and now he charged them with their sin and to bring it home to them the more he called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain in that time of wheat harvest now you must understand that this was a very striking sign indeed in the land of Israel they normally have two periods of rain what has been called the early and the latter rain the time when the time when the time when the seed is sown and then a time as the crops are growing but when it comes to harvest time it is dry they don't expect it to rain it's a rare thing they certainly don't expect thunder and rain that was something unheard of this is what makes it you see so striking in our land well we had thunder in December didn't we did in some places we certainly did at Mayfield one night quite heavy thunder claps but that is not unknown we have a mixture of weather weather it can rain in any month of the year we know that and so

I emphasize this because it shows to us the striking illustration the mark that God brought the Samuel cried unto him to enforce upon the people the greatness of their sin and evidently it came home to them they recognized that God was speaking to them through Samuel his prophet and they confess their sin so it is at this point that our text comes in at this point of the confession of the people the realization that they had sinned that Samuel is able to say unto them fear not ye have done all this wickedness yet turn not aside from following the Lord just before I come to the text

[9 : 48] I hope in some orderly way as the Lord helps me I may say that the people knew what war was they had experience at various times of that sadness and horror of enemies coming against them of battles and conflict and the times of being overcome too with all the harshness of oppression these are sad things and today we live in a time when as Jesus said to his disciples ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars but the Lord Jesus Christ said also see that ye be not troubled I'm struck as I think of the Savior's words the simplicity and yet the expanse of it he doesn't go into details of those wars he doesn't enter into an argument as to what the nature of those wars are or whether they are just wars we have heard quite a lot about that concept of just war well it's a very difficult and debatable point

I don't know what makes a just war I have to honestly say but Jesus did not enter into any argument he does not embroider his statement or surround it with any sort of such ideas but simply and very plainly he says to us there are times when there are wars when God suffers those rumors to actually break out into awful conflict we read of it of old there are times when there are rumors which disturb the heart but they don't actually come to conflict but whatever it may be there is that gracious and helpful word of the Lord see that ye be not troubled after all whatever happens upon the earth we do not know in our life whether we shall live to see it whatever happens in the world the greatest thing for us is to be ready when our Lord shall come whatever may be the troubles and the difficulties that attend in this world we need the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ and if we should be preserved and protected from outward harm and danger and if our life might be protected in a way of material prosperity and comfort and ease do you really think that that alone is the greatest benefit do you honestly think that that is the only thing that is to be worried and concerned about what about the man who thought he had much laid up and God required his soul really isn't it a greater thing and more blessed to have that forgiveness of our sins to know that we are in

Christ Jesus to have the prospect of a heavenly inheritance I was saying at home a few weeks ago just been reading the latest issue of the sword and trowel and Dr.

Peter Masters describing his visit to the Soviet Union meeting with various pastors there you may have read the report of it what struck me was how one elderly pastor who had spent several terms of imprisonment and suffered so much he said saying to the English pastor well what do you ask your people when they join your church yes of the doctrines what they believe you want to know that they are steadfast in that but he went on and he said do you ask them if they will be faithful unto death and Dr.

[15 : 36] Masters was rather shaken I think by that and he said well no no we don't ask them that and he said clearly the Russian was disappointed because it seemed to him so important so vital they had lived through times when they had to be ready to be faithful unto death well that rather struck me too I know that the Lord deals mercifully and gently with us I know that there are very different circumstances in different lands and different places throughout the earth and we are not to compare exactly the life and experience that is wrong and foolish but there is something in the thought isn't there of being faithful and ready ready to bear

Paul says to those elders of Ephesus he called to Miletus we find it in Acts chapter 20 I'm ready he says I'm ready I've been told bombs and imprisonment await me people have said this they tried to dissuade me from going up to Jerusalem they don't want me to go on they think that I'm running into trouble he said none of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself but I think for my part that's something of the difficulty we do count our lives dear we do we think a lot of our lives and the well-being and the benefit of our lives and the security and the comfort of our lives we count our lives dear but

Paul said he didn't well now perhaps that is a little bit of a digression let me come to the text Samuel said unto the people fear not ye have done all this wickedness you notice the faithfulness and straightforwardness of the man of God he doesn't say to the people well fear not you're not so bad after all you really haven't done much wrong I shouldn't worry about it too greatly because your sin is not very great no he agrees with them he acknowledges ye have done all this wickedness and it is a time when we must say something of the same and I believe the ministers of God have to say something of the same in this way we have done this wickedness we have as a nation we have done great wickedness as a nation we have departed from the word of

God as a nation we have despised and dismissed the word of God as a nation we have put into law things that are plainly contrary to the word of God as a nation we seem to be going further in that way the idea of revising the law of Sunday trading well it would be good to revise it I could suggest how to revise it indeed but that's not the idea is it the fear that the revision is to make it just another trading day another ordinary day but it's more or less become that anyway and in various ways as a nation surely that word is true we have become lovers of pleasures more than lovers of

God and I worked on building sites with quite a number of men this was very plain if they had a God it was some football star if they had a religion well it was football itself really it seemed like that the way in which it engrossed them the ardency the earnestness the attention they paid oh far more interested in that than they were in their work that was very evident and in any other thing and this seems to have gripped us doesn't it altogether in the great variety the total idea of pleasure and leisure that we have become lovers of pleasures more than lovers of

[21 : 34] God we have in our churches become cold and faint departed from the Lord do we ourselves preach all the counsel of God you know I have to ask it of myself and concerned as a pastor I fear it is easy to get into a line of ministry it's easy also to be tempted to speak to the people what you know is acceptable what will go down well what you know they will appreciate and what will cause no problems and no difficulties well I'm sharing with you in a sense but you see again thinking of

Paul he could say I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God I've kept back nothing that was profitable for you when he writes to the Corinthians he has to say to them am I become your enemy in telling you the truth are you grieved with me are you offended because I say these things well we don't want to be offensive it's a great thing to speak the truth in love if we speak the truth in love then let us speak all the truth I say have we departed have we fallen short have we faint in this I ask I ask myself and I ask you and I ask you as discerning hearers as you who hear the word week by week and in the week as well who are often hearing the word take heed what you hear

I ask you to consider and to ponder this have we come short in our lives in our own way what about the wickedness have we done that which we should have done are there those things that certainly we look back and see we have the sin we have done foolishly we have done wrong we have thought wrong we have spoken foolishly we have had anger we have had bitterness we have had envy we have had pride selfishness covetousness these things so far from you sadly do we not have to look back and say yes we have done this wickedness all this wickedness and it is summed up in that departure has there been the liveliness the closeness the nearness to the

Lord or have we departed from him above all else we see in the history of Israel this great wickedness that comes over again and again they turned from the Lord and in that turning from the Lord they went into all sorts of evils departing from him whose heart says Jeremiah departeth from the Lord cursed be he the man that trusteth in man whose heart departeth from the Lord ye have done all this wickedness and I was thinking yesterday it was good to meet in the special prayer meetings good to start the year in that way

I was conscious in my own heart of a deep sadness sense of disappointment there's confession of sin and a deep sense of this these men wrong are they just using words that were meaningless when they say we have sinned when they confess are they absolutely mistaken no they're not sadly solemnly they're not it's true isn't it it's true that's where we are with sin godly men have confessed it and do and still they do it's very necessary why does

[27 : 38] Samuel then say to the people fear not well because they confess their sin because there is forgiveness for sins because there is renewing and reviving from that trouble and calamity and distress that sin brings but let there be that full that free confession if we confess our sins says John he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness when I was a lad and began to read the daily paper when I was brought up we had the Manchester evening news I became interested in it and as a lad

I became interested in reading through the paper and the accounts of various crimes that have been committed people men that have been had up before the magistrates for this and that and I used to wonder at first why there were these cases when they said they asked for so many other cases so many other offences to be taken into consideration and I must say as a lad being somewhat deceitful and guilty myself I used to think well wouldn't it be better to keep quiet about them you know cover up your sins how silly it seemed to me that they asked they actually asked for other offences to be looked at by the court and dealt with and it was quite a long time before I realised why it was that they wanted those cases to be cleared they didn't want the threat of them and the guilt of them to hang over them and they realised that unless the law was satisfied about them then perhaps they could serve a term of imprisonment for one offence but when they came out they could be re-arrested and charged with those others but if they were all dealt with and if they were all done away with by the law then then they would be free it was a long time before I realised this now

I don't know if I'm putting it over to you as clearly as I could but do you see something of this and don't you see something of the beauty of this in a spiritual way all sin to be dealt with all offences to be blotted out everything to be wiped away freedom true freedom a blessed liberty forgiving all sins David prays for this doesn't he in Psalm 51 he's very particular he wants a thorough cleansing he wants all his sins blotted out he wants a new heart altogether he wants everything dealt with he's right that's the way here were a people then who confessed and they wanted it dealt with and so there is that hope there is a blessedness there is forgiveness with the

Lord that he may be feared ye have done all this wickedness fear not though fear not because the Lord does forgive sinners and he forgives great sinners now this has often been said to you but it often needs to be said because there is a curious idea in our hearts there is something always of that idea that perhaps you know if we could in some way make ourselves a little better the Lord might think upon us in a more satisfactory way be better pleased with us but it's wrong it's a nonsense we can't do it Corrie Tenboom's father she said used to have some illustrations that he used in his preaching he said about the painter who went about the streets of the

Dutch city Amsterdam I think it was there in those days there were quite a few beggars quite disreputable ragged people who would sit at the street corners and he wandered around the city and he looked for the most disreputable man he could find and he found him filthy and most disreputable and he said to him do you want to earn a few guilders well said the man who wouldn't well he said you can come to such an address tomorrow morning but he said mind I want you to come just as you are just as you are alright said the man he turned up in the morning the painter said to him when he looked at him he said no he said no go away you won't do he said you've spoiled it he said I wanted to paint you as you were

[34 : 17] I told you to come as you were you've tried to clean yourself up you made a mess of it well you see the moral it won't do he said you spoiled it dear friends it's only what we do I know how it is I know how ardently my heart would have liked to minimize my sins get them down reduce the number make make them seem not quite so great as they are like to think that I was better than others in various ways clean up but that is no use because we can't do it because there's no way in which we can blot out our sins no way in which we can make ourselves acceptable though thou wash thyself says the

Lord with nitre and use much soap yet thine iniquity is marked before me here he is saying by Jeremiah this is the way you see how applicable it is you wash yourself strong detergent we would say today plenty of soap but the stain the stain goes deep the stains in your heart the stain isn't on the surface you can't wash it away like that sin it needs to be dealt with confessed freely and dealt with in that proper way but what a great and wondrous way the Lord has of dealing with sins and great sins there is forgiveness the psalmist finds this he is constantly amazed for thou art a

God ready to forgive plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon thee how overwhelmed he is here is a God who is ready to forgive ready with his mercy when we apply for it who has the remedy as soon as the malady is realized because the Lord Jesus Christ has died for sinners and his precious blood has been shed when we were yet sinners all says to the Romans Christ died for the ungodly God commends his love toward us in this there is a ransom the price paid the work done there is a sacrifice that has been made and sinners are to know it they are to realize when they come with true repentance when they come with that seeking spirit that there is that forgiveness what a blessed way it is that sin may be justly forgiven

I often think that is a great word that is said of the Lord that he may be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus that he may be just there is no injustice for the price is paid the holiness of God is satisfied there is that reconciliation salvation Jesus upon the cross satisfied all the demands of God's justice there is that satisfaction there is that satisfaction expressed as Jesus himself put it in his own words I do always those things that please him he speaks of that work that the father gave him to do and he says in

John 17 I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do and there is a sweet sense of the satisfaction in that chapter in Ephesians Paul is exhorting believers to walk in love and so he says to them in chapter 5 that they are to be followers of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling sale so fear not fear not because the Lord is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto him by that way by trusting in the

[40 : 35] Lord Jesus Christ by that new and living way he is able to deliver from all the effects under the dreadful guilt of sin able to cleanse from its guilt and from its power all rights to the Corinthians you wash you are sanctified you are justified God has done this this great work being justified by faith you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ he has reconciled them unto himself and as his people are forgiven so they may be restored and renewed and revived there is that beautiful passage in

Ezekiel that speaks of this then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you a new heart will I put within you a new spirit God speaking in these wonderful ways of what he will do renewing reviving bringing back restoring in his worship providing for them for the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people so Samuel goes on to say in verse 22 he reminds them of the promise of God of the faithfulness of God he reminds them of the purpose of

God that he will have a people for himself Jesus said in that way he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast down this is the father's will that hath sent me he said all whom he hath given me I should lose nothing raise it up at the last day he speaks of his father's will that saving grace that purpose to redeem poor sinners and he has that faithful promise that has been so sweet to many him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out with these things

Samuel speaks in a way of exhortation he adds this admonition yet turn not aside from following the Lord but serve the Lord with all your heart it reminds us of that new testament thought that the love of Christ constrains we are to serve him because he has called us by his grace loved us with an everlasting love and given himself for us very fond of that passage in 2 Corinthians 5 seems to me to set the principle so clearly before us the love of Christ constrain us says the apostle because we thus judge if one died for all then were all dead and that he died for us that we which live should not hence for live unto ourselves but unto him who died for us and rose again here is

Paul saying this is the constraint we are to obey because it is his commandment of love we are to follow him because he has gone before and made the way we are to serve him because he is our master but not only our master he is the good shepherd who has laid down his life for the sheep that is the greatest constraint serve the Lord with all your heart and turn ye not aside for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver for they are vain how the children of Israel found it when they turned to other gods that was in vain we find in

[46 : 15] Judges chapter 10 for instance after there had been a series of ups and downs as it were decline and renewal God saying to them in his wrath turn to your idols go to your gods let them save you but the people found that they couldn't and how touching it is that we find the Lord had compassion he was testing them he was bringing home to them the greatness of their folly and the vanity of it but the Lord had compassion on them when he heard their cry and the greatness of their affliction how vain they found it to turn aside to fleshly things to worldly comforts to sinful pleasures how vain they found it and fruitless and still it applies today so we come back to that great thought we are to seek the

Lord we are to seek him through our Lord Jesus Christ we are to seek his forgiveness to seek his mercy to seek his grace to seek his renewing the reviving of the Holy Spirit all together to seek him may God so bless his word Amen the collections taken today will be for the Bethesda homes and the pilgrim homes tea will be served in the chapel after the conclusion of the service let us conclude our service this afternoon by singing hymn 1141 tune 870

Galilee 1141 tune 870 God is the refuge of his saints when storms of sharp distress invade ere we can offer our complaints behold him present with his aid known joy of his detandé who ish what hinder own great peace

There we can all the heart of place behold Him present with His feet.

Let mountains from there see behold Him through the deep and buried there.

[50 : 44] For mountains from there see behold Him through the deep and buried there. For the faith shall never yield to Him.

Lord may the troubled earth come from.

In sacred place our souls are dying.

While every nation, every joy, O wrinkles and drains the swelling tide.

There is a stream of gentle flows.

[52 : 06] There is a stream of love.

Like love and joy still riding through. Love and poetry, the divine love.

That sacred stream, thy holy world.

Let all of you are waiting here for truth.

We please thy promises of hope. And give you strength to waiting souls.

[53 : 30] Thank ye. ThetaV Sultan graft Pong rejects your knowledge. As Wecall cthou■. So ale■■■ expeditions and x'yled pheromous lights are red.

Pong to depart, Detroit, F disc■st Led at a certain moment. Foundation who built on his truth and on with God.

Amen. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Amen.