

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 11 - 'A Repentant Return' 1 Samuel 7:1 - 6



Here we see the narrative return to reintroduce Samuel into the national scene. We can see God's work at hand upon the people of Israel, for repentance is the God-given step that prepares the way for a God-given deliverance. The most important issue, and the priority before any decision about the political future of the nation was taken, was for Samuel to face people with the truth. What was that truth? Well, king or no king, as a people, as a nation, they would not succeed unless they came back to the Lord, and sought to put Him first, and looked to Him in all things. Samuel had been preaching in the different situations, and yet, there was to be one main gathering where he would call the people to return to the Lord. We can see the following:

1. Conviction - For twenty years the ark had been back in the hands of Israel, but it also seemed as though the spiritual life of the nation had begun just as a little spark to be ignited as Samuel carried out his faithful ministry. It is likely that his schedule and ministry spanned the nation, yet, we are brought to this particular occasion as the people hear the message and it is applied to the head and hearts by the working of God. It was clear that idolatry had been a major problem in the nation of Israel, this was their besetting sin. Samuel commands them to put away their false gods, and it is clear that he wants to avoid a swell of momentary reaction without a lasting work. He wanted the people to be changed not merely moved. Anything that we trust and serve in place of the Lord is an idol, a substitute for God as it were, and it needs to be put away. Anything other than a true repentant return would not break the bondage the Israelites found themselves in. Only a convicted heart that has a God-given desire to remain steadfast in the things of God will be kept in the way. Such repentance allows God's mercy to be poured into a life, not that there is merit in repentance itself, rather it is the preparatory work of God before saving help is graciously revealed.

2. Confession - Samuel was a minister of mercy, and whilst he called the people to repentance, his desire was that they would know the blessing of God once more. This is certainly what should be the motivation of the preacher who urges repentance, that those who hear might turn from their sin, their desperate situation, and turn to the great and merciful God. Samuel calls them to gather together at Mizpah. It is at this gathering that Samuel desires to lead the people into a national renewing of the covenant. The importance of the people's confession should not be missed. They readily acknowledged that they had sinned against the Lord. The Lord had promised to forgive the sins of the people if they were sincerely confessed. Leviticus 26:40-44. I want you to see the significance of the pouring of the water. It was an outward sign of something that was taking place spiritually, inwardly. As the water was poured out, it was wasted, and as if the people were saying that their sin had made them waste the privileges that God had given to them as the covenant people, and a heartfelt desire to be poured out and renewed by a living God. They faced themselves with the harsh reality of their sin, their distance from God, and they were abased before Him. Likewise with us. God in His love and grace knew our need, a new heart, and to be reborn, and has provided a way of salvation such as this. We begin by seeing our sin, our helplessness, our separation from God, and even this is given to us by God Himself, and worked in us by the Holy Spirit so that we can then see our reality, our sin. Yet then, so that we can gaze on the glorious Christ, the Saviour, that we might come to Him and experience the fullness of His salvation so rich and so free. This is truly humbling when we realise that we have come to the end of ourselves, our own resources, when we realise how vile we really are in the depths of heart. All sin calls for repentance, because it is not until we have truly repented that we can know the real joy of forgiveness and new life that floods into the soul by grace and overwhelms the soul. The joy of knowing Christ, of knowing the love of God manifest in Him, and realising that it was purchased for us by the blood of Christ transcends anything else in this world.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs