

“With All Your Heart”
1 Samuel 12:24
(Preached at Trinity, February 5, 2017)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we entered **Chapter 12** we found Samuel giving his farewell address. He reminds Israel of his faithfulness as their leader. He charges them to examine his record. He tells them, **Verses 12:2-3** - "I have walked before you from my youth even to this day.
³ "Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD"
2. Samuel also reminds them of God’s covenant faithfulness throughout their history:
Verse 7 "So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers."
3. Samuel’s point was to press upon them their wickedness in seeking a king to rule over them. They had no right to reject the leadership of Samuel. But much more significant, they had no right to reject God’s dominion over them.
4. They were being granted the king they’ve requested.
Verse 1 - "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you."
Verse 13 - "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you."
5. Israel’s kings will prove to be their downfall.
1 Kings 14:16 NAS - "He will give up Israel on account of the sins of Jeroboam, which he committed and with which he made Israel to sin."
6. Samuel makes two important points abundantly clear:
 - A. Rejecting God and requesting a king was great wickedness.
1 Samuel 12:17 NAU - "Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD by asking for yourselves a king."
 - B. Second, although God is giving them their request for a king it in no way releases them from their duty towards God.
God still demanded that they follow Him exclusively.
7. It would appear in **Verse 19** that Israel repented of their crime of treason.
1 Samuel 12:18-19 NAU - "So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. ¹⁹ Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins *this* evil by asking for ourselves a king."
8. But not so fast. Was it genuine repentance. Israel trembled at the great display of God’s wrath—the torrential rain, the thunder and flashes of lightning. There was no mistaking this was God’s hand against them. They cried out for Samuel to intercede for them.

9. Samuel did pray, but he also charged them:
1 Samuel 12:24 NAU - "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."
 10. This is God's requirement for all men—to serve Him with the whole heart. The problem with humanity is the heart. Samuel was charging them with something they were not able to do.
 11. Israel was always stiff-necked and hard-hearted. God would often chide them for the wickedness of their hearts.
Deuteronomy 10:16 NAU - "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer."
Jeremiah 4:4 NAU - "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds."
 12. Many in the Old Covenant were cut off because of the wickedness of their heart. This is the beauty of the New Covenant – God has given us new hearts.
Ezekiel 11:19-20 NAU - "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God."
Jeremiah 31:33 NAU - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
Romans 2:28-29 NAU - "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart"
 13. Although the New Covenant is a mighty change from the Old Covenant as it entails God giving us a new heart it is not new regarding God's requirement for man. He has always required men to follow Him with their whole heart.
1 Samuel 12:24 NAU - "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."
- I. The problem with fallen humanity is a bad heart
 - A. With the fall of humanity our hearts became grossly corrupted
 1. When we speak of the heart we are talking about the inner-man – the soul, the core of your being. We are talking about the mind, the will, and the emotions. The whole person; the true person.
William Hendriksen – "In Scripture the heart is the fulcrum of feeling and faith as well as the mainspring of words and actions. It is the root of man's intellectual, emotional, and volitional life, the core and center of man's being, his inmost self."
 2. We can put on a false face before the public. We can smile. We can seem to be good people, but God looks upon our heart.
 And our heart will soon demonstrate what we truly are

3. From the heart comes all our actions. The desires of your heart reveal the condition of your soul.
Proverbs 4:23 – “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.”
Mark 7:21-23 – “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. ²³ “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”
4. We love our sin. Only God’s restraining grace keeps humanity from displaying the full measure of our corruption
 Matthew Henry – “Take away conscience and the fear of God, and men become beasts and devils to one another.”

C. Salvation demands a change of heart that only God can produce

1. The problem was Samuel was making a demand that they could not meet apart from God’s grace.
 “Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart”
2. The lost man lacks the ability to comprehend the Gospel. It demands the power of God.
1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU - “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
3. Biblical Christianity demands having our minds, our wills, and our emotions captivated by Christ. It demands a new heart
Ezekiel 36:26-27 NAU - “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”
2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU – “Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”
 - a. God renews our mind – He gives us a new way of thinking
 - b. He sets our wills and affections upon Him.

II. The problem of mere religion

- A. Israel was not lacking in religion
 1. Even though they had rejected God and asked for a king they had not ceased the outward displays of religion. They were serving God on their terms.
 2. We saw this in **Chapter 4** when Israel marched the Ark of God into battle. Their motive was to try to manipulate God’s favor with the Ark. They believed the power was in the Ark rather than in God.
1 Samuel 4:3 NAU - “Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.”

3. Even when Israel was at the height of their sin they still offered their sacrifices but their hearts were far from God. In **Chapter 15** as Saul goes through the pretense of offering sacrifices Samuel rebukes him:
1 Samuel 15:22 NAU - "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams."
 4. Hundreds of years later Jesus will rebuke the Pharisees for the same corrupt religion,
Mark 7:6 – "And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.'"
- B. Fallen humanity isn't lacking in religion
1. We are religious by nature
 2. We know the Creator but will not bow before Him. We want to make the rules. We want to set the parameters for how we approach Him
- III. God demands all men to worship and serve Him with the whole heart
- A. This has always been God's demand
1. This was the substance of Israel's relationship with God
Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NAU - "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
 2. It was affirmed in the New Testament and declared to be our highest duty towards God
Matthew 22:36-40 NAS - "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And He said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
- B. True religion is heart religion
1. We must love and serve Jesus Christ with our whole heart. This is the substance of the Gospel. God has enflamed our hearts towards Him.
 2. Much of the coldness and deadness of the modern church is due to an improper understanding of the Gospel
 3. Genuine conversion is demonstrated by the reality of the Holy Spirit living in us. He creates in us a love and zeal for God. We follow Him with our whole heart.
 4. We have zeal for the things of God because our hearts have been enflamed with Christ.
- C. This is the consistent teaching of the New Testament
1. Following Jesus with our whole heart results in fervent zeal
Romans 12:10-11 NAS - "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;"
 "Fervent" - to boil with heat, be hot

- William Hendriksen – “Religion without enthusiasm can hardly be called religion.”
 - Matthew Henry – “If religion is worth anything it is worth everything.”
 - William Plumer – “He who has no zeal has no love for God”
2. Jesus demands unwavering devotion –
 Jesus accused the church of Ephesus as losing her first love
Revelation 2:4-5 NAS - "But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent."
 - a. The church had labored with patience and endurance but there had been a decay in her love – she had lost her devotion.
 - b. Jesus had ceased to be their focus, their passion
 Remember, God wants to be our total focus
 3. Too many see salvation as a moment fixed in time
 - a. They look back to a decision made, joining a church, baptism
 - b. They see repentance as something done once and for all
 - c. They see surrendering their life over to Christ as something they did in the past – “When did you surrender your life to Christ?”
 - d. Many parents are content that their child has “accepted Christ.”
 They find great comfort that they’ve been baptized, even if they bear no marks of a consecrated life.
 4. Following Christ with the whole heart is a continual offering of one’s self to Christ
 - a. Justification is a once and for all work of Christ to those who receive Him by faith, but justification always results in a life of service. It always results in following Christ with the whole heart.
 - b. Our salvation is something accomplished but also something ongoing.

Conclusion:

1. Samuel’s words still hold today
1 Samuel 12:24 - "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart"
 - a. Those who serve God with the whole heart give great energy in the pursuit of holiness
Psalms 119:128 – "Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way."
 - b. They give great energy in service to their church
2. We must love God with all our being
"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
 - a. What is ultimately meant here is that we are to love God with all the faculties we possess
 - b. Our love for God must be supreme
 1. More than earthly relationships
 2. More than earthly possessions
 3. More than life itself