

“Submission to God”  
1 Samuel 3:18  
(Preached at Trinity, June 19, 2016)

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. In **Chapter 1** we saw the plight of a barren Hebrew woman by the name of Hannah. It was a heavy weight to bear. Not only did she have the normal desires of motherhood, she also understood the blessing of being a part of God's covenant promise by bearing a son. She prayed and vowed to dedicate her son if God would allow her to conceive.
2. And she did conceive. God opened her womb and she had a son and she fulfilled her vow. Samuel was dedicated unto God from birth.
3. He proved extraordinary from the beginning. Samuel was a rare child. William Blaikie: "He was manifestly one of those who are sanctified from infancy, and whose hearts go from the first with sacred duties."
4. By the time we enter **Chapter 3** he is most likely no longer a boy but a young man. At the least he is an older teenager. By this time Eli is old and frail and his eyes have failed from age. Samuel is the keeper of the gate and was performing priestly duties. He guarded the burning of the lamp in the presence of the Ark.
5. Towards the latter part of the night he hears a voice calling his name. He didn't recognize it as the Word of the Lord.  
**1 Samuel 3:1 NAU** - "And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent."
6. After a long absence of a clear prophetic voice God was raising up Samuel as His prophet. The first word from God was a prophetic message of judgment upon the house of Eli – the priesthood was being stripped from his house due to the wickedness of his sons and his failure as a father. It was a fearfully harsh judgment.  
**1 Samuel 3:14 NAU** - "I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."
7. This was a terrifying word for Samuel to receive and he feared to relate it to Eli. You can imagine he laid awake upon his bed for the remainder of the night. He rose the next morning and went about his duties.  
Eli sensed that Samuel had received a word from God and insisted that Samuel reveal it to him.  
**1 Samuel 3:17 NAU** - "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you."
8. So Samuel submitted to the request of Eli and told him everything.  
Eli's response compels us to take notice.  
**1 Samuel 3:18 NAU** - "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."
9. Eli had just heard of God's terrible judgment upon him and his family. His response was an immediate unreserved, "Let God's will be done."  
Tonight I want us to consider the subject of submission to God.

- I. First, we need to consider Biblical submission versus fatalism
- A. Fatalism sees all events unalterably fixed and unchangeable
1. Fatalism sees our destiny as unaffected by our actions
  2. This is the mentality behind eastern Karma. A man has a particular lot in life that cannot be altered.
  3. We have no power over the outcome of our life. Our actions do not have an effect upon the outcome. They will not make a difference. No matter what we do things will turn out the same.
- B. Fatalism is not the same as Divine decree
1. In God's eternal decree He has determined whatsoever comes to pass
  2. Every event, every moment, every circumstance had been foreordained by God.
  3. But unlike fatalism, God's decree does not absolve us of our responsibility. We make daily decisions of which we bear the responsibility. And our actions affect the direction of our lives—while we are still functioning within God's Divine decree.
  4. In fatalism there is no human freedom.
- C. Fatalism leads to mere resignation
1. Since our actions have no effect upon the outcome we simply resign ourselves to what will be.  
Doris Day – “Que Sera, Sera” – Spanish for “what will be will be.”
  2. With fatalism submission is merely giving way to the inevitable  
The modern expression: “It is what it is”
  3. This isn't Biblical submission. Eli wasn't simply giving up to the inevitable. Instead of “It is what it is” the Christian worldview is, “It is what God has determined.”
- II. Biblical submission is not submission by compulsion
- A. In forced submission the weaker surrenders to the stronger
1. This is often the outcome of war. The battle rages until the weaker forces have no choice but to surrender. Such was the condition of Imperial Japan at the end of World War II.
  2. This isn't surrender by choice. It is surrender by force.
  3. In the old Star Trek series there was a powerful alien race called the Borg that moved through the universe conquering and assimilating their victims into the “Collective.” Their words were always the same. “Resistance is futile. We will assimilate you.”
- B. All will bow the knee before Christ
1. At the day of judgment all will submit to the absolute dominion of Christ.  
**Philippians 2:9-11 NAU** - "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
  2. But this is submission by force, by compulsion. The lost and condemned will not be bowing willfully. They will bow by compulsion just before they are cast into hell.

3. Biblical submission is not submission by compulsion. It isn't submission because we really don't have any other choice. After all, who can resist the mighty power of God.  
Biblical submission is more. . .

### III. Biblical submission is motivated by love and trust

#### A. Eli had sinned and was justly under the discipline of God

1. God's was revealing far more than mere chastisement. He was pronouncing Divine judgment upon Eli's wicked sons.
  - a. This is revealed clearly in **Chapter 2**  
**1 Samuel 2:25 NAU** - "But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death."
  - b. God sent an unnamed prophet to declare God's divine judgment  
**1 Samuel 2:31 NAU** - "Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house."  
**1 Samuel 2:34 NAU** - "This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die."
2. God was confirming His judgment through the mouth of Samuel  
**1 Samuel 3:13-14 NAU** - "For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.  
<sup>14</sup> "Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."
3. Eli's words reflect his recognition that God's ways are always right.  
God's ways are perfect. He does all things in according to the perfection of Divine holiness
  - a. Abraham's words:  
**Genesis 18:25 NAS** - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"  
**KJV** - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
  - b. Job's three friends offered him little comfort in his misery but they often spoke words of truth concerning God.  
*Bildad spoke:*  
**Job 8:3 NAU** - "Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?"  
**Job 8:20 NAU** - "Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity, Nor will He support the evildoers."  
*Elihu added:*  
**Job 34:10-12 NAU** - "Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong. <sup>11</sup> "For He pays a man according to his work, And makes him find it according to his way. <sup>12</sup> "Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty will not pervert justice."

- c. The words of Moses:
      - Deuteronomy 32:3-4 NAU** - "For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God! <sup>4</sup> "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."
    - 4. Biblical submission is more than just a declaration of the rightness of God's actions.
- B. Biblical submission is based upon love and trust
  - 1. We willfully submit to the God we love. We have found His dealings with us always gracious and always full of love.
  - 2. We know God is working for our good.
    - Romans 8:28 NAU** - "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
  - 3. God's infinite love for us has drawn us into love with Him. We desire His will in our lives. This is a mark of God's transforming grace. It is a great change. Our eyes are turned away from our self and we humble ourselves before God.
- C. Human beings are seldom satisfied with God's sovereign prerogative
  - 1. With every difficulty they cry out, "Why me! Why! Why! Why!"
  - 2. We are inclined to see our possessions as ours unconditionally. We feel that if we have acquired material possessions we have the right to keep them and enjoy them.
  - 3. We feel that when we give great diligence to our plans we are entitled to success
  - 4. We feel we have claim upon the happiness of our family circle and no one has the right to enter and strike down a loved one.
  - 5. When we are faced with bankruptcy or disease or death the natural inclination of man is to cry out against God
    - a. Be certain that you understand – all murmuring is against God
    - b. We tend to pretend to pass the complaint upon another the doctor, or our boss, or the drought, or the virus, or the robber
    - c. This doesn't mean we shouldn't seek justice against sin, or to expect a fair return upon a dollar spent.
- D. Eli is declaring the rightness of God's actions
  - 1. God is the first cause of all things. And they are always good.
    - 1 Samuel 3:18 NAU** - "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."
  - 2. Job recognized this. His response was that of submission
    - Job 1:21 NAU** - "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."
  - 3. But Job's submission was more than recognition of God's sovereignty. It was more than just a resignation to God's dominion. Job's submission was accompanied by praise.

4. This was also the heart of Eli. When news came that his sons had been killed and the ark taken captive his heart was crushed not because of his sons but because the ark of God had been taken captive.
- 1 Samuel 4:17-18 NAU** - "Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken." <sup>18</sup> When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years."

#### Conclusion:

1. Our proper responsibility before God is that of absolute submission and obedience
  - A. But our submission to God must come from a motivation of faith and love. It must come from a desire for God's glory to be put on display. When others see us praising God even in the midst of adversity they see our declaration that God is worthy of praise in every situation.
  - B. In all of God's actions He has never deviated from His perfect righteousness and justice. God has never done anything but good
2. May God grant us the grace to humble ourselves before Him and declare in our heart.  
**Matthew 6:10 KJV** - "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Or the words of Eli:

**1 Samuel 3:18 NAU** - "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."