



Series: 1 Samuel

Date: January 15, 2023

Speaker: Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: 1 Samuel 2:12-36

Title: Gluttonous, Arrogant, Evil Priests and the Judgment of God

Intro

I want to say thank you specifically to our Sunday morning ministry teams for a Great Sunday last week! Last week we had a record number of people here on Sunday. The house was full, and you did so well to serve many who came for the first time. at both campuses whether its parking or greeting or kids check in or kids' classrooms or worship, ya'll made your church feel really welcoming and as your pastor I'm so

honored to serve with you. We are actively discussing next steps to make more room & hope you will pray for us.

MLK

Happy MLK weekend! You know God always places his people to be his representatives in a certain time and place. So here we are as God's representatives in 21st Century America. And as the church should, we look back at history to help us understand present reality. And this holiday is so unique and powerful. It's personal to me because it commemorates a pastor. Just a man. Such a big figure now we can forget that he was just a man frail & flawed like me. A man courageously trying to lead God's people to stand up for God's way in a broken world. Dr. King is a hero of mine. His biblical worldview spurred him to lead a movement that would push for the equality of dignity to be shown to all of God's image bearers here in this country. For the kingdom of God to come just a little more to earth as it is in heaven.

Each year on this weekend I read his letter from a Birmingham jail. A letter he wrote to fellow pastors. I read it as a recipient because those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it. And in that letter, I read the powerful themes of scripture he brought to bear on the unjust laws of segregation that were oppressing people of color.

- Justice delayed is justice denied
- An unjust law is a human law not rooted in God's eternal and natural laws



- His model for civil disobedience was Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego
- His inspiration for courageous love was the cross of Christ

And in there I see a plea to a bond that should be deeper than race - brotherhood in Christ. I see a black brother in prison calling to his white brothers from a place of pain and disappointment and yet hope. And I grieve it. And then I look at our day.

We live in a city that today has no true ethnic majority. 48% white, 31% black, 13% Hispanic. Fastest growing ethnic group is south Asian. People from all different ethnic groups and even different cultures within those ethnic groups. Who need Jesus and who God has placed in our certain time and place. And Jesus calls us to make disciples of all peoples. Not all people but all people groups. So, my prayer, and one of our ministry values, is that we pursue multicultural unity - UNDER the name of Jesus. For the sake of all peoples.

In other words - only Jesus creates a people from all peoples (1 Peter 2.9). Only Jesus breaks down the dividing wall of hostility between races (Eph 2). This isn't a social fad the church is trying to get in on, it's a response to the gospel. So, we major on the gospel. And we seek the kingdom of God to come here in earth as it is in heaven. And in heaven - it's a beautiful mosaic of peoples gathered around the throne

together. Voices in unison pointing their praise to Jesus. He has already given unity to his church. We simply must receive it and trust the Lord enough to walk in the unity he has already won for us in the resurrection of Jesus. I pray this church continues to make strides to receive that unity he shed his blood to create.

Sermon Intro

If you have your bible, make your way to 1 Samuel. It's in the OT right after the book of Ruth. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, SAMUEL. We'll start in Chapter 2 today. We opened this book last week saying one of the things that is SO good about it is that it is a narrative telling us the account of how God worked out his plan through people who, like us, just didn't know exactly what his plan was. We said a running theme is going to be living my life in God's world. Well, today we talk about living in God's world as a bunch of sinners. Ha! Really different than last week! Instead of the feel-good account of Hannah, this week is a dire warning about sin. Fun title for you:

1 Samuel 2.12-36

Gluttonous Arrogant Evil Priests
& The impending judgment of God

A case study in sin & how to pray against it

Today we are going to look at how sin works. Listen there are 3 things always at work against you. Sin, the world, and the devil. They are all out for your destruction. We won't tackle all



of them today, but we will talk about what the bible calls the sin of the flesh. That means your propensity in your thoughts, desires, and actions to reject God and serve yourself. I'm going to walk through this passage and show you the LIES SIN TELLS YOU. THEN I'm going to offer us a prayer to fight against these lies. This series is about living our lives in God's world. How do we live in God's world...as sinners? Because we are all sinners. We'll see sin at its worst today. And my plan is to show you the lies sin tells us. And then how we can fight back.

TWO parts - The Lies sin tells you and then the prayer to fight back.

**12 Eli's sons were wicked men; they did not respect the Lord
13 or the priests' share of the sacrifices from the people.**

See Eli's sons were also priests. They weren't the high priest like Eli, but they were of his house and one of them would one day presumably take his role as the high priest. If anyone in all of Shiloh (our setting) were to respect the Lord, it would be the priests. The wickedness of these two stated clearly right here in the first part of the opening sentence of our passage - will ultimately cost many, many people in Israel their lives. And it all started with a disrespect of the Lord himself. They knew of the Lord. Of course, they did. Being a priest's kid, they probably knew more about the Lord than almost anyone else in Shiloh.

They knew that Leviticus 7 says that every family who comes to sacrifice an animal to atone for their sins...is to cook that meat afterward and then give a portion of the meat to the priests. Specifically, the right thigh & the breast. They knew because they had eaten that meal. For years. For years Eli had come and said here is dinner. The Goldbergs came today so we've got a great meal tonight! They KNEW all about it. They knew about the Lord, BUT they didn't respect the Lord. And the distinction between knowing about God and bowing your knee in respect of who he is...we'll see is everything.

**Sin's Lies
God is not in charge of you.**

Everything that happens comes from a mindset of disrespect towards God. And the form of that lie is different in the bible belt. See if I told you that you should not disrespect God...Well, many of you would be like THAT'S RIGHT! But there is a form of lip service Christians can get in the habit of giving God. We 'respect' him as in we tip our cap to him BUT when it really comes down to my life, I'M in charge of me, not him. God is an abstract deity, not an authority actively engaged in my life who I submit my desires to. I'm gonna do me. Period. I'm telling you this is the seed from which a lot of bad fruit grows. There are a fascinating way sin works that you can believe God is real, that he is the creator, that he sits on a



throne in heaven, but you are still the authority over your life. THAT is sin at work corrupting your thoughts.

They didn't respect the WORD of God. See that? They knew it. But at the end of the day, they didn't care. Their desires were a greater source of POWER in their lives than God's word. How absurdly arrogant is that? And yet it's us all the time. Come on I can hit the greatest hits

- God says don't be unequally yoked in marriage and yet here you are dating a non-Christian. WHO IS IN CHARGE?
- God says the debtor is enslaved to the lender and yet you are RACKING UP debt to buy things you don't need to impress people you don't even like. Who is in charge?
- God says if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has committed adultery and here you are looking at porn EVERY DAY. WHO IS IN CHARGE?

Man, I could go all day on that list. And I'm telling you sin's lie is...at the end of the day YOU are in charge, not him. I'm not trying to beat you down. I promise. I'm trying to, like a doctor, get down to the source of the infection sin has wrought in your soul. And it hurts before it gets better. So, the first lie you gotta see is sin DETHRONES God and ENTHRONES you. Because you know better than God. But here's the problem -

THE TRUTH IS - YOU ARE A TERRIBLE GOD! That's what sin doesn't want you to know. Sin's gonna keep that hidden and then laugh at you when your life self-destructs. Let's keep going.

When anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged meat fork while the meat was boiling

Pretty gross. They send their lackey to do their work for them. With a 3-pronged meat fork. There is a gross feel to everything about these guys. Even the giant meat fork, just filled with gluttonous disrespect.

14 and plunge it into the container, kettle, cauldron, or cooking pot. The priest would claim for himself whatever the meat fork brought up. This is the way they treated all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh. 15 Even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the one who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast, because he won't accept boiled meat from you — only raw." 16 If that person said to him, "The fat must be burned first; then you can take whatever you want for yourself," the servant would reply, "No, I insist that you hand it over right now. If you don't, I'll take it by force!" 17 So the servants' sin was very severe in the presence of the Lord, because the men treated the Lord's offering with contempt.



This is the kind of disrespect you expect from the Philistines. From God's enemies. And here it is in the very house of God. Shakespeare would say 'There is something rotten in the state of Shiloh.' or as my kids would say 'There's a fungus among us.' They treated the offering with contempt. Meaning they felt it was beneath them. Worthless. It's arrogance of the highest order. And then look at the progression - what started between them, and the Lord ultimately spilled out into gross abuse of power towards the people. Because listen to me sin starts in the heart, but it never stays there. It always works its way out into your attitudes and actions and other people are always affected by it.

Sin's Lies

You deserve more, so go get it

I want to promise you something right now: Sin's appetite is NEVER satisfied. NEVER. These gluttons used their position of spiritual authority to satisfy the appetites of their flesh.

Pastoral Aside: If that's not spiritual abuse I don't know what is. And yes, there is a warning to church leaders in here for sure. Because a lot of spiritual abuse in the church comes from believing the same lie. A church leader will feel entitled to MORE than what God has given them. So, they will manipulate and deceive in order to try and get more of whatever it is they want. Money, power, fame, success, whatever. Believe me this was sobering to write. The stories of spiritual abuse in the

church in our day are not in short supply. And another day I can tell you my story about how as a teenager I watched a pastor use his place of authority to satisfy his lusts and how it ripped families apart and a church apart. And if you've got church hurt like I did, I have to tell you two things. First - Mercy isn't the perfect church. It doesn't exist until heaven. And we will disappoint you. We'll try our best to be faithful, but we are sinners leading sinners under the mercy of God. Secondly - what we'll see in this passage is God is a God of justice. He will make all things right again. I promise you he will. And I hope your season at Mercy will be a time of healing as it has been for so many.

With that said, sin lies like this to you too. You deserve more than what God has given you. SO GO GET IT. Just a little more money. Just a little more success. Just a little more. At its core this is greed. Entitlement. You deserve more. You are entitled to more. After all, look at how hard you work. Look at what you've accomplished. After all God helps those who help themselves right? Ever heard that? Not sure what kind of self-help theology garbage can that was pulled out of but surely didn't come from scripture. God helps the helpless. God helps the weak. God helps those surrendered to him. God helps the power-LESS.

this might hurt. But I say it again in love. Not only do you not deserve more, but you also don't deserve what you have. It is



all a gift. So instead of snubbing your nose at all those gifts maybe take inventory of what God has given a messed-up sinner like you. We'll talk more about that later.

18 Samuel served in the Lord's presence —this mere boy was dressed in the linen ephod. 19 Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. 20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife: "May the Lord give you children by this woman in place of the one she has given to the Lord." Then they would go home. 21 The Lord paid attention to Hannah's need, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.

Ok how cool is this. The Lord offers this light in the darkness of sin. Though only a boy, Samuel is wearing the clothing of a priest. Already showing us God has a successor planned for Eli that isn't his sons. Hannah & Elkanah go up every year to sacrifice just as they had before. And Hannah, with a mother's heart, would remember her son. And would make him another robe because well, like all children he's outgrowing his clothes. This is such a good mom. And each year Eli would speak a prayer of blessing over them. May the Lord give you children in place of the one she has given to the Lord. And The Lord did just that. In fact, the Lord gave Hannah 5 more children.

22 Now Eli was very old. He heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23 He said to them, "Why are you doing these things? I have heard about your evil actions from all these people. 24 No, my sons, the news I hear the Lord's people spreading is not good. 25 If one person sins against another, God can intercede for him, but if a person sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to their father, since the Lord intended to kill them. 26 By contrast, the boy Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people.

So, there is a contrast the author wants us to see. Boy wonder Samuel grew in stature & in favor with the Lord and with people. Though young, the people see that the Lord's hand is on him. And he grows in favor. This is how Eli's sons SHOULD be described. But they aren't. By the way this is why Luke 2.52 is written the way that it is. Our only passage about Jesus as a young boy

"2 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people."

-- Luke 2:52

Samuel is a foreshadow of Jesus. Who will save God's people from the sin that is enslaving them.

The sons are vile. In addition to everything else they are doing; they are sleeping with the women who are there to serve God.



And these evil actions - Eli defines them as being done against God himself. That's not good. It's one thing to sin against a person but when you directly sin against God...Eli poses a very, very important question - who can intercede for you? We'll talk about that more in a minute. But they would not listen since the Lord intended to kill them.

And maybe that phrasing causes you some trouble. The reason they didn't listen to their father was that the Lord intended to kill them. Is God the author of their evil. No, I don't think so. The reading is that these two had developed a pattern of sin that REQUIRED them to ignore opportunities for repentance almost daily. Daily they made a mockery of God's means of repentance. They hardened their hearts against God and now they are experiencing the fruit of that hardening. See "someone can remain so firm in his rebellion that God will confirm him in it, so much so that he will remain utterly deaf to and unmoved by any warnings of judgment or pleas for repentance."¹

Sin's Lies

Only listen to godly counsel when it agrees with you

They rejected their father's warning. They didn't listen. And when sin has its grip on you, it will do the same thing. The people you USED to say you would listen to, you don't listen to

now. People trying to warn you about a path you are heading down - THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU! Why would they try to hurt you? Oh man so many of us would be spared so much pain if we would listen to godly rebuke. So again, I need to encourage you - get a sin sparring partner. Someone you grant a license to say, "If you see me believing sins lie...you have the right to punch me in the face with God's word."

Ok what happens next is the announcement of God's judgment on the house of Eli. Interestingly a prophet comes to Eli and tells him about his impending demise. God says I chose you, and yet

29 Why, then, do all of you despise my sacrifices and offerings that I require at the place of worship? You have honored your sons more than me, by making yourselves fat with the best part of all of the offerings of my people Israel.'

And here we see Sin's lie Eli believed

Sin's lie
People > God

Eli broke the 1st commandment. you shall have no other Gods before me. But you know what Eli did - he put his sons above

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, [1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart](#), Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 34.



the Lord. And in his tolerance of their behavior...and in his participation of it - Eli made himself fat just like his sons did. His conflict avoidant niceness created a tolerance of sin. Because it's gonna stir up conflict if you say something. If you put your foot down. Do we really want to fight that battle?

Who matters more to you? GOD or what your friends think? Whose approval are you after? Eli's greatest sin was his niceness. His niceness made him a great priest when people were living God's way - he was GREAT as a priest for Hannah.

By the way do you see the PARENTING contrast God is putting on display in chapters 1 & 2? Hannah SURRENDERS HER CHILD TO THE LORD! Because as Job says in Job 1 - the LORD gives, and the LORD takes away BLESSED be the name of the Lord. Hannah says my kids are yours and I am yours and as for me and my house Joshua 24 we will worship the LORD! But Eli puts his kids above the LORD. And the longevity of THAT decision. Ya'll he didn't teach them how to bully and take advantage of women. He taught them THEY were more important than God. Sin did the rest.

Eli's niceness made him a comforting priest and a terrible father and ultimately it made him responsible for the sins of his sons. The applications of this are abundant, aren't they? Goes way beyond parenting of course. God never once calls you to niceness. Calls you to kindness. Don't be nice to your kids. Be kind to them. Which means lovingly rebuke their

sin & cultivate their character. And more importantly - the kindest thing you can do for them is honor the Lord above them in your ACTIONS, not just in your words.

Well, the man of God goes on to condemn Eli's house. Forever. His line will suffer violent deaths. Including his two sons who the man of God says will die on the same day. We'll see that in a couple weeks. But still, the Lord's plan will continue. Our chapter ends with a ray of hope.

35 "Then I will raise up a faithful priest for myself. He will do whatever is in my heart and mind. I will establish a lasting dynasty for him, and he will walk before my anointed one for all time. "

It's fulfilled initially by Samuel, then a priest named Zadok, and full fulfilled in Jesus. God's anointed Messiah who will be the great high priest who atones for our sin on our behalf.

Ok here at the end of our sermon let me give us a prayer to combat these lies sin tells us all the time. Maybe it's words will be familiar to you, but maybe it will strike a lot deeper. It's the prayer Jesus gave his disciples to pray. Knowing sin, the world, and the devil would come at them constantly. It is recorded in Matthew 6 starting in verse 9 - He said pray like this.

Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.



10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Sin says I am in charge. But the Lord's prayer says YOU God. YOU be honored as holy. YOUR kingdom come. NOT my kingdom. Not my name but YOUR name. Not my desires but YOUR WILL. HALLOWED. HOLY. IS YOUR NAME. And in this prayer, I am rejecting Sin's lie that I am in charge. God in my work, in my home, in my church, in my social life, It's all YOURS.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

Sin tells me I deserve more. And I am entitled to go get it. But I am fighting that lie with the truth that YOU supply me with what I need today. Just as you took care of your people in the wilderness, so you take care of your people still. I'm choosing to believe you have given me everything I need for a joyful life today. In Christ, I have you. Surely that is enough. I recognize everything I already have; you have given me. And today I will work hard for your glory but as I do, I will remember YOU are the giver. And I will find contentment / peace in what you've given me. I will be satisfied in Christ today.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

This is the prayer of confession. Lord I am a sinner. Can you get specific with the LORD in this prayer? Maybe not when we group up today. Maybe this is at home this week. But can you confess your sins to God? Because you've sinned. And this is SO important friends. If you don't repent of your sin, you will eventually, just like Hophni and Phinehas, you will harden your heart against the Lord. That's what sin does. You must confess your sin to God. You cannot go forward with God while unconfessed unrepentant sin is festering in your life. And listen we are all sinners. The question is are we going to be confessors & repenters?

8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -- 1 John 1:8-9

Some of you have seen sins lies today for what they are. And today you know you need to confess and repent. And receive the forgiveness of God. You need his blood to cleanse your soul. And my friend that offer is YOURS today. That's the only thing any of us Christians really stand on. Not our own merit. We are sinners too. But we have received the mercy of God. And it's here for you too. Receive it today. Confess your sin.

And maybe your next step will be a relational one. to confess your sin to someone you've sinned against. OR...maybe it's to



forgive as you have been forgiven by Christ. Ask God for the humility of spirit to do so.

13 And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Oh, now we see Jesus calling out the things against us. God my sinful flesh is tempted. And the enemy knows it. Satan himself uses my sinful flesh against me. So, God DELIVER ME from my temptations. Protect me from my sinful desires and deliver me from the Evil One. God not in my strength...but in yours...give me victory over the sin that competes for the throne of my life.

CLOSING

Let's pray this prayer together. We are going to do this TOGETHER. Which will be a little interesting. Here's what I mean. We are going to pray in groups of 2-3. And we are just going to pray the Lord's prayer and then what it means for us.

Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.
10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God you are in charge, not me

11 Give us today our daily bread.

I trust you to provide. What you give is more than I deserve.
thank you

12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

God, I confess I am a sinner. I need your forgiveness. I believe if I confess to you, you are faithful and just to forgive me. I believe Christ died for these sins and won my forgiveness then and there. God give me the strength to forgive as well.

13 And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

God help me, a sinner walk in this sin-filled world where the devil himself seeks my destruction. God grant me victory today. Deliver me. I'm bound for him without your divine intervention.

