

Samuel - The Righteous Hero

Lesson 04 of the series "Heroes"

1. When the judges ruled in Israel there was much apostasy.

"apostasy" = desertion of one's religious beliefs and convictions. "In those days... all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Judges 17:6 NLT)

Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the LORD or for their duties as priests.

Whenever anyone offered a sacrifice, Eli's sons would send over a servant with a three-pronged fork... the servant would demand, "...give it to me now, or I'll take it by force." So the sin of these young men was very serious in the LORD's sight, for they treated the LORD's offerings with contempt..." 1 Samuel 2:12-17 (NLT)

"At that time Israel was at war with the Philistines... the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD allow us to be defeated by the Philistines?" Then they said, "Let's bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh. If we carry it into battle with us, it will save us from our enemies." 1 Samuel 4:1-3 (NLT)

Life Application: It is imperative that we know God's Word because God's word is truth.

"I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:14-17 (NLT)

2. Samuel, Israel's last judge, was born in answer to the desperate prayers of his mother.

Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. And she made this vow: "O LORD of Heaven's Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime." ...in due time she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I asked the LORD for him." ...When the child was weaned, Hannah took him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh..."I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life." 1 Samuel 1:10-11,20, 24, 27-28 (NLT)

Life Application: God is always more ready to listen than we are to pray.

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. "You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him." Matthew 7:7-11 (NLT)

3. Samuel became a righteous hero because he listened when God spoke to him.

Suddenly the LORD called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did. Then the LORD called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed." Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before. So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening." ...As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable. 1 Samuel 3:4-13,19 (NLT)

Life Application: God will speak to me if I will listen.

"...the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. John 10:3-4 (NLT)

4. **Samuel was a righteous hero because he obeyed God even when others didn't.**

"Why haven't you obeyed the LORD? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD's sight?" "But I did obey the LORD," Saul insisted. "I carried out the mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed everyone else. Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king." 1 Samuel 15:19-23 (NLT)

Life Application: "Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

John 14:21 (NLT)

Samuel was a righteous hero because his allegiance was to God.

"Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have." Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the LORD for guidance. "Do everything they say to you," the LORD replied, "for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don't want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment. Do as they ask, but solemnly warn them about the way a king will reign over them." ...But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. "Even so, we still want a king," they said. "We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle." So Samuel repeated to the LORD what the people had said, and the LORD replied, "Do as they say, and give them a king." 1 Samuel 8:5-22 (NLT)

Life Application: God does NOT want us to be like everybody else.

"Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls." 1 Peter 2:11 (NLT)

"May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read 1 Samuel 1. Discuss Hannah's situation. Have you ever cried out to the Lord in anguish? Did God hear you? How do you know? After Samuel was weaned Hannah brought him to the temple to live with Eli the priest in order to fulfill her pledge. Would you have made the same choice if you were in Hannah's shoes? Why? Why not?
2. Read 1 Samuel 3:4-19. At Centerpoint we often point out that in order to know God better we need to:
 - Surrender (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - Listen (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - Pray (1 John 5:14-16)
 - Obey (James 1:22-25)

What did these steps look like in Samuel's life? What do these steps look like in my life this week?

3. Read Matthew 7:7-11. You are walking to your car following your Connect Group meeting one week and another member of your group stops you and asks you a question. "For three months now we have been praying every week for my wife to find a job. God knows what we need so why do we have to keep praying about it?" How do you answer? Also read Luke 18:1-8. Discuss.
4. Read 1 Samuel 8:5-21. Why did the Israelites want a king? Why didn't they listen to Samuel's warnings? Now read Romans 12:2. In what ways do believers today want to be "like everybody else?" Why?
5. Discuss the following statement taken from Centerpoint Fellowship Church statement of beliefs regarding the Bible: "The sole basis for our belief is the Bible – the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is God's word to all people in all times. The entire Bible is uniquely God-breathed, without error, and the final authority on all matters of faith and practice." (2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12) Why is the Bible our final authority? What does this mean?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example." Mark Twain

"Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them." Jesus in John 14:21

"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education." Theodore Roosevelt

"The true man of God is heartsick, grieved at the worldliness of the Church, grieved at the toleration of sin in the Church, grieved at the prayerlessness in the Church. He is disturbed that the corporate prayer of the Church no longer pulls down the strongholds of the devil." Leonard Ravenhill