

1 Samuel 12 Corrective medicine. For Growth Groups wk comm 28 Aug 2023.

Warmup: As you were growing up, was there a moment where your parents had you “sit down to talk” with them? Without going into details, what kind of talk was it? (for correction?)

Today Samuel has Israel ‘stand still’ as he talks to them, for their good.

Read 1 Samuel 11:12-12:25 (ch 11 to pick up the context).

First reactions?

How might we describe the tone and feel of what is said here?

Verses 1-5 sound like we’re in a law court. What is Samuel establishing here?

How do v6-7 help answer?

Verses 6-15 continues the same setting in relation to the LORD. Take 5 mins to fill out a table noticing the pattern, and the exception that sticks out.

Verses	Problem / setting	People’s action	Lord’s Action	Outcome
V6-8	<i>(Slavery in) Egypt</i>	<i>Cried to the Lord v8</i>	<i>Sent Moses and Aaron</i>	<i>Brought out and settled us in the promised land.</i>
V9-11	<i>For the LORD, sold to Sisera, Philistines, Moab</i>	<i>Cried to the Lord, and said... because they did... ‘deliver us!’</i>	<i>Sent... and he ... you</i>	<i>So that ...</i>
V12-15				

What point is Samuel establishing about God in these verses?

For example how does the prefacing comment of v7 help answer?

For a second time Samuel tells all the people to ‘stand still’ v16 (also v7).

What is the main point of correction Samuel seeks to bring here?

Is his speech to them effective? What is the evidence?

What are some of the ways God’s people (even now) forget God in order to chase the useless idols of our modern world?

What is the corrective medicine this chapter brings to us, for our good?

What evidence will show the warning is effective?

Pray that we’ll have tender hearts which respond to God’s warning and that we’ll forsake idols to serve God.

For Growth Group planning in September / early October:

- (1) **Series break approaching.** After 1 Samuel 12, we're taking a short 3 wk break from 1 Samuel. From Monday **4 Sep** we'll go to John 15:1-11 (+Jay preaching this passage Sun 10 Sep). Then a 2 wk series 'Let the word dwell richly among you: How our Anglican church services have us do this. **11-Sep** Liturgical prayers, words and priorities that have us engage with God; **18-Sep** The Lord's Supper assurance: Christ dwells in us and we in him.
- (2) **School holidays approaching.** The Spring school holidays run Mon 25 Sep to Fri 6 Oct. Inconveniently this does not line up with our break in 1 Samuel! Sun **1 Oct** Rob is preaching 1 Samuel 13 and **8 Oct** we cover 1 Samuel 14. Resuming Term 4 from Monday **9 Oct**, our passage that week is (the difficult!) 1 Samuel 15.
- (3) **Your own group plans through this period?** I tell you this to give you a chance to consider what you might do during the 1 Samuel series break, and the school holiday break. Some options (and you can think of more):
 - a. Have a go at writing your own questions and leading your group in John 15:1-11 for wk com 4-Sep.
 - b. For ease of continuity thereafter continue in John 15:12-17 and John 15:18-27 .
 - c. See what passages are given for the 'Word Dwell Richly' series, and study those in mid Sept.
 - d. Continue in 1 Samuel 13-14 over three weeks in Sept, as we'll miss these in GG in Oct.
 - e. For my part, I'm happy to provide some GG questions through Sept if these are requested. But I plan to have a two-week break over the school holidays (to give me time to produce our sermon series Reading Guides for Term 4).

Word Dwell Richly: **Thinking about 1 Samuel 12**

Here is a classic, 'I'm warning you' speech given in love for the good of those who hear it.

It's not given in anger, as if for revenge, or out of deceitful evil motive. Samuel puts himself on trial before them to establish that he has not lead them for wicked personal gain. He's like the Apostle Paul '*we have renounced secret shameful ways... on the contrary by setting for the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.*' (2 Cor 4:2)

He then moves to, as it were, 'justify God' to them. All God's ways towards them have been good, and for their deliverance. Every time they've been in trouble, it's been of their own causing. Every time they've cried to him for help, he has sent help and delivered his people out of their miseries. And they clearly need to hear this 'justification of God' because their action has been to abandon God.

It is a stunningly faithless move, in light of God's righteous acts, this generation has done this evil thing of asking for a king (and in so doing, rejecting God as king, even though he has proven himself to be their king all along).

The note of correction is seen in this passage in many ways:

- The courtroom type appeal: Testify! The Lord is witness etc.
- Also the 'now stand still' attention-grabber for the sake of conviction of them in v7 and again v16.
- The fact that he does show the error of the ways – v12 is announcement and v18 is the proof.
- V19 is important – they hear his message, and seek his intercession, there is a new distance to be overcome by the mediator: 'the LORD your God' (compare the same in 7:8).
- and more...

This is a warning God's people clearly need to hear – because God has included it in his word, written for us.

Our new covenant situation is both different and the same.

Different because having the Spirit of God at work in his people does enable us to know the Lord and hold to his ways.

But the same because even the NT churches need Paul to correct them. Consider:

- 'you foolish Galatians'; Gal 3:1 or,
- 'I am writing to warn you as dear children' 1 Cor 4:14; or,
- 'if we keep on (deliberately walking in) sin and so reject God's words there is only judgement left... [the then appeal] that's not us. We're those who trust God'. Hebrews 10:26-39

As our pastor, I don't think we're falling into grievous idolatry or faithless immorality.

So I don't immediately think we are 'in the wrong'. However, we can still benefit from a warning, even as we seek to be faithful. This is how I'd think to push us in application.

Something along the lines of, what are the idols of our world that entice us, and how might we seek to chase them instead of serve God?

While we could answer that individually, this passage is more pushing the 'whole group' corporate danger. I can think of a number of ways that cause churches to look away from Christ in favour of chasing god-like-things that are opposed to God.

- Some churches are suspect to wanting to turn down God's warnings in favour of all his promises, as if God turns a blind eye to our quiet greediness, drunkenness, self-indulgence, self-centredness, or lovelessness etc.
- Some churches are suspect to chasing kudos, mana, public applause by virtue signalling or by cause-supporting and neglect the teaching of God (eg we are the ones in charge of the world and it's climate, rather than we humble ourselves and cry to God and seek to steward his world).
- Some churches are suspect to showiness / slickness. A performance culture.

I suspect here the main danger is looking to human leaders and human skill sets to establish our life in Christ. In the face of external threats (Nahash, v12), they wanted a leader they could see, hear, grab, so as to feel secure. It seemed more securing to have a king than to have God's promises. Isn't that the way with us too? i.e. 'I won't believe it unless I see it with my own eyes'.

The Apostle John counsels: *Dear children, keep yourselves from idols*

And in our passage, Samuel turns up the heat and gives the solemn warning: *the LORD is pleased to make you his own people, so I will teach the way you should go, but if you persist in evil you... will perish.*

His warning is for our good. Be prepared to receive his warning given in love.