

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 2:11-36

"Correcting Corrupt Leadership"

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24:50

So I wanna invite you to make your way to First Samuel chapter two. First Samuel chapter two. If you brought your Bible, go ahead and make your way there. If you didn't bring a Bible but you wanna follow along, there should be one underneath of your chair or maybe the chair in front of you were on page 275 in those Bibles.

25:06

If you brought your own Bible, I don't know what page it is, you gotta figure that out. But this morning we're gonna look at the rest of First Samuel chapter two. We looked at the first 10 verses last week, looked at Hannah's prayer, Hannah's song.

25:18

You may remember if you were with us. And this week we're gonna look at the rest of the chapter. So we've got a big chunk that we're gonna take on together this morning. But what we're gonna see in those verses, we're gonna see an example of corrupt leadership, specifically corruption inside the church.

25:33

So there's good news for you this morning. The good news is that we never see things like this today. This doesn't happen in our culture where corruption in leadership or churches get off track and blow it.

25:44

So... All right, that actually does sound kind of familiar, doesn't it? But we actually do deal with some of these things. So what we're gonna see this morning is we're gonna see how seriously God deals with corruption.

25:58

We're gonna see how seriously God deals with flaws in leadership. And we're gonna be reminded of a few things. That regardless of what position of authority you may or may not hold. Regardless of what position of leadership you may or may not possess.

26:13

This is gonna apply to all of us. God's got a word for all of us together this morning as we consider these evil leaders and how they were just twisting things all up there at Shiloh. So we're gonna pick up the story in the same place that we finished First Samuel chapter one.

26:28

You remember if you were with us a couple of weeks ago, Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, brought their son, Samuel, excuse me. They brought their son, Samuel, to the temple. He was dedicated there. They left their son at the church to be left in the Lord's service.

26:45

And so now we're gonna pick up and continue the story. We're gonna read First Samuel 2 verse 11 down through the end of the chapter through verse 36. So I invite you to follow along as we read. It says starting in verse 11, then Elkanah went home to Ramah and the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.

27:03

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord. And the custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come and while the meat was boiling with a three-pronged fork in his hand, he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot.

27:19

All that the fork brought up, the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and would say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, "for he will not accept boiled meat from you, "but only raw." And if the man said to him, "Let me burn the fat first "and then take as much as you wish." He would say, "No, you must give it now, "and if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of these young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

27:53

But Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

28:05

And then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, may the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord. And so then they would return to their home. And indeed the Lord visited Hannah and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters.

28:19

And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord. Now Eli was very old. He kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all of Israel, how they would lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

28:32

And he said to them, why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No my sons, it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. For if someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him.

28:46

But if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death. Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.

29:01

And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, thus says the Lord, did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt, subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me?

29:20

I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. So why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?

29:38

Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel declares, I promise that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever, but now declares the Lord declares, far be it from me. For those who honor me, I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

29:57

Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you

will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.

30:13

Only one of you, the only one of you who I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out, to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.

30:25

That this shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phineas, it shall be a sign to you, both of them shall die on the same day, and I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind, and I will build him a sure house, and he will go in and out before my anointed forever, and everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, please put me in one of these priest places that I may eat a morsel of bread.

30:56

These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you that we can come here together this morning, that we can consider this interesting story, that we can consider how Hophni and Phineas and Eli, they missed the mark and how that can serve as a warning for us that can serve to caution us in our own pursuits of you and being obedient to what you call us to.

31:21

God, we pray this morning that we would be encouraged by your word, God, that we would be challenged and strengthened as we consider what you would have to say to us this morning. God, we pray that you would speak for your servants are listening.

31:33

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. All right, well, as we jump in this morning, we're looking at these leaders that showed up there in the temple in Shiloh. And so the first thing that we're gonna see in verses 12 through 21, we see these contrasting leaders,

these contrasting stories of these two groups that were there represented in these verses.

31:54

The first are Hophni and Phineas. Now in chapter one, you may remember in the first passage that we looked at in this study, we were told that the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas were priests of the Lord there in Shiloh.

32:07

They were working in the temple, working in the church, but now we have this description in verse 12. And we see this description, it talks about these same two men. It says that the sons of Eli were worthless men and that they did not know the Lord.

32:21

It's not a great description to be spoken of your priest, is it? That they were worthless men who did not know the Lord. We've got a problem already just from the outset of this story. Now unfortunately for us, our cynicism about leadership probably creates some level of, we hear this description of Hophni and Phineas, these evil priests, and probably doesn't immediately shock us when we hear that.

32:46

We hear that there were evil pastors, that there were evil priests that were here in this moment. And I don't think it shocks us the way that it should because we've become used to corruption in high places.

32:58

We've become used to hearing these stories of the moral failure of this leader or that leader. Even inside the church, we hear these stories day after day after day. Pastors or other church leaders being busted for moral failures, for corruption.

33:13

It hardly surprises us at this point. While it's terrible that our expectations are so low that we hear the story of priests of God who did not know God. And it kind of creates a, okay, yeah, and? In us, I think this verse, verse 12 is meant to shock us.

33:35

It's meant to create a response in us and go, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. You describe them as the people who are supposed to speak on God's behalf, who are supposed to come before God and bring the requests and the sacrifices and the things of the people.

33:47

They're supposed to bring those things before God on the people's accounts. And they didn't know the Lord? That should surprise us more than it does. But here we look at this and it seems like, something's not lining up here, right?

34:02

So what was it? What was it like for these people, the people of Israel, to have these priests, to have Hophni and Phineas, priests like this who were speaking on their behalf before God and speaking for God to them?

34:17

How were Phineas and Haphnei reflecting their lack of faith in a tangible way? What did their actions do to reflect this lack of faith? Well, we continue into the next several verses and we see a glimpse of the behavior of these young men and just how terribly off track they had gotten.

34:33

Let's continue in verse 13. It tells us that the custom of the priests, what was normal for the priests to do is that they would, when people would come and bring their sacrifice, the priests would come and there was a portion of that sacrifice that was intended to provide for the priests that worked in the temple.

34:50

They didn't have land, they didn't have crops, they didn't have animals and flocks, things. The people of God and the sacrifices that people brought, they provided for these men and for their needs and so there was an expectation of what that looked like and how they were provided for that was kind of built into the law of how God's house worked at that time.

35:10

But these men didn't abide by those expectations. Go back and read the book of Leviticus, you're gonna see all kinds of very clear, we do this and then we do this and then we do this, that God had provided for these men.

35:22

But it tells us that they, before the fat was burned, before the offerings were made, the priest servant would come and would say, no, no, no, we don't want the sirloin that you're supposed to give us, we want the prime rib.

35:33

We want the filet mignon, we want the best cuts, right? Give me that big ol' bone -in rib eye and we'll just call it a day. It tells us even in verse 16, it says, that if the man said to them, no, no, let us offer our sacrifice first, let us burn the fat that we're supposed to and then you can take as much as you wish, they would say, no, give it to me now and if you don't, I'll take it by force.

35:54

There was some corruption that was happening here. These priests exploited the people that they were meant to be serving. God had placed them in this position to serve the people, but instead of serving and doing what they were supposed to do, these young priests had gotten greedy and they were lazy.

36:11

They had abused this sacrificial system, which was set up to provide for them by stealing from God's portion of the sacrifices. No, no, we don't want what God has given to us, we want the best. If anyone dared to stand up to them, they decided they would just take what they wanted by force.

36:30

The writer summarizes this whole situation in these solemn words in verse 17. It says that the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

36:43

This corrupt leadership was firmly rooted in the ranks in Shiloh. The people seemingly had little reason for hope. They didn't have an election coming up where they could vote these two out and bring new people in.

36:54

They didn't have any system set up like that. God had spoken and said, this family will lead my people. And this is what they got. This is what they got. These people seemingly had little reason to hope that things would improve.

37:09

But as we continue through this passage, hope starts to show up in the scene. Because we have this but, Samuel's here as well, moment in the middle of this passage. There was another young priest that was there in Shiloh.

37:22

And as Samuel grew older, as Samuel grew more mature, as he grew into this role that he had been called to, that he had been dedicated to, we see that God is already starting to work in Samuel's life.

37:35

Verse 18, we continue through our passage. It tells us that Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make this little robe for him and take it to him each year, as we have seen that they would go up and they would make their yearly sacrifice every single time, every single year faithfully this family would go up and they would offer as they were supposed to.

37:56

And we saw just a couple of weeks ago this heartbreaking, I believe, heartbreaking tale of how Hannah and Elkanah brought their son. They said, God, he's yours. They dedicated him there in the temple and they left him there.

38:10

They went home without their son. God had bigger purposes for Samuel and so they left him there. But every year they got to go back and they were going to make their sacrifice. They were going to go and they were going to do what they were supposed to do, year after year after year.

38:24

And so we get to see this little moment of mama's heart being mama's heart, even after she's had to leave her son there at the temple. Every year she's going to make him a little robe and bring him one that's just a little bigger.

38:36

And just a little bigger. Every year mama's taking care of her baby still. And it continues in verse 20. It tells us that Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition that she asked of the Lord.

38:49

So they would return to their home, but indeed the Lord visited Hannah and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters in addition to Samuel. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.

39:02

It tells us that Samuel was doing what he was supposed to do. He was ministering before the Lord. He was growing and becoming the man that he was supposed to be. It tells us also that Hannah and Elkanah, their family continued to grow.

39:15

As God blessed them with five additional children after Samuel. In God's blessings in this moment, God didn't just accomplish what he needed to with Samuel and then just leave this family to be abandoned to whatever it was that happened to them.

39:29

God's blessings continued on this family as they faithfully obeyed, as they faithfully did what God had told them to do. But this is the last that we hear of Hannah. This is the last that we hear of Elkanah.

39:40

We can assume that they lived out their busy lives chasing around five children that we just heard about, that they lived out their days in Ramah, their annual trips to Shiloh, that they would go and see their son and take him a new robe.

39:53

But from this point forward, our focus turns to the son that they left there at the temple that day. Samuel was going to grow into becoming God's priest that he would have oversee right worship in his temple.

40:07

We see these two stories of contrasting leaders, Hophni and Phineas and then of Samuel mentioned in the first several verses in our passage. Now we see in verses 22 through 26, we see an apathetic correction, an apathetic correction.

40:22

So at this point in our passage, our attention turns to Eli. Eli was the high priest. He wasn't referred to by that title, but he was the senior leader that was placed there at the temple in Shiloh. And our impressions of Eli so far have been mixed.

40:41

We just call them mixed, right? The first time that we see Eli show up, we see Hannah is there pouring out her heart before the Lord. She is praying, she is grieved in her spirit. God, I don't know what to do.

40:53

And she's laying it all out there before God and Eli sees her and goes, why are you drunk? This babbling fool over here is just, she's just mumbling in the corner of the sanctuary. What is she doing?

41:06

Eli didn't even recognize a woman that was in distress pouring her heart out before God. His inaccurate rebuke of Hannah wasn't a great first impression for us. But from all we can tell, Eli was doing some things right as well.

41:20

We see in this passage, we see in other places, we're gonna see next week as we see this interaction between Samuel and Eli that we look at in chapter three. We see that Samuel was being cared for. We see that Samuel was growing in the character that he was supposed to develop, that he was growing and becoming the person that he was supposed to become.

41:40

And that was at Eli's leadership. Eli was there playing a role, but in the midst of the good and the bad and what do we do with this guy? We have to ask the question, what was he doing about his evil sons?

41:53

What was he doing about these men? His sons were being allowed to run amok in the temple, being unchecked by their father. And maybe you hear that and maybe you go, well maybe old Eli just didn't know.

42:06

Maybe he just wasn't informed. Well, we can't say that, right? Let's read verse 22. It tells us that Eli was very old, but that he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all of Israel, how they would lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

42:21

It seems likely from reading this, as Eli is described as being very old, it was likely that he was retired from normal daily ministry. He probably wasn't the one that was there offering the sacrifices and doing the things.

42:33

The sons were probably running the daily operations at this point. Eli was very old, but with that said, his absence doesn't preclude him from knowing what's going on. It doesn't prevent him from knowing what his sons are up to.

42:48

It tells us that word would reach him about his sons and about their behavior. He knew what they were doing. It tells us that he knew what was going on there. He knew that this corruption was running rampant through the house that he had been given responsibility to oversee.

43:06

These boys were using the sacrifices of well -intentioned Israelites who were coming to make their sacrifice before God. Eli's sons were using those sacrifices not to make a

sacrifice before God, but they were using them to fatten their bellies and fatten their wallets.

43:23

They were serving themselves instead of the God that they were called to serve. Not only that, but essentially they had turned the temple of God into a brothel, as it tells us that they were sleeping with the women who were there working outside of the temple gates.

43:38

So what we see described here is sex, power, and money. Sound like common themes that have plagued troubled leaders throughout human history, don't they? Sex, money, and power, I think those are the big three, right?

43:56

Verse 22 makes it clear to us that Eli knew what was going on though. You look at 22, it tells us that he was hearing. He kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all of Israel, so he doesn't get to plead ignorance.

44:07

He doesn't get to say, I didn't know, can't hold me responsible. So now we have to ask the question, what did he do about it? If he knew there was a problem, what did he do about it? Well, let's continue on, verse 23.

44:19

It tells us that he said to them, why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons, it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad.

44:32

If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.

44:45

We see Eli goes and, Eli speaks to his sons. That's a good first step. Hey guys, I'm hearing some stuff. We gotta deal with this. He called them to give an account of their actions. Hey, I'm hearing this, but guys, what's going on?

45:00

In fact, he even tells them plainly that their conduct was evil, that this is no good thing that they're doing, these things that I'm hearing about you. He explained the seriousness of their deeds, that you can sin against a man, and all right, maybe God will work on your behalf, but if you sin against God, that's a dangerous place for you to be.

45:17

They had put themselves in terrible danger. While Eli's words and these statements are true and are right, I can't help but suggest that there's something relatively pathetic about them, because we look at these words, that there is no direct rebuke of his sons.

45:34

Eli doesn't come and just simply state, guys, it's time to stop. There is no demand for repentance. There's simply this soft -spoken pleading of, guys, why are you doing that? Because that's, maybe that's probably not a good idea.

45:50

He tried to point out their sin, but it's done with this passive, you guys think it might be a good idea to stop? Maybe? You know, the short answer is they didn't wanna stop. They didn't have any interest in stopping, and they ignored his pathetic attempt to call them to stop.

46:11

Eli was weak in his leadership. Eli was weak in his demand for repentance. So I'm reading through this passage and I'm not entirely surprised to hear in verse 25 that it tells us Hophni and Phineas refused to listen to the voice of their father.

46:25

It doesn't seem like Eli is a bad guy. He's not a wicked man, but in his old age, he wasn't able to provide the leadership for this temple to his sons that Israel needed. His words that he expressed to his sons, they expressed sorrow, they expressed distress at their behavior, but he didn't have the strength to step up and to stop them.

46:48

Shiloh suffered from the corruption of Eli's sons and they also suffered because of the ineptitude of their old father who refused to step in and to do something about it in the midst of all of this corruption that was at home there in the temple.

47:04

It's an atrocious thing for anyone to endure leadership like this. It's a terrible thing for us to look at leaders who would know the right thing to do. It's pathetic that the leadership of God's chosen people had descended into greedy, immoral hands of Hophni and Phineas and their old weak-willed father who refused to do anything about it.

47:29

It's equally terrible that that still happens today. That people still today suffer under leadership that displays many of these same qualities. It breaks my heart that this happens in our society that there are those who can't stand up for themselves, who are supposed to have someone else stand up on their behalf.

47:50

There are leaders that are put in place to stand up for those that can't stand for themselves and it just never happens. And it just never happens. The people of Israel that were coming were bringing their sacrifices to God were not being represented.

48:06

There was evil that was being done to these people and Eli just sat back. The fact that leadership of God's people had fallen into the hands of Hophni, Phineas and Eli is heartbreaking. That's why it breaks my heart to see these same things happening in churches today, this morning.

48:31

Across our country, right now, guarantee you there are places all across this country that many of these same things are happening. That there are churches that will open their doors and will provide an entertaining show, will promise blessings to someone if someone just writes a big enough check, God's gonna bless that.

48:48

They will abuse people in the same way that Hophni and Phineas did. That they will use people in their churches to fatten their bellies and to fatten their bank accounts in the same way that Hophni and Phineas did.

48:59

They will use things to give people what they think they want, but they don't actually give them what they need. This morning, today, it's a big day for many people across our country. It's Super Bowl Sunday, right?

49:15

I was looking around online, I had a friend share something. He was pointing out, talking about how many churches today are doing these festival things, these big consumer moments, these consumer events where people go into church, right?

49:31

We'll use that term loosely. They go to church on Super Bowl Sunday and there's games and there's carnival and there's food and there's all the concert and bands. There's all these things providing entertainment.

49:43

It's Disneyland at church this morning. Meanwhile, they're very shy about saying anything that God might have to say. The word of God doesn't show up there beyond maybe being set in a corner somewhere or hung on a poster because everything in those churches, loosely used term, is about what people want, not about what God wants.

50:07

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? We've been talking about that Hophni and Phineas were taking what they wanted instead of doing what God had told them to do. What people need is Jesus. What people need is the Bible.

50:22

This isn't me coming up here and saying don't have fun. As soon as we finish up here in a few minutes, I'm gonna go have some fun. We're gonna eat some good food. We're gonna watch a football... I'm okay with fun, right?

50:33

But that's not our greatest need. Our greatest need is Jesus. Our greatest need is to do what God has told us to do, not just trying to line the pockets of some corrupt leader who just wants to build a crowd for himself, just wants to build a bigger piggy bank for himself.

50:52

There's corruption in this church. But again, we see this little drop into the story, but there's Samuel, verse 26. Tells us that the boy Samuel continued to grow, both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.

51:13

In the face of this rampant corruption that we see, this weak leadership that we see, God was still at work. God was still accomplishing what he wanted to accomplish. Samuel continued to grow, continued to mature in the Lord.

51:28

This passage is reminding us hope is on the way. Even as this evil leadership existed, no matter how bad things get, God is faithful to provide good leaders who will point people towards the truth. Now there's times in human history, there's times in our history where those voices get a little bit louder and sometimes we hear those things and people are more obedient.

51:49

I'm more obedient when I'm closer to the voice of God than I am when I'm just over here doing my own thing. We see that in our country, right? We've had times and seasons where the leadership of our country is listening to God and we've had these times of great opportunity and prosperity and blessing as God is speaking so clearly.

52:08

Our founding fathers were in that space. You can fast forward to a different period of time where the preacher was really the most influential voice in America during a season of time. You know what happened during that time?

52:22

The Great Awakening happened during that time. That people's lives were changed, that the country looked entirely different than it does now where we have the voice of God kind of being set on a shelf and quietly whispering in the corner that we've turned the volume down on the voice of God a little bit these days, haven't we?

52:42

But no matter how bad it gets in our story in First Samuel 2 and our moment now in 2024, God has not abandoned us. God has not abandoned them. God is faithful to

provide good leaders who will point towards the truth and Samuel is coming, help is on the way.

53:03

Let's continue into the last little chunk of our verses, verse 27 through 36. We see this corruption that had taken root there in Shiloh. We see this corruption condemned. In this final section, we see an unnamed prophet come to Eli and speak on God's behalf.

53:17

So the remainder of this chapter essentially is God speaking directly to Eli through this prophet and God does three distinct things in this section. In this section, God talks about what he has done in the past in verses 27 and 28.

53:32

He talks about what Eli's house is doing in that present moment condemning what they've been doing in verse 29. And then God makes some promises for them. God tells them what he is going to do in the days and weeks and years ahead in verses 30 through 36.

53:47

Let's take each of those one by day at a time. The first thing that we see, God talking about what he has done in the past in verses 27 and 28. It tells us there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, thus says the Lord, did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt and subject to the house of Pharaoh?

54:06

Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.

54:21

God is telling Eli, God is reminding us that he was faithful. God was faithful. He worked supernaturally when he led Israel out of Egypt. God was leading his people well. He worked supernaturally when he chose a special family to be the priests, to be the ones who would speak on God's behalf.

54:41

And Eli's family was given this special blessing of being the priestly family. In fact, they had even been given special instructions on how they were to conduct themselves. God didn't just leave them to figure it out.

54:53

Verse 28 tells us that they were to be his priests, that they were gonna go up to the altar, that they were gonna burn incense, that they were gonna dress and wear these ephods before God. They had special direction on how they were to conduct themselves.

55:07

But you know what? Eli and his family had royally blown that. They had absolutely blown that opportunity, that responsibility that God had given to them, which is what we see a little more clearly in verse 29 when God turns his attention to Eli's house.

55:22

Pointing out in verse 29 what Eli's house is doing in that moment. Verse 29, God asks, why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling? You honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people, Israel.

55:42

God is directly calling Eli and his family out for their failure in this moment. Eli had passively tried to lead his sons with this week, hey guys, no, stop, wait. Like that passive at best. He never rebuked them, and he never did anything about their behavior.

56:04

He never stopped them. He passively allowed them to continue to do what they had been doing. That brings me to this thought that's important for us because, pay attention. Because sin, oftentimes we think of sin and we think of, you know, God told me not to do that.

56:21

Don't eat that, don't drink that, don't go there, don't touch that, don't look at that. We know those things, right? Don't do these things. And we think of sin as what we're not supposed to do. When we do something, that's sin.

56:37

But sin can also be refusing to do what God has told us to do. Sin is simply put, it's disobeying what God has said. If God is in charge and God told you, don't do that, to go and to do that, would be sin.

56:51

In the same way, if God looks at you and says, do this, and you go, I don't want to. That's sin too. That's just as sinful going and doing something that you shouldn't. If God has commanded it, we have to do it.

57:09

Or it's sin. James 4:17 says this just as clearly as anyone could say it. James 4:17, whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, it's sin. Pretty straightforward, right? That's about as black and white as it gets.

57:27

Eli needed to put a stop to the sinful behavior of his sons. But instead of standing up for what was right, Eli honored his sons. I don't want to embarrass them. I don't want to take their jobs away.

57:39

I don't want to... He honored his sons over honoring his God. It sounds to me, reading these verses, that Eli may have even been complicit. He may have even been involved in their sins. Because this passage right here that we're looking at in verse 29, it says that if he's saying, you have fattened yourselves by taking the choice parts of the meat.

58:00

That's spoken to Eli. That sounds to me like Eli has fattened himself just as much as the sons have fattened themselves. If Eli's sitting at home, no, they're the ones that poked the fork into the...

58:10

They're the ones that took the meat. Yeah, dad, and then they brought it home and stuck it on the grill, and you were the one that ate it. I think Eli may have played a role in this. I think Eli may be participating in this stolen meat plot that was running at the temple in Shiloh.

58:28

So now in the last six verses, seven verses of our passage, we see what God's going to do in response to all of this. Let's pick up in verse 30. It tells us, therefore, the Lord, the God of Israel, declares, Eli, listen up.

58:43

I promise that your house and the house of your father should go in and go out before me forever. But now the Lord declares, Far be it from me. For those who honor me, I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

58:59

Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress, you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.

59:15

The only one of you who I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out, to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phineas, shall be assigned to you.

59:32

Both of them shall die on the same day. God is going to do in the coming days, in the coming years, God is going to do what Eli should have done years earlier. God is putting an end to the sinful leadership of Hophni and Phineas, and now he's putting an end to Eli's leadership as well, as Eli didn't step up and do what he should have when it was time for him to step up.

59:55

It says in verse 30, those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Seems like a simple way of saying, you don't do what I ask you to do, you don't get to play the same role that you've always played.

01:00:11

I will cut off your strength, and I will cut off the strength of your father's house. Just in case Eli doesn't believe it, verse 34, God provides some proof for Eli that what he's spoken is true. This isn't going to be some accident where my family members get died.

01:00:28

Everybody gets old and dies, right? My sons are going to die one day. Of course, Eli's sitting here, well maybe it was just coincidence. No, no, no, no. God provides proof. This will be no accidents where his sons die by coincidence.

01:00:40

We will see their promised demise in just two chapters, in chapter 4 in a couple of weeks. But God is promising to put an end to this evil leadership from these two brothers and really from Eli's entire family.

01:00:54

And the face of God's judgment on Eli's sinful household though, we see this promise of grace. We see this promise of hope pop up in the last two verses of our passage. Because in the midst of God saying, I'm going to bring the hammer on this family for their sinfulness, we see verse 35.

01:01:14

God promises, he says, I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do, according to what's in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.

01:01:26

And everyone who is left in your house shall come and implore you for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, please put me in one of the priest's places that I may eat a morsel of bread.

01:01:36

God was going to judge sin, but he was also going to remember his people. He was also going to raise up a new priest for them. God hadn't forgotten. God hadn't forgotten his people then. God doesn't forget us now.

01:01:51

God is always at work, accomplishing what he wants to accomplish in the grand scheme and the big picture. God is doing something. We don't always understand it. We don't always know what's going on. We don't always see the whole picture, like God sees the whole picture, but I'm telling you, we watch this story.

01:02:07

We see first and second Samuel unfold. We're going to see, oh no, God was doing something in those moments where we didn't see it. God saw it. And we get the opportunity, the blessing of hindsight being told.

01:02:20

In 2020, as we look at first and second Samuel, we get the opportunity and the privilege of hindsight being 20 -20 when we look at what God was doing in our lives five years ago, or 10 years ago, or 50 years ago.

01:02:32

We can look back and go, oh no, now I see what God was doing. Now I see it, but in the moment, it's really hard to see sometimes. In the moment, God, what are you doing? God was going to judge sin, but he was also going to remember his people.

01:02:49

He was going to raise up a new priest for them. There's this prophecy that happens here. God says, no, no, help is on the way. Help is on the way. And something that I just want to point out for us as we work our way through these books, the first and second Samuel, we're going to see this, that prophecy, oftentimes in scripture, prophecy can have a couple of different layers of fulfillment that happen in these prophecies.

01:03:15

There can often be an immediate fulfillment, and then there can be a greater fulfillment that happens later. So in this instance, as God says, that he's going to remember his people, that he's going to raise up a new priest for them, we've got Samuel sitting here, right?

01:03:28

His name keeps popping up in this passage. Samuel's there, Samuel's growing, Samuel's learning and becoming the man that he's supposed to be. Samuel is going to be a wonderful, godly man who leads the people well throughout this book.

01:03:43

But so much of this book is also going to give us these shadowy references to Jesus. We see these glimmers, these little, wait, was that Jesus? Yeah, the more full picture is Jesus. Verse 35 tells us, I will build him a sure house and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.

01:04:07

Samuel didn't go in and out before the Lord forever. There's one high priest who serves on behalf of the people that serves forever, that is the ultimate high priest, that is the great high priest. If you haven't read the book of Hebrews, go read it because we've got this answer, right?

01:04:23

We get to look back and see hindsight 20-20. Jesus is the great high priest. Jesus is the great mediator who would go before the sinful people and the holy God and would bring God's word to us and would take us before God.

01:04:37

The role of that high priest was to mediate between the people and God. We have a mediator, his name is Jesus. So we see Samuel's on the way. We see a little bit bigger picture, Jesus is on the way. We've looked at this passage, long passage, but I think there's an important message in here for us because on the one hand we see that corrupt and inept leadership for the dangerous poison that it is.

01:05:12

We see just how dangerous it is for leadership and for people that are in positions of power to just stand back and idly watch while people do the wrong thing. Even more dangerous, we see what happens when evil people are in leadership and they were taking what they wanted and corrupting the system to feed themselves and their own desires.

01:05:35

Eli's family has taken us to the heart of the problem. Got laid it out right at the beginning of this passage, right, in verse 12, tells us that the sons of Eli were worthless men. Why? Because they did not know the Lord.

01:05:54

Corruption and leadership cannot be downplayed. It cannot be glossed over. This can't be something that we just, well, you know, it's just what we get, right? This is just what happens. Those who lead are called to a high standard, and we should expect those who lead us to do so with integrity and with godliness.

01:06:12

I hope that you will file that away somewhere in the back of your mind, because this year, specifically, we as Americans have an opportunity to choose for ourselves who our leaders are going to be. And while I care about their immigration policies or about their financial experience or about how they're gonna handle this conflict or that problem or whatever it is. There's lots of policies that are good, that are important, but the thing that we should care most about is what God cares most about.

01:06:39

That those who would lead would do so with integrity and with godliness. It was the reason why a couple of rotten priests got kicked out and are gonna meet their demise one page to the right, if you flip over to 1 Samuel chapter four.

01:06:55

It's important for us to keep at the very top of our list expectations for a leader. They should lead with godliness, they should lead with integrity. But as we talk about leaders, as we talk about leadership, we should also be careful about throwing stones, because the problem that we see in leaders is actually a problem that we all share.

01:07:20

This is something that all of us deal with. Corrupt leadership can do terrible damage, but corruption in us is really problematic and really dangerous as well. But for us to have that same desire to, well no, I wanna do what I want instead of what God wants.

01:07:37

We saw that in Hophni and Phineas and we saw how dangerous that was for them. But you know that pops up in you. I know that pops up in me. God says, do this, I want to do that. Now what? Because that human sinfulness, that defiance of God is the heart of the problem that we see in our leaders, but it's the heart of our problem that we see in ourselves as well.

01:08:05

Hophni and Phineas decided that their desires were more important than what God had commanded. They said no to God and yes to their sinful desires. But we do that. We do that. Sometimes we do that daily.

01:08:26

So what can we learn from the failures of these men that we see here in this passage? Hophni, Phineas, even Eli. And when we think that we are above God's laws and we get to do what we want, we get ourselves in trouble.

01:08:45

Eli and his sons, they were the priests. That means that they were reading the Word of God before the people. That means that they were speaking on God's behalf. I guarantee you, Eli and his sons said many of the right things.

01:09:00

But their actions didn't line up with what they said. They knew it here, it came out here, but their hearts were dirty. Corruption took root in the core of who they were and it tore them up and it ruined their future.

01:09:18

So our question for us to ask ourselves this morning is a hard one for us to ask, but I think it's an important one for us to ask. As we see God bring the hammer down on this corruption in Hophni and Phineas, Eli, we have to ask ourselves.

01:09:35

They said the right things, but then they didn't do them. Is there an area where our words and our actions don't line up? Is there something that we say, oh no, no, no, no, yeah, the Bible says that I'm supposed to... fill in the blank.

01:09:52

No, no, the Bible says I should never ... fill in the blank. But then when it's time for you to make that decision, oh, I'm gonna go do what I want. How can we learn from these failed leaders? I think the question for us to ask is how do you need to be careful to put God's desires above your own today?

01:10:18

How do you need to be careful to do what God has told you to do, not just say it, not just give lip service to it and then go do what you want, to do it. How can we be careful to choose God's ways today?

01:10:32

So if there's something that God is sitting here whispering that every time I said, made one of those connections of, if there's something that God told you to do that you're not doing, if something popped in your mind, you know, that's your application for today.

01:10:46

When I said, if there's something that God told you not to do and you just keep running back to it and continue to do it and in the back of your mind you go, Yeah. That's your application for today. We don't just say the words.

01:11:04

We don't just do the things that we're supposed to do when everybody's watching. Dave, you talked for years, I think, working with our 180 students about integrity, right? What's integrity? You remember?

01:11:17

Doing the right thing when no one's watching. Hophni and Phineas were doing what they wanted, and when everybody was watching. But for us to live with integrity, for us to do the right thing when nobody's looking, our prayer team is going to be down here after the service.

01:11:39

They would love to pray for you and whatever it is that you've got going on. We've got our prayer wall out the back doors. If you look to the right, maybe you don't have time or don't want to come down here and pray with our team, go back there and write those prayer requests down.

01:11:50

Our prayer team checks that wall each week and would love to pray for whatever it is that you've got going on in life. But at this point, we're going to wrap up. I want to invite you. Would you pray with me now?

01:11:59

God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for, wow, a powerful reminder of just how dangerous it is for us to discard what you have commanded to do what we want. God, help us to be people who learn from the mistakes of Eli and Hophni and Phineas and those like them that go out, that live to gratify whatever it is that their heart desires.

01:12:31

Whatever it is that their flesh puts on their heart, whatever it is that calls out to them, attempts them, that is what they do. God, help us to not be those people. God, help us to be people of your word.

01:12:42

God, help us to be people who are devoted to obeying what you have called us to. Like Romans talks about, God, we are no longer slaves to sin, but we can be slaves to righteousness. We are set free to do what you have invited us to do and live the life that you have invited us to live instead of just being trapped in the sin that so easily ties us all up.

01:13:03

So God, we pray that you would help us to live in that freedom. God set us free to go and to live in obedience, that we would love our spouse as well, that we would lead in our workplace as well. God, that we would be a light in our community that you instruct us, that you command us to be.

01:13:22

God, help us to go and to do what you call us to do. Help us to be what you call us to be. God, help us to be obedient to him who knows to do good and does not do it to him and his sin. God, we lay our lives before you this morning.

01:13:40

We pray that you would be pleased with the sacrifice that we've set before you. We love you. That's in Jesus' name. We pray. Amen.