

April 12, 2020
Living in The Promised Land
1 Samuel

Sermon Summary

In this message we will discover the ingredients for living in our spiritual Promised Land, which is made possible through the Resurrection of Jesus, by examining four characters in the Old Testament book of 1st Samuel and the ingredient each one's life brings to the table. These four individuals are connected in our Scripture readings for the coming week. Hannah and sincere praying: 1 Sam 1:9-28, 1 Sam 2:1-2. Samuel and listening to God's Word: 1 Sam 3:1-10 & 19-21. Saul and the need for obedience: 1 Sam 13:7-14, 1 Sam 15:22. David and a passion for God: 1 Sam 16:1-12. New Testament Scriptures bridge the Old and the New with instructions for prayer, listening to God's Word, the need for obedience and a passion for God! The message ends with celebrating the victory of Jesus in His resurrection and then remembering the sacrifice He made on the Old Rugged Cross through an observance of the Lord's Supper!

Full Sermon Notes

Still, God is the One who brings us hope no matter what we face in this old world! Still we turn to God in prayer when we face such things as this coronavirus! Still, we know He hears our prayers for those who are fighting for their lives, for those who are fighting on the front lines, and for those who are grieving loss! In fact we're starting a round the clock prayer initiative tomorrow which you can join. Still we trust Him to give us His strength to endure, and His presence to give us His peace! Still we believe that Jesus, God's One and Only Son, Divinity in the flesh, came to bring us hope through His ultimate sacrifice on the Old Rugged Cross, and His mighty victory on that Resurrection Day thousands of years ago! Still, He is changing lives in powerful ways! "Oh Praise the Name of the Lord our God!" At the end of my message today we will remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us by observing the Communion of The Lord's Supper. All you need to participate is some juice and bread. Let's pray right now and ask God to teach us today by way of His inspired Word and His Holy Spirit's guidance. Pray!

Father God we humbly come to you today to ask You to use the same power that brought Jesus out of the tomb, to bring healing to the sick, strength to those who are fighting hard to save lives around the clock and to bring comfort and hope to those who have suffered the tragedy of losing a loved one. We don't have answers to so many questions, but we have the secret to eternal hope. That secret lies in your Resurrection from the grave on that Easter morning so many years ago. You defeated death and the grave and gave us the blessed hope, as the song says, it's not a hope so some day, it's a know so one day! Lord Jesus please hide me behind the cross so that You will be glorified today and Your Word will transform hearts and lives, for it is in the precious Name of Jesus I pray and believe!

Life has a way of changing quickly in catastrophic, unnerving ways, but the never changing truth of the good news of God's love for us through Jesus remains the anchor that tethers and strengthens our souls! Today we're going to learn some amazing and eternal truths through our study of some Old Testament passages found in the Book of 1 Samuel! The Hebrew people were now living in The Promised Land, but they were still struggling. God had promised them a better life in The Promised Land, however, things were not turning out as they had hoped. Had God failed them? Had God mis-led them? Absolutely not! The Israelites had yet again, turned their backs on God and broken their covenant promise to Him. As a result He was unable to bless them like He wanted to. As we saw last week, a pattern of behavior had developed. The Hebrews would make promises to trust God and follow Him, and then they would recant and follow the pagan religions of the surrounding cultures. Things would get bad, they would cry out to God and He would send a deliverer, like Gideon, whom we talked about last week. But as soon as a particular deliverer, or judge, died, they would return to their evil ways. The background of our text today finds the spiritual condition of Israel in deplorable condition. Even some in the priesthood had become corrupt and wicked. But God had not given up on His people! He still loved them and wanted them to return to Him. Aren't you glad God's is so long-suffering and patient? Living in the Promised Land was supposed to be a wonderful thing for the Hebrews because everything they needed for life was there. It was a land flowing with milk and honey. But, as they would discover, material wealth is not the key to ultimate fulfillment in life! God had given them the Promised Land and the ingredients for living a truly fulfilling life were there, but many of the people rejected the most important ingredient and that was a personal relationship with their Creator! Zach shared with our students last Sunday night in their online service that God is indeed a powerful God, but He is also a personal God and desires fellowship with humanity! So many of the Hebrews simply were missing that message! While the Promised Land for the Hebrews was a physical place, God has provided for us a way to live in a spiritual promised land, no matter where we live physically! We find our Promised Land by living our lives in the power of the Resurrection of Jesus! I want to preface our Old Testament study today with these words from Paul in the New Testament...

Rom 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Rom 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Rom 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Rom 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--

Rom 6:7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Rom 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Now that's living in the Spiritual Promised Land! Believe it or not, we will discover the secrets to living in our Promised Land through the Resurrection of Jesus by examining

four characters in the Old Testament book of 1st Samuel. Four people, and four very important ingredients for us when it comes to living in our Promised Land! With all of the spiritual difficulties the Hebrew people had, I've got to say this: the Jewish writers who recorded their history in the Bible didn't try to cover up their issues, but sought to learn from them. The honesty of Scripture is one of the most powerful things about the Bible. Okay, the first person we will learn from today is named Hannah and she gives us the first ingredient needed for life in the Promised Land!

1. Character - Hannah **Ingredient - Sincere Praying**

Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah, a member of the priestly tribe of Levi. The other wife was named Peninnah and she had children, Hannah had none. The Bible shows clearly how Polygamy complicated and brought tragic hardship into the families of many Old Testament leaders. In fact when you read about Hanna and Peninnah you see the jealousy and rivalry that had developed between the two. Peninnah would provoke Hanna in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. And when they would take their annual pilgrimage to make their family sacrifices, Peninnah would provoke Hanna till she wept and would not eat. Is there anyone here today that has been in a place of desperation like Hanna? Maybe it's a family relationship or situation that seems impossible, or in this new world we live, the loss of your job and you have no way of providing for your family. Maybe it's an addiction or sin you've struggled with for years and you've tried and tried to overcome only to fail again. Maybe it's depression and discouragement brought on by a traumatic event in your past, or depression and you don't really know why you're always down and discouraged. Maybe it's a health issue for you or one of your family members and there seems to be no positive outcome in this world. Whatever it is, God wants you to know He cares and He's listening to those who earnestly pray and seek Him. Here's what happened with Hannah at one of those yearly sacrifices...

1 Sam 1:9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's temple.

1 Sam 1:10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.

1 Sam 1:11 And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

1 Sam 1:12 As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

1 Sam 1:13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk

1 Sam 1:14 and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

1 Sam 1:15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.

1 Sam 1:16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

1 Sam 1:17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

1 Sam 1:18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

1 Sam 1:19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

1 Sam 1:20 So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

After Samuel was weaned Hannah took him to Eli...

1 Sam 1:26 and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD.

1 Sam 1:27 I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.

1 Sam 1:28 So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

1 Sam 2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance.

1 Sam 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

Hannah's prayer was answered and she followed through on her promise and dedicated Samuel to the Lord's service, and you may think this was a crazy thing for a mom to do, but God went on to use Samuel greatly and I'm sure Hannah was one of the proudest moms on planet earth! One of the secrets to living in the Promised Land is Desperate and Sincere Praying and trusting God with the answer. The same is true when living in the promised land of the resurrected life. Listen...

Rom 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

James 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

James 5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

James 5:15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Oil is not a magic potion. It represents the healing power of the Spirit of God! We know God works through doctors, nurses, medicines and surgeries to heal people, and

sometimes He goes beyond what humans can do and works a miracle, but we also have to understand while God sometimes heals in this world, at other times He brings a person home so He can heal them eternally, never to be sick again! Prayer is trusting God to answer our prayer in a way that's best! Sometimes being called home is the ultimate answer to prayer. Let me give you a quick example. When I was serving a church just outside of Birmingham, AL I was ministering to a family whose loved one was dying. We prayed and asked for healing, but trusted God as to whether that healing was to be on earth or in heaven. I was there the day this precious woman of faith drew her last breath and went to be with Jesus. Her grown son who was living in the party world of drugs, and all that goes along with that, had come home to be with his mom in her last days. When she died, he took me by the arm and led me out to the back patio away from the folks who had gathered there. He broke down in tears and said to me, "That was the most Godly woman I've ever known, I need what she had! Brother Larry, how can I get that?" I told him to admit his sinfulness and need for God, to believe Jesus died on the Cross to save him, and to call on His Name in prayer. He gripped my hand, we prayed and he was gloriously saved! I can tell you that his mother's desperate pray for her son to come to know Jesus as His Savior was the prayer she wanted answered that day, and as she entered into her eternal Promised Land she saw a celebration going on because of her son's decision! Desperate and sincere praying is a must for ultimate living in the Promised Land! Now to the second character and ingredient needed for living in the Promised Land...

2. Character - Samuel

Ingredient - Listening to God's Word

1 Sam 3:1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

1 Sam 3:2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place.

1 Sam 3:3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

1 Sam 3:4 Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am."

1 Sam 3:5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

1 Sam 3:6 Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

1 Sam 3:7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

1 Sam 3:8 The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.

1 Sam 3:9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

1 Sam 3:10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The Scripture goes on to say this about Samuel...

1 Sam 3:19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.

1 Sam 3:20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.

1 Sam 3:21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

In a few weeks we're going to have an entire message on finding victory in the Word of God. But today we must understand this basic principle for living in our promised land, the resurrected life: Listen to God's Word!

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

James 1:23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

James 1:24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

James 1:25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

And why does the Word of God work so powerfully in our lives?

1 Pet 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

And this leads us to the third character and ingredient needed for living in The Promised Land...

3. Character - Saul Ingredient - The Need for Obedience

Samuel was not only a priest, but he was the last of the Judges whom God used as deliverers for Israel. The people decided they wanted an earthly king like the surrounding cultures. They thought a King could protect them and lead them into victorious battles. God had wanted them to simply trust Him as their King. Samuel was hurt and displeased by this request from the people, but God told him to go ahead and anoint a King for them. Listen to this description of the situation by commentator Ben F. Philbeck, Jr.

“...the popular clamor for a king indicated the people’s lack of understanding of their real problem. Israel lacked unity not because the tribal system itself was deficient, but because of faults within the people themselves. Each tribe became overly concerned with its own self-interest and neglected the needs of the nation. Israel could be united and vigorous only when the people submitted themselves to the Lord’s leadership and worked for the common good.”

When I read this I immediately thought out about our nation. What would happen if our leaders and our people “submitted themselves to the Lord’s leadership and worked for the common good?” We are blessed in the City of Slidell to have leaders who seek to do that! Thank you Lord!

So living in the Promised Land comes down to a willingness to be obedient to God’s leadership. The Israelites had a problem with this and their first King, King Saul had a problem with this! Sometimes we learn from a person’s good example and sometimes, if we’re smart, we learn from a person’s bad example. Our Foundations 260 guide says this about Saul...

“From the beginning of Saul’s story...we see hints of the life-long struggle that would plague his leadership--a lack of trust in God.”

We don’t have time to go into all of the struggles Saul had, but his lack of trust caused him to take matters into his own hands and he disobeyed God. At one point Saul was getting ready for a battle and was instructed by Samuel to wait until he got there and made a sacrifice unto the Lord! But here’s what happened...

1 Sam 13:7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.

1 Sam 13:8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.

1 Sam 13:9 So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings. " And Saul offered up the burnt offering.

1 Sam 13:10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

1 Sam 13:11 "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,

1 Sam 13:12 I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

1 Sam 13:13 "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

1 Sam 13:14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

Now at first glance, this seems a very harsh of Samuel. Saul's actions may have seemed innocent enough, but God knows the heart and tests the heart. God can't bless disobedience. To do so would set up a very unhealthy pattern. When you have a disobedient, rebellious child, you don't reward the bad behavior, "come on let's go get a happy meal!" If you do the child will not learn the lessons they will need to survive and thrive in life. You will see later how the true nature of Saul began to come to light and it was not a pretty picture! Samuel would later tell Saul this very important principle for living in the Promised Land. It's one of our memory verses for this week...

1 Sam 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Paul puts it this way for us today...

Rom 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Rom 6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.

Rom 6:18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Rom 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

Rom 6:20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

Rom 6:21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

Rom 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And this leads us to our last character and ingredient needed for living in The Promised Land of the resurrected life...

4. Character - David Ingredient - A Passion for God

Listen to what God says to Samuel...

1 Sam 16:1 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

1 Sam 16:2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'

1 Sam 16:3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

1 Sam 16:4 Samuel did what the LORD said.

Samuel is probably praying when God speaks to him and Samuel listens to the Word of God and is obedient! He did what the LORD said. When Jesse and all but one of his sons arrive Samuel sees one of the sons, Eliab and thought...

1 Sam 16:6 ..."Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the LORD."

1 Sam 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Sam 16:10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these."

1 Sam 16:11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

1 Sam 16:12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

This one was David. He was the youngest son, but even at his young age his heart had a passion for God! David was a musician and would later pen some of the most powerful worship song lyrics ever written. Like...

Psa 27:3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

Psa 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Psa 27:8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.

Psa 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

As we'll see in the coming weeks, David was not a perfect man, but he was a man who had a passion for God and as a result God was able to use him in powerful ways as the King of Israel for 40 years! But even greater than his 40 year reign is what we read in The New Testament Book of Acts...

Acts 13:22 After removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

Acts 13:23 "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

And speaking of that Savior Jesus, on what we now call Good Friday, many years ago, Jesus became our Deliverer, sent to free us from our captivity to sin and to make a way for us to enter into a spiritual Promised Land. He suffered a horrible death on the Old

Rugged Cross as He fought an epic spiritual battle for our souls. On this Easter Sunday we celebrate with great elation, the fact that He won that battle when the stone was rolled away and He burst from the Grave in resurrected victory. But He asked that we never forget His loving sacrifice for us. So today we remember. Please take your bread and Juice as we think back to our Lord's Last Supper with His disciples...

Luke 22:14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.

Luke 22:15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Luke 22:16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.

Luke 22:18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Mark tells us...

Mark 14:26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

As Andrew leads us in a song of worship, please remember that Jesus died and rose again for you! He desires a personal relationship with you! If you will pray and call upon His Name you can begin your new life in The Promised Land of God's Grace! His Holy Spirit will teach you to pray, to listen to God's Word, to be obedient and to love God with a passion!

