

2017-04-16 - I Will Pray for You and Teach You - 1 Samuel 12:20-24

Call to Worship: Psalm 25:4-5

Scripture Reading: Acts 6:1-7

Sermon: "I Will Pray for You and Teach You" 1 Samuel 12:20-24

Benediction: Psalm 86:11-13

## INTRODUCTION

We understand that this congregation is greatly blessed by the Lord right now. He is dealing with us graciously, favoring us when we do not deserve it. He is helping us greatly. He is showing us the riches of His mercy, pouring out blessings on us in Christ Jesus.

As we were slowly reaching the end of the previous course of bible study together, I was thinking more and more about what I should do next, I reviewed some of the bible passages that gave me direction years ago, including the one I read earlier from Acts, and this one I will read now in 1 Samuel. As I did so, I realized that whereas before I had noticed only the instruction to the preacher in this passage, there is a rich banquet of instruction for the whole congregation here.

In this history, you see God showing mercy to the congregation of Israel. If we look at this together and take it to heart, we can know God's will for any congregation, and go on from here based on this instruction from the Lord.

What is it like for a congregation when God is showing you mercy, when He is showing you grace? What is a congregation so blessed by God to do?

## TEXT

1 Samuel 12:1-25

## BODY

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,

- I. You Are Caused to Realize Your Sins (19)
  - A. All your sins
  - B. The evil of one thing in particular: asking to have a king for yourselves like the world around you
    1. you were not happy being ruled by the Word of God through His prophets
    2. you were not happy being delivered by God into the hand of your enemies when you sinned
    3. you were not happy being saved by God out of the hand of your enemies only when you repented
  - C. When God is being merciful to you, He does not show mercy by leaving you in self-righteousness, but by causing you to realize your sins

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
You are caused to realize your sins, and

- II. You Are Warned Not to Do What You Would Do Naturally in the Flesh (20)
  - A. What is that? To fear and turn aside from following the LORD (20, 21)
    1. do not fear
      - a) to be afraid of God with a *servile* fear; the fear of a slave expecting punishment from a master he cannot please; the fear of the wicked servant given one talent by his master, who decided his master was impossible to please, and so hid his one talent in the ground
      - b) to hear God's voice thundering His law, and cower in fear, asking not to hear Him anymore
      - c) to see God strike down Uzzah for touching the ark, and be afraid of God, and angry at Him for enforcing His law
      - d) to be afraid of what God will do to you, with no thought of Him saving you from His own wrath by His grace
    2. do not turn aside from following the LORD
      - a) when you get a glimpse of God's holiness, and His wrath against sin, you are tempted to go serve some easier god, some lower cause
  - B. What you would be doing if you turned aside from following the LORD (20)
    1. you would go after empty things
    2. you would go after things that are nothing
  - C. What good those empty things would do for you
    1. they cannot profit
    2. they cannot deliver/save

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
You are caused to realize your sins,  
You are warned not to do what you would do naturally in the flesh, and

### III. You Are Urged to Fear the Lord and Serve Him

#### A. To fear the LORD (24)

1. Pattison: meaning with a deep sense of our accountability to Him
2. To be governed by thoughts of His awesome majesty, combined with hope that He will save You by His grace through Jesus Christ

#### B. To serve the LORD

1. in truth (24)
  - a) not pretending
  - b) not based on some made-up requirements
2. with all your heart (20)

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
You are caused to realize your sins,  
You are warned not to do what you would do naturally in the flesh,  
You are urged to fear the Lord and serve Him, and

### IV. You Are Reminded Why You Should Fear and Serve the LORD

#### A. For the LORD will not forsake His people (22)

1. for His great name's sake
2. because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people
  - a) if He had made us His people because of something about us, it would be subject to change
  - b) but He has made us His people because it pleased Him

#### B. The LORD has done great things for you (24)

1. Psalm 130:3-4 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? (4) But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.
2. He has covered your nakedness with clothes when you sinned in the garden of Eden
3. He has saved you from the great flood of His wrath by giving you a place in the ark that Noah built for you
4. He has saved you from the famine by providing you the food that Joseph stored up for you
5. He has brought you out of bondage in Egypt
6. He has given you His law at Mount Sinai
7. He has brought you in to the promised land and driven out your enemies before you
8. He has saved you from the lords of the Philistines by giving Samson the strength to bring down their pagan temple on their own heads

9. He has saved you from Goliath the giant by slaying Him with the stone David slung at him
10. He has brought you back out of exile in Babylon, to rebuild the temple under Zerubabel and to rebuild the wall under Nehemiah
11. He has sent you John the Baptist, to preach repentance from sin to you, to make you ready for the Lord
12. In the fullness of time, He sent forth His own beloved son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law
13. He poured out His wrath for sin upon His own dear Son on the cross
14. He raised His Son from the dead the third day
15. He has seated His Son at His right hand in heaven, and is now putting all His enemies under His feet
16. He has regenerated you on the inside by His Holy Spirit, so that you repented of sin and believed the Gospel of forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ
17. He has given you a living hope that on the last day, the Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will return to take us all with Him for eternal life

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
 You are caused to realize your sins,  
 You are warned not to do what you would do naturally in the flesh,  
 You are urged to fear the Lord and serve Him,  
 You Are Reminded Why You Should Fear and Serve the LORD, and

- V. You Are Provided a Minister Who Knows What to Do for You (23)
  - A. I will pray for you
    1. it would be sin not to
    2. “far be it from me” not to
  - B. I will teach you the good and the right way
  - C. This is what has guided me the whole time I’ve been your pastor
    1. not that I have done these things all that well
    2. not that I don’t aspire to do much better
  - D. This is what will guide me all the way

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
 You are caused to realize your sins,  
 You are warned not to do what you would do naturally in the flesh,  
 You are urged to fear the Lord and serve Him,  
 You Are Reminded Why You Should Fear and Serve the LORD,  
 You are provided a minister who knows what to do for you, and

- VI. You Are Warned Against Continuing in Wickedness (25)
  - A. The salvation of God is for those who repent

- B. Hearing all these wonderful things about God, do not mistakenly think that the blessings will come to those who persist in wickedness instead of repenting
- C. The man-made systems of the world will one day be swept away and burned; you will be swept away and burned with them if you persist in wickedness
- D. But I hope for much better in your case, that you will be among those who turn to the Lord and are saved

## CONCLUSION

When God is showing mercy to you as a congregation,  
You are caused to realize your sins,  
You are warned not to do what you would do naturally in the flesh,  
You are urged to fear the Lord and serve Him,  
You Are Reminded Why You Should Fear and Serve the LORD,  
You are provided a minister who knows what to do for you, and  
You are warned against continuing in wickedness

Dear congregation, whom I love, whom I cherish, God is showing you mercy, God is dealing with you in grace. You have realized your sins. Now do not do what comes naturally to the flesh, but fear the Lord and serve Him, because the Lord will not forsake His people, for whose salvation He has done so many marvelous things in Christ Jesus. I will pray for you, and I will preach to you, teaching you from the bible the way that is good and right. Only do not continue in wickedness.

**1 Sam 12:20 Do not fear**

Geneva:

He shows that there is no sin so great, but it shall be forgiven, if the sinner turn again to God

Poole:

with a servile and desponding fear, as if there were no hope left for you

Henry:

He would not that the terrors of the Lord should frighten them from him, for they were intended to frighten them to him  
that is, “despair not, fear not with amazement, the weather will clear up after the storm.  
Fear not; for, though God will frown upon his people, yet he will not forsake them

Gill:

he would not have them despond or indulge slavish fear

Henry:

The fixedness of God's choice is owing to the freeness of it; we may therefore hope he will not forsake his people, because it has pleased him to make them his people.

**1 Samuel 12:23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.**

JRY:

This devotion of Samuel must become more and more my devotion to the church.

Trapp [quoting Thomas Taylor]:

Whether a minister shall do more good to others by his prayers or preaching, I will not determine, saith one

Henry:

Note, It is a sin against God not to pray for the Israel of God, especially for those of them that are under our charge: and good men are afraid of the guilt of omissions. we sin if we restrain prayer in general, and in particular if we cease praying for the church.

“Fear not with a slavish fear,” but here, “Fear the Lord, with a filial fear.”

Ellicott:

the words he used on this solemn occasion tell out to all ages that the true function of the prophet or the preacher of the Eternal is to teach the people the good and the right way

EB:

God forbid that any Christian should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for the Church which He hath purchased with His own blood.

Acts 6:1-7

### **Is this rightly applied to pastors today?**

Calvin: Therefore, pastors . . .

Poole: the two great employs of a minister of Jesus Christ

Wesley: This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop

Gill: the principal employment of a Gospel minister

Ellicott: as afterwards of the bishops or elders of the Church

Barnes: We have here a view of what the apostles thought to be the proper work of the ministry.

### **Acts 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**

Calvin:

Therefore, pastors must not think that they have so done their duty that they need to do no more when they have daily spent some time in teaching. There is another manner of study, another manner of zeal, another manner of continuance (349) required, that they may (350) indeed boast that they are wholly given to that thing. They adjoin thereunto prayer,

There is no man which ought not to be careful for the common salvation of the Church. How much more, then, ought the pastor, who hath that function enjoined him by name to labor carefully [anxiously] for it?

we must always remember that, that we shall lose all our labor bestowed upon plowing, sowing, and watering, unless the increase come from heaven, (1Co\_3:7.) Therefore, it shall not suffice to take great pains in teaching, unless we require the blessing at the hands of the Lord, that our labor may not be in vain and unfruitful. Hereby it appeareth

that the exercise of prayer (352) is not in vain commended unto the ministers of the word.

Trapp:

If we were to preach only, saith the apostle, we could then wait upon tables; but the one half of our time is to be taken up in prayer, the other in preaching.

Poole:

the two great employs of a minister of Jesus Christ; to pray unto God for the people, and to speak unto the people from the Lord: these, though great businesses, they durst not delegate from themselves unto others to perform for them.

Henry:

Though this serving of tables was for pious uses, and serving the charity of rich Christians and the necessity of poor Christians, and in both serving Christ, yet the apostles would not take so much time from their preaching as this would require. They will no more be drawn from their preaching by the money laid at their feet than they will be driven from it by the stripes laid on their backs. While the number of the disciples was small, the apostles might manage this matter without making it any considerable interruption to their main business; but, now that their number was increased, they could not do it. It is not reason, ouk areston estin - it is not fit, or commendable, that we should neglect the business of feeding souls with the bread of life, to attend the business of relieving the bodies of the poor. Note, Preaching the gospel is the best work, and the most proper and needful that a minister can be employed in, and that which he must give himself wholly to (1Ti\_4:15), which that he may do, he must not entangle himself in the affairs of this life (2Ti\_2:4), no, not in the outward business of the house of God, Neh\_11:16.

Wesley:

This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop: to speak to God in prayer; to men in preaching his word, as an ambassador for Christ.

Clarke:

a minister who does not pray much, studies in vain

Gill:

the preaching of the Gospel, to which prayer is absolutely prerequisite, and with which it is always to be joined

These two, prayer and preaching, are the principal employment of a Gospel minister, and are what he ought to be concerned in, not only now and then, but what he should give himself up unto wholly, that his profiting might appear; and what he should be continually exercised and employed in

if parting with that branch of the ministerial function, the care of the secular affairs of the church, and of the poor of it, was necessary in the apostles, that they might be more at leisure to attend to the more important and useful duties of prayer and preaching; it therefore seems necessary that those who are called to labour in the word and doctrine, if



possible, should be exempt from all worldly business and employment; that of the ministry being sufficient to engross all a man's time and thoughts.

Bengel:

These are most noble functions, which no bishop can delegate to another, as though he himself were intent on more important matters.

Ellicott:

“Prayer” includes the public worship of the Church in all its various developments, as well as private prayer and intercession; the “ministry of the word,” all forms of teaching.

Barnes [as others]:

The word “ministry” *diakonia* properly denotes the employment of a servant, and is given to the preachers of the gospel because they are employed in this as the servants of God and of the church.

We have here a view of what the apostles thought to be the proper work of the ministry. They were set apart to this work. It was their main, their only employment. To this their lives were to be devoted, and both by their example and their writings they have shown that it was on this principle they acted. Compare 1Ti\_4:15-16; 2Ti\_4:2. It follows also that if their time and talents were to be wholly devoted to this work, it was reasonable that they should receive competent support from the churches, and this reasonable claim is often urged. See the 1Co\_9:7-14 notes; Gal\_6:6 note.

EB:

They laid down that there are diversities of function and of work in the Church of Christ; there is a ministry of the word, and there is a serving of tables. One class should not absorb every function; for if it does, the highest function of all, the ministry of the word and prayer, will inevitably suffer.

I often wonder how her clergy are now to fulfil this solemn vow, when frequently they have not a night in the week at home, save perhaps Saturday evening, and when, from early morning to late at night, all their energies are swallowed up in the work of schools, and clubs, and charitable organisations, and parochial visitations, leaving little time and still less energy for the work of meditation and thought and study. The clergy are the Lord's prophets, watchmen upon the walls of Zion. It is their great business to explain the Lord's will, to translate the ideas of the Bible into the language of modern life, to apply the Divine principles of doctrine and discipline laid down in the Bible to the ever-varying wants of our complex modern civilisation; and how can this function be discharged unless there be time for reading and for thinking, so as to gain a true notion of what are these modern wants, and to find out how the eternal principles of the Scriptures are to be applied to them?

JRY:

This will be something of a manifesto, a making known or making clear.

The Lord God has done all this for us.

We the church elders will do these two things primarily:

1. pray to God for you
  2. teach the word of God to you
- You, the rest of the members of the church should do these things

1. One sermon, or possibly more, from 1 Samuel 12:23-24 with Acts 6:4

This will be to take a look back at how the Lord has enabled you and me to minister here for these several years, and to express our intention to keep up this ministry of prayer and preaching, urging the congregation to consider what great things the Lord has done for them, and to serve Him with all their hearts.

2. Several sermons from Genesis 37 - 50 on Joseph as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ

I don't really know whether this will be closer to 3 or 4 sermons, or whether it will be a year's worth. I've started studying into it, but I don't know yet how it will develop.

3. Some mini-series from the gospels

-possibly the Lord's conception and birth

-possibly the Olivet Discourse Matthew 24-25

-possibly marriage, adultery, divorce, remarriage, singleness from Matthew 19

4. Study through 1 John.

I have not done any of the John epistles with the congregation, and I don't recall that you have either.