

DAY 2

³ And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."⁴ So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only.⁵ Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you."⁶ So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the Lord." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

1 Samuel 7:3-6

⁶ The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

Exodus 34:6

A.W Tozer has said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

The Israelites were unfaithful to God for many years. What made Samuel confident that if the Israelites were truly serious about coming back to God and worship Him alone, God would save them?

Samuel knew God.

It was not just that Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord (1 Samuel 2:21). When God first revealed Himself to Samuel through His spoken word, Samuel's response was to listen. (1 Samuel 3:10). Unlike Eli's sons, Samuel was a man who listened to God.

During the twenty years the Ark was in Kiriath-jearim, Israel mourned because it seemed the Lord had abandoned them (1 Samuel 7:2). But they were wrong. God had not abandoned them. In fact, it was God who made the Philistines return the Ark back to Israel (1 Samuel 5:6-7). Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, God remained faithful. He was patiently waiting for the Israelites to repent and return to Him wholeheartedly.

Dane Ortlund comments:

The Christian life, from one angle, is the long journey of letting our natural assumption about who God is, over many decades, fall away, being slowly replace with God's own insistence on who He is.

The fall in Genesis 3 not only sent us into condemnation and exile. The fall also entrenched in our minds dark thoughts of God, thoughts that are only dug out over multiple exposures to the gospel over many years.

Perhaps Satan's greatest victory in your life today is not the sin in which you regularly indulge but the dark thoughts of God's heart that cause you to go there in the first place and keep you cool toward Him in the wake of it.

'Gentle and Lowly' by Dane Ortlund.

God revealed Himself to Moses as “merciful and gracious” (Exodus 34:6). These are the first two words God uses to describe Himself. He then says that He is “slow to anger and “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” This is covenant language. It is God's way of saying that He will never give up on His people, nor forsake them despite having many reasons to do so. Unlike us who can only love to a limit, God's love is limitless. We cannot exhaust His mercy. Our sins may be great, but His grace is greater.

Samuel was confident that God would not reject the Israelites when they humbled themselves before Him. He knew his God. And sure enough, when the Israelites repented God gave them a victory they did not deserve.

In the same way, we are given the gift of salvation when we turn from our sin and trust in the finished work of Christ for our lives. And even though we are prone to wander in our journey of following Jesus, He will never turn away His heart when come back to Him in humble repentance. That is simply who God is!

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

APPLICATION

What does God want me to do?

PRAYER

Respond to God's Word by writing your prayer.
