

THE MAN WHO GOT FIRED, BUT WOULDN'T QUIT

Text: 1 Samuel 8:4-5; 12:22-23

INTRO: Samuel was the last of the judges of Israel & the first of its prophets. At the time of our texts, he was a near to an earthly king as the Israelites had so far had. He was the greatest leader to arise in the 300 years since the time of Moses.

I. SAMUEL'S QUALIFICATIONS AS JUDGE & LEADER.

A. He was born in answer to the prayers of a godly woman, who, in turn, dedicated him to God. She took him to live with & be trained by Eli the priest in the tabernacle of God, 1 Sam. 1.

B. While he was still a child, God spoke audibly to him & gave him a prophetic message for Eli, 1 Sam. 3:19-21.

C. The Israelites used Samuel's age & the misconduct of his sons to "justify" their desire to have a king--but in reality, they had no complaints against Samuel himself, 8:5; 12:1-5.

II. SAMUEL'S REACTION TO ISRAEL'S REJECTION.

A. He was saddened & displeased, 8:6.

1. God informed Samuel that Israel had not rejected Samuel as judge so much as they had in reality rejected God Himself as King, vs. 7.

2. Knowing Samuel as we do, it is unlikely that Samuel found any consolation in this fact. In fact, most likely this knowledge increased Samuel's sadness.

B. He was angry, 12:23. The fact that he made this statement shows that he at least considered ceasing to pray for them.

C. But we see Samuel's strength of character in the fact that his displeasure & anger did not provoke him to sin.

1. Many a man, many a woman, becoming displeased with some decision of God's people, have allowed their hurt & anger to turn them completely away from their duties & responsibilities in the family of God. To do so is sin, vs 23.

2. Rather Samuel's attitude: I can't help you as judge. You've taken that away from me, but you can't keep me from praying for you & trying to teach you God's will.

3. God needs more servants in every generation who will refuse to allow others to keep them from faithfully serving Him.

III. THE RESULTS OF SAMUEL'S DECISION.

A. His right decision was good for himself. Any other decision on his part would most likely have insured that he would become cynical, hardened, withdrawn. Any other course of action would have brought Samuel to the grave as a sad, dejected, bitter old man.

B. As a result of Samuel's wise decision, other doors of opportunity were opened to him. He was recognized as the appointed leader of a company of prophets. Most reputable scholars believe that Samuel had established a school of prophets where young men could be molded & trained under the guidance of inspired teachers.

1 Sam. 19:20, Then Saul sent messengers to take David: & when they saw the group of the prophets prophesying, & Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, & they prophesied.

C. Finally, Samuel's decision was good for his nation.

James 5:16, effective fervent prayer

1. His godly influence may have accomplished more in his new field of endeavor than as a judge.
2. At any rate, even after Saul had been appointed as king, the people continued to have great respect for the power & influence of Samuel.

1 Sam. 16:4, So Samuel did what the Lord said, & went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming & said, "Do you come peaceably?"

3. Samuel reminds me of the slave who was beaten by his master

for wasting time in prayer and inciting other slaves to pray up into the night. Finally, somehow, that slave-master came under the influence of the gospel. The first thing he did was to find that old slave & apologize for having mistreated him, & to ask that slave to pray for him. The slave replied, "Masser, I've been praying for you ever since I got here."

CONCLUSION: Let each of us resolve to do with our might what our hands find to do in the service of God--and to let no man or group of men keep us from doing so. If someone has wronged me, or hurt my feelings, or made me angry, let me say with Samuel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good & the right way."

La Porte, TX, January 31, 1982

Exton, PA, March 11, 1986

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, February 25, 1996