

# Keynotes from Steven Drivers pm Sermon on 13/3/2022

## 1 Samuel 2 v 12 > 4 v 1a Series: "The real King" Part 4"

### "Taking God at his Word"

#### Scripture references from the ESV

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.<sup>2</sup> At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. <sup>3</sup>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.<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.<sup>8</sup> And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

**Please**

**read 1 Samuel 2:12 – 4:1a in your Bible**

What does it mean for you to live out the Word of God? This is a question we ought to ask ourselves regularly, though we often answer it wrongly. We tend to think that living out the Word on a day-to-day basis means a long list of things we ought or ought not to do. This is a mistake, and we need to understand what the Word truly is and what it means for us not just when we read the Bible in our quiet time but as we live out what it has to say.

**There is a problem with the Word, and that problem is us!**

We are the problem, but God provides the solution. How do we create the problem?

1. **We distort the word or completely ignore it.** (1 Samuel 2:12-17 see p4). Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas, are priests, directly descended from Aaron. As such,

they would have known the roles and functions ordained for priests by God in the first 5 books of the Bible. They would be the ones who put into practise the sacrificial system on behalf of Israel that was the means of atonement. In their day, they were seen as powerful people who carried out God's instructions. Yet the first thing we learn about them is that they are worthless (2:12). God has weighed the actions of these priests (1 Sam 2:3 see p4) and declared them to be worthless. Why was this?

- a) **They didn't really know God.** They had knowledge and knew of him, but they didn't have a relationship with him. This can apply to us too and we need to take care to avoid the trap.
- b) **They distorted the and manipulated the sacrificial system, that beautiful foreshadowing of Christ.** They did this for their own gain. Today we see this in churches that distort the Word of God, only keeping the bits that help them to be popular in today's culture, or allow them to fill their own pockets as in the case of the prosperity gospel.
- c) **They are sleeping with the women who worked at the temple** – a huge moral issue, though our culture would probably not find this shocking. Hophni and Phineas were making a mockery of the tabernacle of God.

The house of God was becoming a house of scandal and at the heart of it was the fact that:

### **They were ignoring God and ignoring his Word**

God rightly counted them worthless.

Eli is not much better than his sons. He rebukes them, certainly, (1 Sam 2: 22-25 see p4) but it is a feeble rebuke. He should have fired them and banished them from the temple. He failed to administer God's Word-based discipline to his sons. He put them above God, and protected his sons at the cost of dishonouring God, to the very real detriment of his people. Eli only really cites the moral issue. He ignored what his sons were doing with

the sacrificial offerings, because it appears that he gained from it. When he dies, we are told that he was heavy! (1 Sam 4:18 see p4).

**He had a distorted view of God and so was distorting the word of God for his own gain**

Because Eli wouldn't administer judgement on his sons, God does. Indeed, he promises to bring judgement not just on Eli's sons but on his whole household, as he will on all those who do not take him at his Word. That is the message from God to Eli.

In our culture today, we have people who completely ignore God and his Word, but even we, though we are God's people, do the same. We distort God's word when

- we want to try to make the Bible more accessible and inclusive for our friends.
- we take one doctrine and utilise it to the detriment of another. We might focus on unity in the church (very important) but then choose to ignore the need to rebuke or correct a fellow believer for fear of undermining that unity.
- We think I must do better to make God like me, or God doesn't care if I go on in a particular sin

**There is a problem with the Word of God and the problem is simple - it is us!**

We may try hard to put into practise sermons from Sunday, go to every meeting we can and always do our daily reading, but we quickly fail to live out what we have felt convicted about. We all fall short of the glory of God by distorting, ignoring or forgetting his Word. Just like Eli and his sons, we deserve God's just judgement. We are counted as worthless based on our works, just as they were. v1 (above) tells us the result for God's people.

**God wasn't speaking because no one was really listening.**

We have the full word of God in our Bibles, but how many of us really let that word do a work in us? Are we ignoring inconvenient truths about ourselves or distorting it so that we don't really deal with the issues and repent? Does it seem

that God isn't speaking through His Word? We are the problem on the receiving end but

**2. There is a solution and that solution is IN the Word.** There are unexpected glimmers of hope in this passage. (1 Sam 2:18-21, 26, 3:1). God is raising up the solution that God's people should be asking for. He is raising up Hannah's child, the child whose name means 'asked for'.

**Ch 3** (above) shows us that Samuel is already ministering to the Lord, doing what Eli and his sons should have been doing. He is lying down in the Lord's temple where the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, resided. Samuel was finding rest in the presence of God. Elkanah was his biological father, and Eli and adopted father figure, but Samuel is finding rest in the presence of the Father of all. When you understand the sovereignty of God, you find rest in him.

**The Word of God that has been ignored and distorted is now breaking through, and is going to be heard.**

Samuel becomes a new Moses – notice the echo of the burning bush encounter in the repetition of 'Here I am'. When God's people were far away, God raised up his prophet to speak his Word to draw them back to him. God will speak his word and it will make the ears of all who hear it tingle. It will do a work beyond just hearing – it will draw this nation back to him. His glory is going to be made known through this word.

Samuel neither distorts nor ignores the word he is given. He might have been fearful about giving Eli the message from God, but he still did it. Thus, the Word came through his prophet, and by the start of Chapter 4, the situation has moved from the word being rare to the word ruling God's people, drawing them back to him.

**The solution for Israel came through God's Word.**

**The solution for us comes through God as the Word made flesh**

Though we have the physical word in our Bibles, we too are living in darkness and counted as worthless. Along with all of creation, we distort ignore and forget his Word. Samuel could not solve this problem for Israel. He only came as a

forerunner, a witness to testify concerning the light, according to the Word God had given him. Later God stopped speaking for 400 years, until John the Baptist came as another forerunner to point us to the true light. (**John 1:1-5** see p4)  
God brought himself low to raise up all who put their trust in his Word. The Word made flesh came not to condemn but to save those who deserve to be condemned. Like Samuel:

- Jesus was born not just of someone who couldn't have children, but of a Virgin
- Jesus grew in stature in the Word, and proclaimed the Word

Jesus was the true prophet of the Word, but he was so much more than that. He fulfilled the Word, living it out perfectly. He is the perfect great High Priest who doesn't distort the Word for his own gain. He didn't steal the sacrifice. Rather he became the sacrifice once for all on the cross, taking on the sin of all mankind and freeing his people from the slavery of sin. The light is not dim. It is shining out for all to see and to come to through the power of the Spirit. Samuel transformed Israel for a time under the Word of God. Jesus transforms his people for all time as the Word of God. yet we are not saved by our obedience to the Word nor do we gain favour with God by our works.

**There is a problem with the Word. The problem is us. There is a solution in the Word.**

**The solution is Jesus.**

**3. There is new life because of the Word.** When we put our trust in Jesus, does this mean we do not have to bother following the Word? A follower of Jesus is following the Word, because the Word is who you are following. We are joined with this Word, set free from sin and now have new life in him (**Rom 6: 3-11** see p4)

In this new life, we are priests administering the Word as we become living sacrifices. ( 1 Peter

We are in the line of the prophets who spoke out the Word of God faithfully. We are called to go and make disciples, proclaiming the good news of the Word. We

are to live out the Word, tell the Word and enjoy the Word, finding the same rest that Samuel did, lying in the presence of his Father. It is not about doing.

We are to be what we are – the children of God:

- finding rest in the presence of God and saying 'Here I am.' 'Speak for your servant hears'
- opening the gift of grace that is God's Word and dwelling in it, enjoying what he has to say to us even when that convicts us because he does not condemn us
- letting him show us where we are ignoring or distorting his Word, so that he can draw us to repentance through his grace.

We are called to live out the Word on a daily basis, but on a daily basis we fall short and that is the point.

When we fall short, we can come to him and he meets us with open arms and shows us again his love and mercy, made known through his Word. We can come to the fountain of grace and be restored.

- In the Word made flesh, there is now no condemnation.
- In the Word made flesh, we receive new life
- In the Word made flesh, we are being drawn to him in full assurance

### **In the Word made flesh there is grace everlasting**

**1 Samuel 2:12-17** Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. <sup>13</sup> The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, <sup>14</sup> and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. 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. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and 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." <sup>16</sup> And if the man said to him, "Let them 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." <sup>17</sup> Thus 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.

**1 Sam 2:3** for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

**1 Sam 2: 22-25** <sup>22</sup> Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>23</sup> And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. <sup>24</sup> No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. <sup>25</sup> 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.

**1 Sam 4:18** As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy.

**1 Sam 2:18-21, 26**, Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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." So then they would return to their home.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

<sup>26</sup> Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

**John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**Romans 6:3-11** <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self<sup>[a]</sup> was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free<sup>[b]</sup> from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will

never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.