

Samuel's Faith: Speaking God's truth to power

Ponder: Bold faith

Scripture: "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you . . . But now your kingdom shall not continue" (1 Sam. 13:13-14, NKJV).

Have you ever thought of Samuel as a great example of faith? Hebrews 11:32 includes him as one whose faith is worthy of our imitation.

Samuel lived in the territory of Ephraim, but was a priest by lineage, descending from Moses' brother, Aaron. As a young child, he began to learn about trusting and obeying God while serving Eli, the High Priest at the Tabernacle (1 Sam. 3). Much could be said about his faith, but one outstanding quality is his fearlessness in speaking God's truth to power.

Eli had some positive characteristics, but his sons behaved in gross ungodliness and immorality, and Eli failed to restrain or discipline them. God called young Samuel to deliver His word of condemnation to the High Priest. With Eli's encouragement, Samuel faithfully related God's denunciation to this powerful man. This early episode of courageous faith served Samuel well in his later life.

After warning Israel that they would regret demanding a king, Samuel anointed Saul as Israel's first king. Saul began well, but soon strayed from God. Before going into battle against the Philistines, Saul fearfully and impatiently took it upon himself to offer a burnt offering to God. Only Levite priests were authorized to sacrifice, and Samuel had told him to wait for him. As king, Saul had life-or-death power over his subjects. Nevertheless, Samuel boldly reprimanded him, as seen in the Scripture quoted above.

Saul blundered again by failing to destroy the Amalekites completely (1 Sam. 15). As Saul tried to rationalize his sin, Samuel bluntly ordered the king to "Be quiet!" (v. 16). Then he delivered a scathing rebuke from the Lord, ending with these words: "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king" (v. 23).

Too often God's people timidly refuse to speak the truth to power. Let's be like Samuel, who boldly delivered God's word regardless of anyone's worldly status.

Song: "I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord"

Prayer: Almighty God, please strengthen us to plainly deliver your word to all who need to hear it, regardless of their station in life. In Jesus' name, Amen.