

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

The people of Lystra were so dazzled by Paul and Barnabas that they called them by the names of two Greek gods. What were the names?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Nisroch - 2 Kings 19:36-37

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Samuel: An Ebenezer In Israel

Shane Carrington

It was a nation at war, pursued by the dreaded and powerful Philistines. As they approached, Israel cried in despair to their God-given vindicator and judge, Samuel: "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 7:8). They knew Samuel's faith in and favor with God. At this request Samuel offered sacrifice, appealing to God for refuge. "And the Lord answered him ... The Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel" (vv. 9, 10). Israel won this battle so resoundingly that they received few problems from the Philistines for quite some time.

In memorial to God's grace on this occasion, Samuel set up a stone—Ebenezer—saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us" (v. 12). Ebenezer literally means, "stone of help." and God certainly was their Rock of strength. But because of his faithfulness toward God and trustworthiness among the people, we could say Samuel was also an Ebenezer in Israel—a rock of strength for the

people of God. Let's consider and learn from the following events of faith in Samuel's life.

Faith Instilled

In most cases, faith begins early. Samuel's parents both revered God, but they had him only a short time—a few years at most. Yet his service in God's tabernacle surely build his faith. "Samuel ministered to the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod" (1 Samuel 2:18). It takes faith to work in God's service, but it also strengthens faith. Like physical exercise strengthens the outward body, laboring in spiritual activities strengthens the inward person. Meaningful spiritual practices developed in childhood under the loving teaching of godly adults prepare children for time and eternity (Proverbs 22:6). Work with them in spiritual activities: praying, studying, and doing works of service for others. These increase their faith—and ours. Samuel's upbringing equipped him to serve God in wonderful ways.

Rebuking A Nation And Her King

Samuel loved the Lord, His word, and his nation too much to allow sin free reign. This sometimes brought him into conflict with his own people. When the nation became idolatrous, he rebuked them (1 Samuel 7:3–6). When King Saul strayed, he confronted him with the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 13 and 15). Samuel refused to let fear of rejection hinder him. He feared God rather than man.

Also, Samuel used no deceptive tactics, backbiting, or sayings too subtle for the people to understand. In plain language he told them their sin and the changes they needed to make. He possessed faith in God's word—that speaking it plainly and forthrightly could change the hearts of honest men and women from sin back to God.

But his faith in God's word also moved him to speak it whether people would accept or reject it. Have the same fearless disposition of faith: wanting to save everyone you can by speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 16), but realize that we must speak truth whether people receive it or not (2 Timothy 4:1–5).

“God Sees Not As Man Sees”

After Saul's fall, God sent Samuel to anoint a new king from the sons of Jesse. Samuel quickly decided which son he thought God would choose. But God responded by saying, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Seven of Jesse's sons passed by, but God selected none of them, so Samuel asked if there were any others. Then he met David, and God chose him as king.

Samuel learned an important lesson about faith that we also need to learn well: faith is often contrary to human reason. We might evaluate a person or situation one way and God another, but trust His judgment above your own. God never errs; we often do. Trust whatever God teaches, whether it seems reason able to you or not.

Conclusion

By faith Samuel was an Ebenezer—a rock of help—in Israel. These events in his life exemplify the kind of faith we need today. Like Samuel, trust God and His word, stand up for right and against wrong, and strive to instill these values in your children. Then, like Samuel, your character will be strong, your influence for good will be widespread, and your eternal reward in heaven will be assured.