

Eli's Wicked Sons

1 Samuel 2:12-36; Galatians 6:7-8; John 1:14

INTRO:

- Last week in Student Ministry we showed the students the Bible Project intro video to 1 Samuel (really good videos if you aren't familiar)
- It looked at Hannah's prayer, which we touched on last week and highlighted this verse:

1 Samuel 2:7-8

*The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,
and on them he has set the world. (ESV)*

- That intro video rightly pointed out that the God exalting the humble and bringing low the proud is a main theme in 1 & 2 Samuel (and the whole Bible)
- God humbles proud Goliath and exalts humble David. God humbles proud Saul, and raises up a king after his own heart.
- Last week, God brought Peninnah low as he elevated humble Hannah
- Today we will see much of the same: God predicts ruin for the proud, while increasingly positioning the humble in the next place of leadership over Israel
- A key theme in this passage is the idea of sowing and reaping. Galatians says that if we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption, but if we sow to the Spirit we will reap life.
 - As we go through these stories, think about this theme of sowing and reaping
 - What can you learn from the examples of the characters in this story?
 - What do these stories teach you about parenting and raising up the next generation of healthy disciples?
- Next Gen Multiplication is a primary focus this year → what can we glean from 1 Sam?

1 Samuel 2:12-17

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. 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, 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

INTRO: sets the stage for us

- Worthless men. Pretty direct.
- Religious in their duties, but God is far from their hearts (like so many in today's world)
- They knew the priestly duties, but it was all a charade
- As Jesus said many years later, "You shall know their falsehood by their fruit / lives"
- These men are crooked, corrupt, scoundrels
- They exploit their priestly position for personal gain
- They violate the sacred offerings

<p>came there. 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." 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." 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When offering a fellowship sacrifice, the fat is burnt on the altar, and portions for priests and worshippers are prepared for a sacred meal (Lev. 7:28–35). However, Eli's sons, dissatisfied with their portion, selfishly take more, targeting the best cuts. Their greed affects all who sacrifice at Shiloh. - The priests weren't allowed to eat the fat, but these guys didn't care
<p>1 Samuel 2:18–21</p> <p>Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. 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. 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>CONTRAST w/ SAMUEL (always look for contrasts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the midst of this, the passage contrasts the character of Samuel and his family - They continue to come up every year - God hears their prayers for more kids - As Eli's sons grow in wickedness, Hannah (Grace / Favor)'s son grows in the presence of the Lord - Samuel is serving the Lord even as a child. No junior HS, guys. Let's empower our young people, not hold them back - Young people: stop using your age as an excuse to not take God seriously! - We need to equip and empower others
<p>1 Samuel 2:22–25</p> <p>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. And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While God is visiting Hannah with favor, he is visiting Eli with warnings (CONTRAST) - Eli, their father and the high priest, hears about the evil deeds of his sons. Did he really not know before? ALL OF ISRAEL knew - These guys are scum. They leverage their power for exploitation and sexual crime - They deserve to be removed from the job, even killed in OT Law - Instead, Eli rebukes them but fails to take any action to correct their behavior. - Here is a dad who isn't doing a very impressive job! Even if he was a good guy, something is off - BUT, he does say something right on, : who will intercede between God and man? That's supposed to be the role of the priest, but what if the priest needs the intercession?

<p>1 Samuel 2:26</p> <p><i>Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.</i></p>	<p>CONTRAST w/ SAMUEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While Eli's wicked sons go from bad to worse, Samuel continues to grow (become great) - Grows in stature (physically) and in favor (spiritually) → BAP: Pray this for your kids! - God is raising Eli's replacement.
<p>1 Samuel 2:27–36</p> <p><i>And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel (1) to be my priest, (2) to go up to my altar, (3) to burn incense, (4) to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your</i></p>	<p>JUDGMENT on ELI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God sends some random, nameless guy to pronounce judgment (love nameless ppl) - This is the first time a prophet is mentioned since Gideon, and the fact that God doesn't talk directly to Eli is already a little cringe - God is phasing Eli and his family OUT - Eli is rebuked b/c the priestly responsibility (highlighted) is a privilege! - 1. **To be my priest:** This signifies being appointed as a mediator between God and the people, responsible for conducting religious rituals and upholding sacred laws. - 2. **To go up to my altar:** This symbolizes drawing near to God in worship and seeking His favor through sacrificial offerings at the central place of worship. - 3. **To burn incense:** Burning incense represents the act of prayer and worship, with the rising smoke symbolizing the ascent of prayers to God's presence. - 4. **To wear an ephod before me:** Wearing the ephod signifies the high priest's authority and divine appointment, serving as a distinctive symbol of the priestly office during religious ceremonies. - Eli treats it with SCORN - Scorn is to kick at, like an animal trying to buck out of a yoke - It's not just that Eli is lazy, his heart has disdain for the things of God b/c he has made his sons an IDOL - Contrast this with Hannah. She "lends" Samuel to God as a steward. Eli "honors" his sons above God - Good parenting is stewardship, not idolatry - We are gonna come back to that... - The one who is spared looks forward to much later and then into 1 Kings with a priest named Abiathar who is, ultimately, replaced by a new "household" - He is going to be replaced by Zadok, who

house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."'"

becomes a type of Christ, so to say (sign post)

- What's the proof for Eli that this is gonna happen? His sons are gonna die the same day. Bad news, bro.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS? WHAT DO WE DO? Galatians 6:7-8

Summarize: This passage serves as a warning against corruption, lack of discipline, and complacency within religious leadership. It also foreshadows the transition from the corrupt priestly leadership of Eli's sons to the faithful leadership of Samuel.

It highlights the moral decay within Eli's family, the consequences of their actions, and the contrasting faithfulness of Samuel. We see a biblical principle here of sowing and reaping.

Characteristics of God: *Galatians 6:7a, Do not be deceived: God is not mocked*

- **God is righteous and just:** Just because God doesn't immediately drop the wrath hammer doesn't mean he doesn't care. We see God's patience as time to repent, but don't be deceived. God is not mocked. He knows what's going on.
 - Just because the world doesn't know, your spouse doesn't know, your kids don't know → God knows. He's not an idiot.
- **God values obedience and reverence:** God is merciful, not giving us what we do deserve, and gracious, giving us what we don't deserve, but he also smiles on faithfulness
- **God exalts the humble and brings low the proud:**
 - He exalts the humble who have the right heart (Hannah, Samuel)
 - He brings low the proud who thumb their nose at God (Eli's sons)

Biblical Action Principles: *Galatians 6:7b, ...whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*

- *Galatians 6:8a, For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption;*
 - Eli's sons face severe consequences for their disobedience
 - They sow flesh, they reap corruption and judgment
 - We look out on this wicked world and wonder, "How long, O LORD?" Don't worry, God is not out of the loop (like Eli supposedly was). God sees it. He knows.
- *Galatians 6:8b, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*
 - The alternative is to sow faithfulness, humility, a heart that is fixed on God
 - Samuel is contrasted with the sons of Eli as one striving to have the right heart and do the right thing. That kind of life reaps blessing b/c God is gracious

Tips for Parenting: *John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- **PARENTING TIP: Sow Truth**
 - The story emphasizes the failure of Eli as a parent in not disciplining his sons.
 - If you want to be a good parent [discipler], you need to speak truth to them

- There needs to be consequence for actions
- Proverbs says to TRAIN up your child in truth so they know the right way to go
- It also says to DISCIPLINE them for spiritual and moral development
- Proverbs 23:13–14
 - Do not withhold discipline from a child;
if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.
 - If you strike him with the rod,
you will save his soul from Sheol. (ESV)
- Let's get controversial: Pop-psychology hates this. You might have strong opinions. I am not telling you to hit your kid with a stick. I will say this, discipline / consequences for misbehavior is a biblical expectation and command
- The goal here is not venting your parental anger. The goal is not behavior modification b/c your kid is scared of you. The goal is character development and training. The idea is that our kids must learn that bad decisions have consequences b/c we are trying to equip them for life!
- PARENTING TIP: Sow Grace
 - At the same time, we are called to be people of grace.
 - God is the perfect parent. He parents us perfectly and we are still a mess. There's no silver bullet here, or magic formula
 - You need to know - I mean KNOW - that the Law cannot accomplish everlasting heart change in your kids.
 - Only grace, only the gospel, can change your child
 - Law is like a fence to keep them from being a complete trainwreck, but grace is the only thing that can change their heart in the long haul
 - As parents we need to be people of TRUTH, but also people of GRACE
 - We need to be parents who DON'T always give our kids the consequence they deserve, but sometimes do! Lord, give us wisdom!
- PARENTING TIP: Be what you want your kids to become
 - You look at Eli's sons and you can help but wonder, "What's Eli like?"
 - So much of parenting is modeling. Do you want your kid to manage their money? Manage yours. Not scream? Don't scream. Not punch walls? Don't punch walls. Go to church as an adult? Don't come once a month and skip for every sport activity and scouting event. Read their Bible and pray? Let them see your reading and praying.
 - Model what you want in your kids. It's one of the best things you can do
 - Remember: Nothing is a formula. These are PRINCIPLES, not rules. Just b/c you love Jesus doesn't mean you won't have problems, but they are still good ideas
- As for us all: Sow to the Spirit, not the flesh. It's the best decision we can make.

NEXT GEN: "I don't have kids.." Timothy? Barnabas? Paul?