

Date: 05.04.2020

Time: 11am

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Scripture: 1 Samuel 2: 12-36

Outline:

- a) Introduction
 - 1. Awesome privileges
 - 2. Dramatic failures
 - 3. Neglected principles
 - 4. Encouraging contrast
 - 5. A Faithful Priest

- **Introduction**

The Bible is an honest book; it doesn't hide the truth, even when it makes us uncomfortable – this shows us God's honesty.

There is no perfect Christian or church – there will be failure. The Bible shows us this.

- 1) **Awesome privileges**

Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas were priests of God, from the family of Aaron. Eli's sons were not faithful. God sends a prophet to speak to Eli and to remind him of the privileges that were his.

God's revelation: God reminds this family that God has revealed Himself to them in a special way. He reminds Eli of the special intimacy in relationship between God and this family. The priests had the privilege of being often in God's Word and in worship, to know God better.

God's choice: God reminds them that He has chosen them. This family were chosen to be priests by God in His sovereignty. They were not chosen because they were more holy or spiritual, but because of the sovereign free choice of God.

God' service: God chose this family to be priests to serve Him. They had the privilege of mediating between God and His people. Priests were men chosen for the privilege of helping God's people to come into the presence of God.

God's offerings: The people brought offerings to God. God had no need for what the people offered – the offerings were used as God's way of providing for His people, His priests after the sacrifice was

made. But despite God's provision through these offerings for this family of priests, they were not happy – they wanted more.

The New Testament tells us that we are God's priests. We are His servants. We're to be in His presence and to worship Him and to point the world to Him. We're to be praying for those who are unsaved around about us. We've been chosen, not because of our goodness, but because of God's sovereign grace. We have received the grace and apostleship to serve God.

2) Dramatic failures

Family before God: Eli gave his children a place that was not theirs, but God's in his life. He gave more honour to his children than to God. We read that Eli rebuked his children, but this was not enough – he should have banned them from the ministry. Eli was not loving his children by giving them what they wanted.

They didn't know God: Despite having the scriptures before them, Eli's sons did not know God. They knew religious rituals, but did not know God. They had no love for God, they just cared for themselves. There can be ministers who know about God without really knowing God. Think of Judas Iscariot – he knew about Jesus, but he didn't know Jesus in a loving way.

They dishonoured God's offerings: Eli's sons took from the offering of God. It wasn't enough for them to wait for God's provision from the offering for them. They robbed God. They treated the holy things, things consecrated to God, lightly.

They were immoral: These men lay with women serving God in God's house. They were worthless men.

They would not listen: they were warned, but they were unrepentant. They thought that they could keep going in their defiance against God. They failed badly.

We need to remember that we are sinful, failing creatures in need of God's grace. We need to keep praying for our ministers, for their protection and that God will keep them from falling.

3) Neglected principles

The importance of God-honouring worship: The worship of God is set apart for Him. We won't worship God perfectly, but we mustn't worship Him lightly. God cares about and is jealous for His worship. We might take His worship lightly, but He doesn't. Eli's sons treated the holy things of God lightly. Don't be like them.

The responsibilities from God-given blessings: With great privileges, comes great responsibility. The more that is given, the more will be required. He has done so much for us and it is absolutely right that we respond with faithfulness.

There is a point in God's providence and dealings when He says "enough" and when He stops softening a heart, and instead hardens a heart. God allowed this with Hophni and Phinehas. Jesus

speaks about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is resisting the Holy Spirit's ministry in our hearts. If we are guilty of this, then the life-giving gospel instead brings death. Don't keep hardening your heart.

God's mercy is wonderful and amazing and so is His grace. But don't abuse these things. You need to turn to God and repent.

4) Encouraging contrast

Earnest worshippers: Eli's family take God's worship lightly. Samuel's family sacrificed, even risked their lives to come to the house of God – they saw worshipping God as a precious thing.

Divine blessing: Eli's family received punishment. Samuel's family received great blessing. Hannah had been unable to have children, but God allowed her to have a family of her own.

Faithful child: Hophni and Phinehas rebelled against God. Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord. Hophni and Phinehas were unfaithful. Samuel was faithful. Samuel actually grew up in the same family as Hophni and Phinehas as Eli became his adoptive father. Yet the choices that Samuel made were so different from Eli's sons. This teaches us that if our children grow to know Jesus, this is God's work, not ours. May God grant us many more Samuels in spite of our failings.

5) A Faithful Priest

Israel needed a faithful priest – someone who would point them to God and mediate for them. No earthly priest could do this perfectly, but Jesus did.

Jesus has taken our sins and has made the perfect sacrifice for our sins and our salvation.

Thankfully, we no longer need to offer sacrifices to God as Jesus has made the perfect sacrifice. He has opened a way direct to God. He has in Himself provided a perfect, faithful High Priest.

Jesus is the foundation for our prayers, our fellowship and our worship. Come to Christ.