

A Farewell Call to Faithfulness

In 1st Samuel 12, Samuel stands before all Israel for his farewell address as his time as the public judge comes to an end. With the people now having chosen a king, Samuel reminds them—and challenges me—to consider the true cost of turning from God’s direct rule.

Samuel begins by saying, **“Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice; you have asked that I should set a king over you”** (1st Samuel 12:1, NKJV). He acknowledges his long journey with the people—from his early days at worship to the very present—and invites them to bear witness that he has always acted with integrity: never taking what was not his, never accepting bribes, and never oppressing anyone. His honest invitation, **“Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken?”** (1st Samuel 12:3, NKJV) is a challenge to each of us to examine our own lives for honesty and accountability.

As Samuel recounts the mighty works of the Lord—from leading Israel out of Egypt to raising deliverers like Moses, Aaron, and the judges—he gently reproaches the people for asking for a human king. In doing so, they effectively rejected the One who had been their true King all along. I find this deeply resonant. How often do I, too, lean on human solutions or leaders instead of trusting God’s sovereign guidance? Samuel’s words remind me that while earthly leadership can serve a purpose, only God’s rule brings lasting security and true freedom.

Samuel’s warning is clear: if the people—and by extension, if I—remain faithful to the Lord, obey His voice, and serve Him wholeheartedly, then both they and their king will prosper. However, if they turn aside to follow other gods or pursue vain things, then the hand of the Lord will come upon them, just as it did in times past. His call is not just to avoid sin, but to actively choose righteousness and reliance on God’s provision.

In a dramatic display during the wheat harvest, Samuel prays and the Lord sends thunder and rain. The people tremble, acknowledging, **“We have sinned”** (1st Samuel 12:18, NKJV). Yet even in their fear, there is a reminder that true repentance involves more than sorrow over consequences—it requires a real, turning back to God.

This passage speaks to me personally in several ways:

- **Examine My Priorities:** Just as the Israelites had to choose between following God directly or opting for an earthly king, I must decide daily where my ultimate trust lies. Am I seeking security in temporary, worldly things, or am I committed to following God wholeheartedly?
- **Practice Accountability and Integrity:** Samuel’s invitation to the people to challenge him if he ever acted unjustly is a model for my own life. I should be willing to examine my actions honestly, seek forgiveness when needed, and be accountable to those around me.
- **Embrace the Power of Prayer:** Samuel’s declaration, **“God forbid that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you”** (1 Samuel 12:23, NKJV), reminds me of the critical role prayer plays in the ekklesia and personal life. Consistent, heartfelt prayer keeps me connected to God’s will and protects me from drifting into error.

- **Remember God’s Faithfulness:** Just as Samuel recounted the many ways God had delivered Israel, I too can look back on my own “Ebenezer moments”—times when God’s help was unmistakably present—to build my faith for the future.

May this farewell message from Samuel inspire me to always honor God’s leadership in my life. Even as I navigate the complexities of modern decision-making, I am reminded that true, lasting security comes only from serving the Lord with all my heart. Let’s strive to remain faithful, accountable, and prayerful—trusting that God, who has been faithful in the past, will continue to lead and deliver us in every season.