

CCH sermon 3rd Feb 2019 1 Samuel 2:12-36

“Scoundrel Days”

SERMON INTRO

Front page- my first ever tape (1986)- Aha’s scoundrel days

V30- rest of ch2 today, but reading as we go!

▲ A good leader can make all the difference.

Lousy leader terrible- bumbling head/nasty boss/incompetent politician.

Honourable leader- can steer situation for everyone’s good.

▲ Chris Young was young primary school pupil in Corby in late 70s. His mum died, dad alcoholic. Miss Ward English teacher rescued him, turned his English grades around, and 40 yrs on he’s an author and has launched twitter campaign to meet her. Our leaders can do so much good/harm. So critical to know the difference, because we all follow.

This passage today about how

The Lord lowers lousy leaders

The Lord raises up honourable leaders

- Saw reversals last week
- Whole book reversals:
 - Judges (previous leaders) to Kings (new)
 - Saul (1st King) to David (2nd)
 - Today from Eli (old priest) Samuel (new)
- [PRIEST= mediator stand between God & man, sacrifices.]
- See the difference God makes to leadership
- and so crucial that whether leader or a follower (all follow- not just social media) follow the right leader!
- And that’s so why relevant (though 3000 yrs old)

GET BEARINGS:

- Cos long passage, read as we go in 2 chunks.
- As we do so see 2 big lessons (red at end)
- As we look at 7 little scenes.

READING 1- v12-26. I’ll explain few things as go along...

- As James reads- note the alternating good-bad.
 - Bad- Eli & his family
 - Good- Samuel young lad growing up.

1) V12-17 Greed & Contempt

- Increasingly serious greed in this verse
 - FOOD Take food for self v14. OK. Lev 7 allowed priests.
 - FAT v15. That was reserved for God. Used in worship animal sacrifices. Best bit (crackling) for God.
 - FORCE. V16
- V17 tells us what we should think.
- Not just greed, it’s contempt.
 - One thing to do this in fast food restaurant
 - Another to do it in house of God. Sacrifices.
 - Like us if we treat death of Jesus with lightness.
 - Shows reason why did it..
 - REASON: v12 no regard Lord
 - Lit: They didn’t know the Lord.

2) V18-21 Sam Growing up

- Contrast to these low lives and their dad, separate part of tent.
- New servant with his mum. Lovely touch mothers love.
 - Each year...“Haven’t you grown”
- Eli is weak, but not wholly bad (like his sons): Blessing.
 - Indeed 5 more children.
 - God has been gracious in answer to her prayer.
 - In fact her name means grace.

3) V22-25 Greed & Contempt

- V22 drops a real bombshell.
- 2:2 no-one holy like the Lord.
- So what are they doing, thinking that they can misuse God’s good gift of sexual intimacy.
 - Bible from start to finish, God kind, doesn’t want us to get hurt.

- Sex is for lifelong marriage between 1 man and 1 woman.
 - Totally abuse this gift.
- Sadly with power/fame/influence comes greater opportunity to abuse others, #metoo.
 - Tragically in religious world too.
- Irony here. Samuel “hears” god’s voice in ch3.
- All Eli **hears** is local gossip of his boys sowing their wild oats.
 - Rebuke, but pretty ineffective. Not strong leader.
 - NT can’t manage own household: not care for church.
 - ➡ *Can you pray for me, that I will be strong to rebuke when needed! Challenged by this quote DRDp37*
- WARNING v25.
 - There’s forgiveness for sins,
 - But to show contempt for the very sacrifices that bring forgiveness.
 - ▲ Like puncturing your own life raft. Like rejecting the very thing (or for us person- Jesus) who will save us.

4) V26 Sam Growing up

Just like a verse in Luke about Jesus- Luke 2:52 *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man*

- Under God’s blessing slowly growing upwards
- Little lad in Tabernacle. Could easily underestimate him.
- Just like it’s possible to underestimate Jesus Christ- the leader we need.

Thanks James- pls sit down. First big lesson.

➡ HOW WE NEED GOD HONOURING LEADERS!

- 2nd half of V30 our key verse.
 - We haven’t seen what God’s going to do to remove Eli and his sons (that is spelled out next), but it’s pretty clear. V30 God hates leaders who despise him.

- **Teens**- who are you going to listen to? Follow?
 - Impressive guys with power, food, muscle
 - or Jesus Christ, and then Christian role models (perhaps sometimes unimpressive leader) who is close to God.
 - We all need good leadership.
- **Adults** too- make sure you have the right person at the steering wheel of your life. Preferably Jesus.
 - Remember those ▲ferry disasters.
 - A bad captain can lead 1000s of people to their grave
 - And positively, a good leader (as we are going to have in Samuel) can turn the whole nation back on track
- Think about who you follow.
- But a word to those in **leadership** in some way.
- ▲ studied this passage for a conference while we were choosing elders for CCH, AND keynote speaker.
 - God was making v clear to me absolute importance of godly leadership
 - All 4 elders interviewed
 - Questioned about money, sex, power.
 - Our rel’n. Pleased to say no dealbreakers.
 - All came away with things to work on.
- Robert Murray M’Cheyne (Scottish minister): “My people’s greatest need is my own personal holiness”. Please pray for us.
- None of us is perfect.
- So grateful when a bible study leader in a diff church struggling with pornography came to get help.
 - Painful for him and wife,
 - Got good accountability
 - Lots of prayer and help
 - but he’s been clear ever since
- And there’s full forgiveness at the cross if we don’t scorn the sacrifice (which is what Eli’s family were doing).
- Not forget the wonder of whole sacrificial system.
 - Sacrifice that takes full force of God’s anger in my place.

Move to second half. Colin come and read the rest.

5) V27-34 **Lowering**

- Don't know who this nameless prophet was.
- But God speaks into the situation with clarity and authority.
- First about PRIVILEGES
 - Come as questions v27. V29. V29b. WHY?
 - Ancestor v28 speaking about Aaron.
 - Eli was incredibly privileged
- In v30-33 we see God rewriting the future.
 - cutting Eli and his family out of serving him.
 - It's a horrible prophecy of degeneration and distress.
 - And we can watch it unfold in the rest of the bible.
- The first of it will happen in chapter 4 in fulfilment of 2:34, a shocking sign. Eli, Hophni, Phinehas all die in 1 day.
 - H & P in battle
 - Eli falling off his chair and breaking his neck.
- V30 is going to happen.
- THOSE WHO HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR BUT THOSE WHO DESPISE ME WILL BE DISDAINED.

But it's not all doom and gloom! Need a bit of good news don't we?!

6) v35 Absolutely stunning! **Raising up!**

- Incredible ray of sunshine out of blue.
 - God won't just bring down bad leaders
 - He will raise up good leaders
- Who should be in the bracket?
 1. **Samuel?**

Yes. He's going to take over where Eli fails.
Great- a priest after God's own heart.
We'll have a king after God's own heart later in book.
But...
He is actually more prophet than priest.

2. **Zadok.** He was the priest who ministered before David from a diff part of the family tree.
3. Well ultimately **Jesus!**

Our high priest.
Mediator between God and man.
One who doesn't sin and lives forever.
A perfect bridge between God and man.

7) Last bit bad news v36

- Finishes with family line of Eli well and truly down in the dust.
- They will be begging the new priest for food and money
 - What irony.
 - What a reversal.
- What a fulfilment of Hannah's song
 - 1 Sam 2:5

FINAL BIG LESSON 2) HOW WE NEED JESUS OUR PERFECT PRIEST!

This passage points forward to earthly leaders, but it points so much further.

- I'm totally scuppered without Jesus.
- And you are too.
- But God has provided a bridge back to him!
- So as we prepare for communion.
- **We say sorry.**
- Perhaps someone been messing around with sin.
 - Comes a point where too late.
 - ▲ Eagle on ice before waterfall. Feet were stuck.
 - Think of your situation are you going to honour Christ or others or yourself.
- Perhaps some
- And we **turn back to our priest Jesus.**
- *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*
- Tell Jesus how much we need him
- How grateful we are for his sacrifice.