Water of Life Community Church
SAMUEL: A LIFE OF PRAYER
WEEK 3
1 SAMUEL 4-7

ICE BREAKER

PRAYER

WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

What we will see in 1 Samuel 4-7 is that we should not approach God with presumption as to how He will act or how He desires to be worshiped. When we approach Him in this way, He allows us to do what we want and suffer the consequences. However, even in our darkest moments, His presence rules and reigns. This is seen clearly as God continually reaches toward us in His mercy and restores what we have lost when we turn to Him with awe, gratitude, repentance and reverence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. READ 1 SAMUEL 4:12–5:5.

a. Why do you think losing the ark to the Philistines was a big deal to Eli and the Israelites? How did losing the ark reflect the spiritual state of Israel at the time?

b. How did God correct the Philistines' belief that their god was superior to Israel's (see v. 3-5)? How does this show Yahweh to be holy and unique among the gods of Israel's neighbors, and the only God worthy of worship?

2. READ 1 SAMUEL 5:6-12.

a. How do the Philistines' assumptions about God expressed in the passage parallel how people today think about God and worship Him?

b. What are some ways people in our culture and within our churches overlook the holiness of the God of the Bible?

3. READ 1 SAMUEL 6:1-21.

a. What does the Philistines' guilt offering and attempt to make reparations with God tell us about their attitude toward holy things or places? What does this reveal about humanity's knowledge of spiritual things since even non-Israelites found it intuitive to revere holy things and offer sacrifices?

b. How does verse 20 point to our need for salvation? How is Jesus ultimately the answer to the question raised by the men of Beth-shemesh in this verse?

4. READ 1 SAMUEL 7:3-17.

a. What "if . . . then" statement did Samuel give in verse 3? What specifically did Samuel indicate Israel's repentance would entail?

b. If the people had put away their idols, then why did Samuel also lead them to pray and fast (vv. 5-6)?

c. Is it possible for a person to truly turn to the Lord and not fully repent? Explain.

d. What might this kind of half-hearted relationship with God look like in the church today? In contrast, what would be involved in true repentance?

e. Read 1 Samuel 4:3-4. How did Israel respond differently in 1 Samuel 7:8 to the difficult battle they faced? Why?

f. What was the result of Israel's turning to the Lord for help in humble repentance?

g. Why do you think Samuel said "Thus far"? What was he wanting Israel to know about their present and their future?

h. Why did Samuel feel it necessary to set up a stone to commemorate this moment in Israel's history? Why is it important to remember how God has rescued us in the past? What are some ways we remind ourselves (and one another) of what God has done for us?

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

How can we avoid becoming presumptuous about God's presence and favor toward us like the Israelites did with the ark?

Chapter 7 can be outlined this way: repent (vv. 3-6), rescue (vv. 7-11), and remember (vv. 12-17). Which of those three words stands out to you the most personally in your own relationship with the Lord? Explain.

GOING DEEPER / WEEKLY CHALLEGE

REFLECT

- Take a moment and think about this: What areas in my life do I need to invite God to be the Lord over?

RESPOND

- This week, confess to the Lord the areas that you need healing in. Commit to taking one step towards healing (counseling, confession, community, etc).

Also… Subscribe to our e-devotionals by texting "edevotional" to 67076; or go to wolgroups.com and click on the eDevotional button for daily testimonies relating to this week's theme.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 7:3, New International Version (NIV)

So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

NOTES