

# (1 Samuel) God Blesses When We Get Right

by David Guzik

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and humility in getting right with God, and how this leads to victory and deliverance.*

**Duration:** 31:59

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3, 1 Samuel 4:3, 1 Samuel 7:4-5, 1 Samuel 7:8, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not relying on our feelings, whether they are good or bad. The Israelites made the mistake of trusting in their feelings in different situations, but the speaker encourages listeners to humbly do what is right before God and trust Him for victory. The speaker also highlights the difference between having faith in a lie versus having a little bit of faith in the Lord, stating that even a small amount of faith in God is stronger than a lot of faith in a falsehood. The sermon concludes by discussing the spiritual battle that Israel faced and the role of judges in leading the nation during the period of the judges.

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## Transcript

1 Samuel chapter 7, let's just jump right into it and read the first couple of verses and sort of pick up the context as we make it along. Then the men of Kireth-Jerim came and took the Ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Lord. So it was that the Ark remained in Kireth-Jerim a long time.

It was there 20 years, and the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. I want you to notice here that what we're ending here in 1 Samuel chapter 7 has been three or four chapters where it's been focused on the Ark of the Lord. Now, the Ark of the Covenant is something that you may have a picture of in your mind.

You may remember seeing that movie Raiders of the Lost Ark and this golden covered box that was to be a sacred memorial and a representation of the presence of God and the throne of God. Well, Israel had started to regard this Ark of the Covenant as sort of a lucky charm. And they were trusting more in the Ark of God than they were trusting in the God of the Ark.

And one day in the midst of a lot of battles with the Philistines, battles which the Israelites were losing, they said, well, let's take the Ark of the Covenant into battle with us. It was a very unwise thing because God wouldn't be manipulated in that way. And as it turned out, the Israelites were defeated severely in that

battle.

They thought, we can't lose if the Ark of the Covenant is with us. But they lost badly. And the Ark of the Covenant was captured and it went to the land of the Philistines.

And it stayed there seven months. And there was great discouragement and desperation among the people of Israel while the Ark of the Covenant was in the land of the Philistines. I mean, the thing that represented the presence and the throne of God in their midst had been taken away from them.

And there it was in the hands of their enemies. They had to think, you know, has God let us down? Are the gods of the Philistines stronger than the Lord God of Israel? This was a great problem for the people of Israel. But God knows how to take care of himself.

And God convinced the Philistines by sending a lot of plagues and disaster among them that they should send the Ark of the Covenant back to the Israelites. And that's exactly what they did. Now, in 1 Samuel chapter 7, the Ark of the Covenant has come back to the Israelites.

They took it, they put it in the house of Abinadab. They consecrated a man to be sort of a priest over the Ark of the Covenant. And it stayed there for 20 years.

Some 20 years went by and the Ark of the Lord was there at Kirith-Jerim. Look at what it says at the end of this period of time in verse 2. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. I find that significant.

Because I think it would have been easy for the people of Israel to blame, excuse me, a lot of other things for their problems. They may have been blaming the fact that for seven months they didn't have the Ark of the Covenant. You know, there they go, the Ark of the Covenant is in the land of the Philistines.

And they're thinking, well, you know, while it's in the hand of the Philistines, no wonder things are going badly for us. I mean, who can have God for them when the Ark of the Covenant is in the land of the Philistines? But when the Ark came back, did things get different? No, they stayed the same. And then they might have been thinking, well, I know why things are going badly for us.

It's because the Philistines are over us. It's because we're under the domination of the Philistines. They're beating us, they're subjecting us as a nation.

But you know, that wasn't the cause of their problem. They had the Ark of the Covenant back. They had enemies, but they were always going to have enemies.

Yet it came a period of time where Israel started lamenting after the Lord. And they had good reason to lament. Their cities were in ruins, their armies were defeated, and they were under Philistine domination.

Why? They had the Ark of the Covenant back, but their hearts were not right with God. Now, at this period of time, the prophet of Samuel comes up. And if you take a look at verse 3, it says, Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel.

You see, the prophet Samuel has been absent from this whole line of story about the Ark of the Covenant. I don't know if you picked up on that at all. We talk about the Ark of the Covenant going into battle, and going to the land of Philistines, and coming back to the Israelites, and going from one city to another.

Samuel is absent in the whole story. Why? Because I think Samuel was saying under the direction of God, he was saying to himself, Listen, all the while the Israelites are obsessed with the Ark of the Covenant, instead of the God of the Covenant, all of that time he goes, I can't do anything. But when their hearts start to turn after God, then I can do something.

And now their hearts are starting to turn after the Lord. Their hearts are lamenting after the Lord God. And so now Samuel can talk to them.

And this is what he does in verse 3. It says, Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Asherah from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only. And He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines. So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Asherah, and served the Lord only.

Now when Samuel comes back on the scene, he doesn't say, Well, now we can be right with God again because we have the Ark back. Or he doesn't say, Well, we have to defeat the Philistines before we can be right with God again and things can be good. No! Samuel says, The problem is, is that you're not right with God.

You need to get right with God again. Now, God had been doing this work in the heart of the people. They were ready to hear this message from Samuel.

And now he says, If you return with all your hearts and put away the foreign gods. Friends, he was calling them to repentance. Now, repentance has two aspects to it.

There's an inward aspect to repentance, and there's an outward aspect to repentance. Both aspects are mentioned in verse 3. He says, If you return to the Lord with all your hearts. That's the inward aspect of repentance, right? You have to turn to God in your heart.

That's an inward thing. Nobody can see it. I can't see if you've turned to God in your heart.

You may be emotional. You may not be emotional. You may cry.

You may not cry. But where's your heart? Only you and the Lord really know that, don't they? So there's an inward aspect to repentance, but there's also an outward aspect to repentance. He says in verse 3, If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Asherah.

Put away the foreign gods. You see, that's the outward aspect of repentance. And we might ask ourselves, Well, which is more important? The inward aspect of repentance or the outward aspect of it? The answer is yes.

They're both important. I don't think you can really have one without the other. If you've really repented in your heart, it's going to show in actions, won't it? And if the actions are really there and have the right motivation, it will have happened in your heart.

I think the inward repentance comes first. That's why Samuel said first return with all your hearts. Then he says put away the foreign gods from among you.

But you see, inward repentance is a secret thing. Nobody can see it. It's hidden.

Yet the inward is proven by the outward. How could we know if Israel really did return with all their hearts to the Lord? By seeing if they would put away the other gods. That's what Samuel's telling them to do.

Serve the Lord only. Now, you see, what the Israelites wanted to do is something that many of us do, is that they didn't want to reject the Lord. Oh, no, they wanted to serve the Lord.

We'll serve the Lord, they said, but we'll just serve the Lord and Baal. We'll just serve the Lord and Asherah. God said, no, no, no.

You serve me and you serve me alone. Put away these other gods. And so the children of Israel did.

Did you read verse four? That's exciting, isn't it? So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Asherah and served the Lord only. That's marvelous. Now, if you know much of the Bible, when you read a verse like verse four, you know something good is going to happen to Israel.

They're finally getting down to what the issue is. The issue wasn't the Ark of the Covenant. The issue wasn't the Philistines.

The issue was their own hearts before God. And now, responding to the call to repentance that Samuel gave, now things are going to be set right. Now, we read that and we say, Baal, Asherah, what's the big deal? Ah, those stupid Israelites.

What's the charge in bowing down before a statue? Who cares about that? We're so much more sophisticated in our day. We'd never commit that kind of idolatry. Oh, yeah? Do you know why somebody would want to worship Baal? It wasn't because they got a charge from bowing down before a statue.

You know what the worship of Baal was all about? It was all about money. It was all about financial success. You see, because that was a period of time when almost everybody made their living by farming the land.

And they didn't have irrigation. They didn't have modern fertilizers. Friends, if you were a farmer and you wanted successful crops, if you wanted to make a lot of money and you're a farmer, you have to have good weather.

So what do you do? You do your business with the weather God. And Baal was the weather God. When an Israeli farmer burned some incense before a statue of Baal, he wasn't thinking, I love Baal.

He was thinking, I love money. Now, what about Asherah? Asherah was the goddess of sex and fertility. And so if you wanted to be sexually immoral, you would worship the goddess Asherah.

Isn't that funny? All that idolatry, that's way back in the days of Israel, right? We don't have people worshiping money and sexual immorality today, do we? Of course we do. The worship of Baal and Asherah is with us today. And God said, put it away and serve me only.

And that's exactly what the Israelites did. Now, I want you to see what they did next, because this is very important. Verse five.

And Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the Lord for you. I think this is interesting because on the one hand, you might say they've already repented, haven't they? They took the Baals and the Asherah and they put them away from them, right? They did that in verse four. But for Samuel, that's

not good enough.

Samuel says, no, it's not good enough for you to put away the bad. You have to pursue the good. You need to come to Mizpah with me and let's have a prayer meeting.

I'm going to pray for you. It's as if Samuel's saying, God is doing a work in your heart. God is moving in you, but you need to have that work completed and sealed, if you will.

You need to have that work completed and sealed by prayer. You know, that's why we have a prayer team up front here after services on Sunday morning. That's why we invite people to come on up for prayer.

It's not because we don't think God's doing a work in your life. And boy, you really need prayer because God's not doing anything in your life. We have a prayer team up here because we believe God is doing something in your life.

And you need that work to be deepened and completed and sealed by having somebody pray for you. That's what Samuel was saying. He was saying, come forward for prayer.

Come to Mizpah. Let me pray for you, is what Samuel was saying. He's saying it's not enough for you to put away the bad.

You need to pursue the good. Come to Mizpah and let's pursue the good together. And so the good was saying, Samuel, we need you to pray for you.

And look what else the good is in verse six. So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day and said there, we have sinned against the Lord.

And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. Frankly, got together there and Samuel told the people, you need to repent. You need to have a humble heart before God.

And so what did they do? Ceremony, they poured out water before the Lord. And they said, Lord, just as empty as this vessel is after the water has been poured out. That's how empty we are before you.

Just as wasted as this water is has been poured out upon the ground. That's how weak. That's how wasted we are before you.

We're humble before you, God. They humbled themselves before God. That was the good thing that they needed to do.

And so they humble themselves before the Lord and they fast. They say nothing else is important to us. Food isn't important to us.

We need to get right with God. And then they confess their sin. They said simply, did you notice that in verse six? We have sinned against the Lord.

That's a great way to confess your sin. No excuses. No yeah, but no.

Well, maybe I made a mistake. No rationalizations. Just look, we've sinned.

We need a forgiving God to forgive us. Father, forgive us. We have sinned against the Lord.

In our nation these days, we've seen an awful lot of kind of evasive apologies, haven't we? You know, people kind of asking for forgiveness without really asking for forgiveness, very carefully phrasing it. And, you know, here the Israelites give us a good pattern. They just simply say we've sinned against the Lord.

No excuses. No rationalizations. No blame on anybody else.

We've sinned against the Lord. This is exciting. The people of Israel are getting right with God.

They're not looking at the problem being, well, we don't have the Ark of the Covenant. No, they know that's not the oil. The problem is we've got enemies, the Philistines.

That's the problem. No, none of that's a problem. We need to get right with God.

And now they are. They put away the bad. They've done the good.

Praise God. Good things are going to happen, right? Well, yes and no. You know what's going to happen next? Attack.

See, I imagine that at this great gathering of Philistines at Mizpah, there was some, excuse me, great gathering of Israelites. There were some Philistine spies there. And the Philistine spies looked in on what the Lord was doing there.

And they looked in and the Philistine spies look over this great assembly of people there in Israel. And they're thinking, man, what a bunch of wimps. Look at them cry and wail before their God.

Look how depressed they are. What a bunch of weaklings. Oh, I got to report this back to headquarters.

And so what do they do? You know, the spy goes back to, you know, the Philistine commanders. He says, listen, I'm telling you, we got to strike against these Israelites for two reasons. Number one, they're getting right with their God.

And we Philistines know when the Israelites get right with their God, bad things happen to us. So we better strike now. The second thing they say is, listen, these wimps are all crying.

They're all weak. They're just, they're nothing. You know, we need to wipe them out now.

They're weak. They're vulnerable. We can get them now.

And in the midst of getting right with God, what happens? Attack comes. Now, I've talked to people and they kind of say, you know what? Why should I even get right with God? Why should I even do what he wants me to do? Because I'm just going to get attacked by the devil. On the one hand, I kind of understand because nobody wants to be attacked by the devil, right? None of us want that.

But on the other hand, it's kind of like saying, you know, why should I let go of my bondage? Because, you know, then I can just get attacked again. Well, of course, the devil is not attacking you when you're in bondage. He has you.

He didn't have to worry about you. You know, the Lord wants you to walk in freedom and walk in the victory that he has for you. Now, notice what happens here.

Verse seven. Now, when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

So the children of Israel said to Samuel, do not cease to cry out to the Lord, our God, for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines. Now, let me ask you a simple question here. Did the children of Israel have any kind of confidence right now? No, no confidence.

They were afraid. Oh, we're going to get wiped out. All the Philistines are going to defeat us.

Oh, we're just it's gone. We're goners. They had no confidence.

Are they where the Lord wants them to be? Well, I think in their own respect, they are in the respect that simply saying they're repentant and they're humble before him. Now God can do something great. See, my friends, our feelings of confidence can be very deceptive.

Here are the Israelites crying out before God. Oh, Lord, you know, we're history. I remember back in 1st Samuel, chapter four, when the Ark of the Covenant came into the army camp of Israel, everybody was so excited.

They said, yeah, we're going to win. Yeah, there's no stopping us now. We've got the Ark.

We're going to beat the Philistines. And they're all confident. They're all this.

You know what? Was their confident well-based? No, their confidence was not based on anything solid or good. They were confident, but it was a false confidence. Now here they're not confident at all, but God's going to win a great victory.

You see, my friends, oftentimes we can't go by how we feel, whether it be good or bad. When the Israelites felt good in chapter four, they shouldn't have gone by that. When they felt bad in chapter seven, they shouldn't have gone by like that.

We just need to humbly do what's right before God and to trust him for the victory. Matter of fact, I would say that from an outward appearance, it looked like they had more faith in chapter four when they were superstitiously trusting in the Ark. Oh, they've got a lot of faith.

There's a lot of shouting. There's a lot of hallelujahs. Wow, that's a lot of faith.

And you know what? It was faith in a lie. And here in chapter seven, doesn't seem like they have much faith at all. But the little bit of faith that they do have is in the Lord.

Let me tell you, a little bit of faith in God is much stronger than a lot of faith in a lie. And that's what's going to happen here. Look at verse eight.

So the children of Israel said to Samuel, do not cease to cry out to the Lord, our God, for us that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines. Friend, this is the best thing they say of all in the chapter so far. I remember back in chapter four when they were talking about the Ark, they said, let's bring out the Ark that it may save us from the hand of our enemies.

They're not looking to the Ark for salvation anymore. They're looking to God. They want God to save them.

They know that only the Lord can do it because there's been a change of heart. They're not looking to the Ark anymore. They're not looking to the Philistines anymore.

Now, at verse eight, they're finally looking to the Lord. Cry out to the Lord, our God, for us, they say to Sam. OK, so Samuel does it.

Look at verse nine. Now, look at how Samuel begins his prayer. I just say everybody in this room, whenever you pray to God, you need to pray this way.

You need to begin your prayer with this verse nine. Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel and the Lord answered him.

Saying what, David? You're saying we need to sacrifice a lamb before we pray? Well, spiritually speaking, yes. I want you to consider the situation here, friends. The Philistine armies are attacking.

At the moment Samuel is offering the offering, the Philistine armies are attacking. It would seem like a useless thing to take the time to offer a lamb as an offering before God when you're being attacked. But Samuel said, no, this is more important.

I'm going to offer this lamb as an offering. Why? Think of that poor lamb, a suckling lamb. Do you know what that means? That means that that lamb was so young, it was still nursing from its mother.

That suckling lamb, who had never hurt anyone, who had never sinned itself, that suckling lamb had its throat slit, its blood poured out, its body cut up and its carcass burned. Why? Because Samuel and the whole nation of Israel were saying, this is what we deserve. This is the punishment that should come upon us.

Thank you, God, for accepting the punishment of this innocent lamb. But Samuel said, no, I'm going to offer this lamb as an offering to God instead. Now, do you see what I mean when I say you need to do this before you pray? You need to realize that you come to God because an innocent lamb was slain in your place.

That someone sinless and innocent was sacrificed and took the punishment in the place of you and I, who are sinful and guilty. And we come to God in light of what Jesus has done. And Samuel knew that he was coming in light of God's perfect sacrifice when he said, no, let's offer an innocent lamb.

So, friends, when we pray in light of God's atoning sacrifice, then we're ready to cry out to the Lord. We're coming to God because of what He has done for us instead of what we think we may have done for Him. And what was the result? Look at verse 9 again.

Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel and the Lord answered him. Friends, the battle isn't won yet.

The battle isn't started yet, but it's over because the Lord answered Samuel. So see what happens now, verse 10. Now, Samuel was offering up the burnt offering.

The Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. Isn't that spectacular? There's the Philistine army saying, we got them.

We got them right where we want them. The Israelites are saying, oh, no, we're going to get wiped out. Samuel's saying, don't worry.

The lamb has been sacrificed. I've prayed. God has heard.

The answer is going to come. And what does the Lord do? He thunders from heaven. And it frightens and confuses the Philistines so much that their armies are routed and the people of Israel win a great victory on that day.

Now, I want you to see that there were two significant miracles there. The first one was the sending of the thunder. I mean, that was a great miracle that God did.

And you know what? God did it for an important reason. God did it, number one, just to show the Israelites. Listen, I'm going to show you who's in charge.

You know, they put away Baal earlier in the chapter, didn't they? What kind of God did I tell you? Baal was the God of the weather. Matter of fact, a lot of times in these ancient pictures or sculptures that they have of Baal, he's holding a thunderbolt. You know what God's saying? Saying, listen, now that you put away Baal, I can show you the real God of thunder is.

And let me show you. Let me show the Philistines. Let me show you.

I'm going to just wail on these Philistines with some thunder and lightning right now. Let me say something else. God was doing another miracle at work here, not just by sending the thunder.

But it says here in verse 10 that he so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. Israel heard the same thunder that the Philistines did. But the Philistines had their hearts confused by the Lord.

And then they ran and the Israelites won a great battle. And you know what? If I was an Israelite on that day, I would have thought two things. I would have thought, Lord, you are so great.

This is such a great victory. We thank you, God. Thank you.

But I would have thought something else. I said, man, are we dumb? I would have said we spent 20 years trusting in the ark. We spent 20 years worrying about the Philistines.

When if we would have humbled ourselves before God like this 20 years ago, we could have had this kind of victory from God then, instead of going through 20 years of captivity. My friends, the Lord was making it very, very clear to the Israelites, trust in me. Don't worry about your enemies.

Don't look to yourself. Don't look to some superstitious object. Trust in me.

And when Israel did their business with the Lord, then the victory came. And it came in a big way. Look at verse 11.

And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and drove them back as far as below Beth-kar. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shenn and called its name Ebenezer, saying thus far the Lord has helped us. The name Ebenezer means stone of help.

And Samuel put it up in a certain place and said this is our stone of help. And to this far the Lord has helped us. I love that.

To this far the Lord has helped us. He's saying we know there's more to go. We can see more help that we need from the Lord.

The work's not done, Samuel said. The nation isn't where it should be spiritually. But God's done something and we want to thank him for what he's done.

We want to be able to say thus far the Lord's helped us. And you can say that in your life right now, can't you? You look at your life and you shake your head. Lord, I know there's so much more you need to do in my life.

It's easy to say. But can't you set up an Ebenezer stone right now and say, hey, thus far the Lord has helped me. I know what the Lord's done.

I know there's a lot more to do, but I know what the Lord's done. And every time you'd look at that stone, every time Israel looked at that stone called Ebenezer, they'd say, you know what? The Lord helps us and we can trust his past help is a promise of what he's going to do in the future. Well, look at how the chapter ends here, verse 13.

So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel from Ekron to Gath.

And Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also, there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. So Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

And he went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel in all those places. But he always returned to Ramah for his home was there. There he judged Israel and there he built an altar to the Lord.

You know, I think it's remarkable how this chapter ends. Because through this chapter, we've seen that the real battle that Israel had to fight was not with the Ark, was not with the Philistines, but it was a spiritual battle of them being in the right place with the Lord. And the last part of the chapter really shows us that it's a spiritual battle also.

Let me explain to you what I mean. The last part of the chapter explains Samuel's career as a judge. Now, there was a period of time for some 400 years in the nation of Israel known as the period of the judges.

It was a time when there was no king in Israel, but God would simply raise up a leader, a political leader, a spiritual leader, a military leader when it was really needed at the right time. And when God would raise those people up, God would bring deliverance for his people. Gideon was a judge.

Ehud was a judge. Deborah was a judge. And I think of a guy like Samson when I think of one of the judges.

I kind of think in my mind and compare the career of Samson and the career of Samuel. Both of them were judges of Israel, right? Both of them led the people of God in victories over the Philistines. But their careers were very different.

Samuel was a judge leading the nation in spiritual things. Samuel was not some great military genius. Samuel was not a big fighting man himself.

He was a spiritual man. Samson, on the other hand, he was a fighting man, wasn't he? Oh, man, could he fight? He was strong. He could whoop people.

You just read about the exploits of Samson and it's like, man, you say, I want to see the movie of his fights. Get up to heaven, check that one out at the video library in heaven. Better than any Bruce Lee martial arts movie you see in this whole world, man.

To see Samson take on 500 Philistines and kill them all with his bare hands. This is amazing. Let me ask you a question.

Samson was one kind of judge. He fought in the flesh. Samuel was another kind of judge.

He fought in the spirit. Which one was more successful? Samuel by far. Now, I'm not saying that Samson didn't do any good, and that the Lord didn't use him.

God did use him. But which one did more good for the nation of Israel? Which one led them to more and to greater victories? It was Samuel by far. And they each had their own weapons.

You know what the weapon of Samson was? He was the jawbone of an ass in one place. Takes this big piece of bone and fighting against the Philistines. Pow, whack, you know, all over the place.

They're like, some guy picks up something, just wipes them all out. Wow, you're so impressive, Samson. Look at what you can do with the jawbone of an ass.

There, wow, you're a mighty man. You know what Samuel's weapon was? At the end of verse 17. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

An altar is a place where sin is atoned for. An altar is a place where we lay down our own lives and sacrifice to God. An altar is a place where you meet with God.

Friends, I tell you, it would have been spectacular to see Samson in action with that jawbone. But Samuel was far more effective with an altar. I don't know what kind of difficulties or what kind of challenges you're facing right now in your life.

But I'm going to guess that you're kind of tempted one way or another. To kind of attack those problems the way Samson might. Or to attack those problems the way Samuel might.

I know it's tempting. And I know that the way that Samson would do it a lot of times seems to make more sense. Friends, I just ask you to consider who won the real victories here.

Who led God's people into the real kind of victory that he wants them to enjoy? Well, it was Samuel. Let's build a lot of altars in our life. And meet with God.

And lay ourselves down as living sacrifices before him. Which is our spiritual service. I think that's a tall order.

So we better pray and ask God to do that. Fathers, we're before you now this morning. We recognize so readily, Lord, our need for you.

We want to be just like Israel, Lord, where they cried out before you and recognized that if you didn't save them, they couldn't be saved. And we want that kind of repentance and humility of heart before you.

Father, along the same line, we don't want to trust in the kind of things that Samson trusted in.

Instead, Lord, we want to trust you. We don't want jawbones, Lord. We want altars in our life.

So, Lord, we come before you now. And we surrender our lives to you all over again. And we present to you our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Wholly acceptable in your sight. It's our reasonable service. Our spiritual service before you.

Thank you, Lord. We love you. We praise you.

And I ask, God, that you do the deep work of your spirit in our hearts right now. As we consider your greatness. Speak to us, Lord, in Jesus' name.

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