

Tuesday Vespers for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
1 Samuel 28:3-25
July 26th, 2022
ELDoNA Family Camp
Panama City Beach, FL
Pastor Jerald Dulas

When Saul Inquired of the Lord

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord God, enter not into judgment with us, who have not from the heart kept Thy commandments, but regard the precious merit of Thy dear Son, and let us ever be partakers of His righteousness. Enable us also by Thy Holy Spirit to walk in Thy fear, true faith, and holiness of living and to beware of pride and security, that we may not be cast into everlasting prison, but enter into Thy eternal Kingdom; through Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Throughout the first book of the Prophet Samuel, we are shown the decline in faithfulness of King Saul. Here in this chapter we are shown the bottom of his fall from grace. The Philistine army had once again gathered to oppress Israel. They had been oppressing Israel since the time of Samson over forty years before these events. We are told earlier in the First Book of Samuel that the Prophet Samuel had defeated the Philistines and that they no longer troubled Israel. But we are also shown throughout this book that the Philistines had made several attempts after Samuel had driven them from the land of Israel. Now, after the death and burial of Samuel in his home city of Ramah, the Philistines make one more attempt.

King Saul upon seeing the army of the Philistines was filled with great fear. Samuel had long since departed from him, no longer offering any words of the Lord. The Lord had forsaken King Saul because he refused to kill Amalek, even though the Lord God had commanded it. King Saul after the battle with the Amalekites was to have destroyed every living thing of the Amalekites. This was to be a punishment for their treatment of the Israelites during their forty years wandering in the desert. What King Saul did instead was keep out the choicest animals, which he said were for sacrifice, and did not kill Amalek their king, hoping perhaps to have a former king be a servant to him. But this is not what the Lord God had commanded him to do. He was to be the avenging sword upon the enemies of the Lord God. He gave reprieve where he was not allowed to give it.

This of course was not the only bad decision of King Saul. Eventually, the Prophet Samuel would completely forsake King Saul, and never see him again. He had prophesied that the kingdom of Israel would be ripped from Saul's hands, and given to another. It was given to David, the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. And then twenty years passed. David rose to prominence among the nation of Israel. Saul tried to kill him several times, even taking with him three thousand men a few times to seek David and kill him. Saul grew farther and farther from the graces of the Lord. Now as he sees the Philistine army, the vessel of the Lord's wrath upon the faithlessness of Saul and Israel, he is shaken with fear to his very core.

The fact that the Lord God does not answer Saul when he inquires of the Lord shows how far away from the Lord God Saul is. His next act confirms it. He had driven out the mediums and spiritists from the land of Israel. This was done in accordance with the Law of God given through Moses. The fact that Saul is so quick to turn away from inquiring of the Lord God and find other means shows he has very little faith in the Lord. Someone with faith would show patience in this situation and wait for the Lord to answer. Or, they would at least have faith and trust that the Lord God would see them through the trouble that has been put before them, even when they have not received a clear answer from the Lord on what to do. King Saul shows his unbelief when he readily seeks other means to give him an answer. He no longer inquires of the Lord, but seeks out the enemy of the Lord, the devil.

This is where unbelief, questioning of the Lord God, and faithlessness leads. It leads a person to turn away from the true and only source of help to a whole host of false gods and means. In King Saul's case, he actually gets a pretty accurate answer to his inquiry, even if the answer is not what he probably wanted to hear. Israel would be routed by the Philistines. He and his sons would be dead. The unbelief of Israel and Saul would be punished in one day by the hand of the Philistines. Their sins would be punished with the sword of the Philistines. Hearing this a person should consider their own sins; their own faith in the Lord God. This chapter of First Samuel should lead us into repentance. For the Lord God does threaten to punish all unbelievers; he threatens to punish all sinners; all those who break His commandments. He especially threatens to punish those who hate Him to the third and fourth generations.

This was certainly true of King Saul, whose entire lineage, except one young man, was destroyed by the Philistines. This was also true of the high priest Eli's family at the beginning of the book of First Samuel, who also had his entire family destroyed, but one person. The Lord God punishes sin. King Saul refused to act like the king that the Lord God wanted to establish on the throne, one who would punish evildoers; one who would be the avenging sword against the Lord God's wrath, just as St. Paul mentions in the Book of Romans.

The Lord God does threaten punishment upon all those who hate him through sin and unbelief, but He also promises grace and every blessing to all those who keep His Commandments. The Lord God used the hands of the Philistines to exact His punishment upon Saul and unfaithful Israel, but He does this to establish His servant, David.

David in his grief and anger over the death of Saul, and of his son Jonathon, the beloved friend of David, would be the avenging sword of the Lord God against the Philistines. King David would do what King Saul refused to do; he would destroy the enemies of the Lord God.

King David would be the very image of his descendant, our Lord + Jesus. The Lord + Jesus would also come to the land of Israel; He would bear the flesh of mankind, in order to destroy the enemies of the Lord God. Those enemies are the same enemies that we fight every day: the devil, the world, and the flesh. Sin, death and the devil plague us from all sides. Like the Philistine army before Saul, they pose a frightening sight. Unbelievers are led into false pride and despair, like King Saul. Those of us who in repentant faith seek the help of the Lord God, continually, with patience and endurance in suffering, rely on the help of the Lord God.

Indeed, we place our trust in the embodiment of King David—in His descendant—our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. The One Who was anointed by the Lord God to face our enemies and become the Victor over sin and death. He faced our enemies—the Lord God's enemies; His enemies—on the tree of the holy cross. He offered up His life as a ransom for our lives, so that all of us who cling to Him in faith will have forgiveness of our sin, and eternal life and salvation. We now have no need to fear, like King Saul did. We now have no need to seek our salvation in anyone other than the Lord God; anyone other than the Lord + Jesus, for He is the true conqueror of all our enemies. He is the true avenging

sword against all that would seek our harm and destruction.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us turn from our fears and sins, and cling solely and completely upon the gracious salvation found in the Lord + Jesus Christ. For in Him and through Him is forgiveness, life and salvation. In Him is found the promise of an eternal life in paradise with Him. There in paradise no sin or unbeliever or enemy of the Lord God will ever bother us again. We will live with Him in eternal joy and happiness, singing the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom which has no end. There in His Kingdom we will enjoy the eternal Wedding Feast of the Lamb. We will feast upon the choicest meats and the finest breads, and there we will be joined together for all eternity with those who have gone before us in the faith. We will sing forever with the eternal heavenly band the song of victory that our Lord + Jesus, the Christ has won for us salvation from all our enemies. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!