

1 Samuel 12:19-24¹
Samuel intercedes for Israel
Midweek Advent Service
Cf. Wendland, *Sermon Texts*, p. 75,
Nazaarites as Types of Christ –
Judges 13:8, Samson
1 Samuel 12:19-24, Samuel
Luke 1:13-17, John

Pastor A. J. Kunde
Our Savior WELS Perry MI
7:00 p.m., Wednesday,
December 4, 2013;
& Grace WELS Durand MI
7:00 p.m., Wednesday,
December 11, 2013

¹⁹ The people all said to Samuel, “Intercede on our behalf to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.”

²⁰ “Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You yourselves have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹ Do not turn away after useless things or idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. ²² For the sake of his great Name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his people. ²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to intercede for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴ But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE
I. FOR REPENTANCE
II. FOR FORGIVENESS
III. FOR FAITHFULNESS

In the Name of Jesus, our Savior, Intercessor and Mediator, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

This Midweek Advent sermon from First Samuel Chapter Twelve, looks at how the Prophet, Judge and Deliverer, Samuel, responded to the sinfulness of Israel during the time of the Judges – for Samuel is the last Judge or Deliverer of Israel. This Midweek Advent Sermon more significantly looks at our LORD Jesus Christ, who is the perfect Deliverer, Mediator and Intercessor for God’s people – believers in him – you and me by grace through faith alone in Jesus. As we review this text, we see that ... GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE. GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE ... I. FOR REPENTANCE; for, II. FOR FORGIVENESS; and for, III. FOR FAITHFULNESS.

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE I. FOR REPENTANCE

Samuel tells Israel, "You yourselves have done all this evil" (12:20b). The evil that Israel had committed was to ask for a king such as all the nations surrounding them had. Samuel, the leader of Israel, was old. His sons who would rightfully succeed him "did not walk in [Samuel's] ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice" (8:3). Rightfully, Israel did not want Samuel's sons as their leaders. Nevertheless, Samuel brought to the LORD Israel's demand for a king.

The LORD God spoke to Samuel and said, "It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you" (8:7b&8). Israel did not want the LORD God as their king. They wanted a tangible king; who they could see, touch, feel. And, as the LORD God points out, this rejection of him as Israel's king was something that Israel had done from the time the LORD God brought them out of their slavery in Egypt. Confronted with all this, Israel recognized their sin.

Israel said to Samuel, "Intercede on our behalf to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king" (12:19). Israel recognized their separation from the LORD God as they word their request to Samuel: "Intercede on our behalf to the LORD your God." Because of their sin, Israel recognized that they were separated from God. Because of their sin, Israel understood that they could not call the LORD God their God. Moreover, Israel recognized that because of their sin they should die – God should exterminate them. Israel confessed their sin and pleaded with the Prophet and Judge, Samuel.

Israel says to Samuel, "Intercede on our behalf to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die" (12:19a). Israel recognizes their sin. They recognize their separation from God because of their sin. They confess their sin. They recognize the fact that God ought to slaughter and exterminate them because of their sin. Israel is in abject terror and repentance.

APPROPRIATION

Do you recognize the depth and result of your sin? It does not matter if your sins appear to you to be great or small. Isaiah speaks of the result of your sins: "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). What does that mean for you?

A person could say: "Go ahead. Pray to God all you want. Call on his Name. But why should he hear, listen or answer your prayers? Your sins have separated you from God.

"You think of yourselves as God's people. You say you believe in Jesus as your LORD and Savior, but you fail to hear what Jesus said!

²¹ ‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, LORD,” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, LORD, did we not prophesy in your Name, and in your Name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”’ (Matthew 7:21-23).

“Do you think you are faithful? Do you think you are relatively good people? Do you think you have been faithful as men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers? Do you think you are faithful parents and grandparents? Then how many take time each day to read, learn and study God’s Word; and, if you do, do you remember what you have learned, believe it, and put it into practice?

“Children and grandchildren, if your parents and grandparents do take time to read God’s Word in your presence, do you inwardly grumble because of the time it takes when you would prefer to watch television or play video games? Are you disobedient – whining, complaining and misbehaving when things are not done the way you want them? Why should God listen to you at all when you pray to him?

“Just like Israel, you have added sin upon sin and evil upon evil. Recognize this and repent of it. As you do this, turn to your LORD Jesus for forgiveness.”

GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE II. FOR FORGIVENESS

Israel needed forgiveness of sins. They could not earn this forgiveness. They could offer God nothing that would move him to forgive them. But Samuel spoke God’s Word to them.

Samuel said, “Do not be afraid” (12:20a). “Fear not!” Those are some of the most beautiful and comforting words in the Bible. That phrase, “Fear not!” is used when God is going to take action in order to save and deliver his people. Why does God do this?

God the LORD does not take action on behalf of Israel because they deserved his help and deliverance. Israel did nothing to earn God’s help. Rather, Samuel makes clear the reason for God’s message of “Fear not!” and his saving action for Israel.

Samuel says, “For the sake of his great Name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his people” (12:22). The LORD God Almighty, full of grace and truth, would deliver Israel “for the sake of his great Name.”

God had revealed himself – his great Name – as the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace. He was the LORD who loved Israel in spite of their sins and shortcomings. He was the LORD who made Israel his own special people, even though they rebelled against him continuously. In that relationship which the LORD God himself had established with

Israel, Israel had the forgiveness of sins; and, Samuel would intercede for Israel for that forgiveness.

Samuel says, “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to intercede for you” (12:23a). Samuel would intercede for Israel, pleading with the LORD God to forgive his people.

APPROPRIATION

You too have the forgiveness of sins from God your LORD. You have that forgiveness, not because of who you are or what you have done. You do not have forgiveness on the basis of your merit, character or work. You have that forgiveness from God the LORD because of who God the LORD is – the God of free and faithful grace – and what this LORD God has done.

It is particularly during this Advent Season that we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus our Savior. What did Jesus do to be our Savior? Jesus lived the perfect life. Peter, quoting from the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah, says, “[Jesus] committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:20; cf. Isaiah 53:9). Jesus was tempted in every way, just as you are tempted, yet Jesus never sinned (cf. Hebrew 4:15b). Jesus’ holiness, perfection and righteousness, have been credited to you and to me and to the entire world. Moreover, because sin had to be punished or else God would not be a holy and righteous God, Jesus took upon himself the sins of the world and gave his life on the cross for those sins. John proclaims in his First Epistle, “Jesus Christ, the Righteous One ... is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 1b&2). Jesus’ resurrection from the dead proves and assures you and me that all of our sins have been forgiven.

The Apostle Paul writes, “[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25). The Apostle Paul is saying that we and the whole world have been justified – sins have been forgiven. Jesus was raised to life because of that fact. That justification, forgiveness of sins, or declaration of righteousness, was pronounced on the entire world when Jesus cried out from the cross: “It is finished!” (John 19:30b). Having completed the redemption of you and me and all people, Jesus is now at God’s right hand and intercedes for us.

In our Scripture Lesson from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans this evening, you heard St. Paul say, “Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34b).

Jesus intercedes for you and me with a better intercession than Samuel gave for Israel. Jesus is the “Mediator between God and men” (1 Timothy 2:5b). Through Jesus alone, we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

What does that forgiveness of sins that we have through Jesus mean in our daily life? Our text states ...

GODLY LEADERS INTERCEDE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE
III. FOR FAITHFULNESS

Samuel points out to Israel what they should and should not be doing.

²⁰ “Do not be afraid, [Fear not!]” Samuel replied. “You yourselves have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹ Do not turn away after useless things or idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless (12:20&21).

Samuel warns Israel to turn away from useless things, including idols, that can do no good. Anything or anyone in which a person trusts or relies or looks to for help and security is an idol. They are of no help. Look only to the LORD God for forgiveness of sins, and in that forgiveness of sins, “serve the LORD with all your heart” (12:20d). Moreover, Samuel points out to Israel why they can serve and trust in the LORD.

Samuel says, “Be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you” (12:24). What great things had the LORD God done for Israel to warrant their serving him faithfully?

Centuries before the LORD God had delivered Israel from their slavery in Egypt. The LORD God brought them out of Egypt through Moses with miracles, signs and wonders. The LORD provided miraculously for Israel during their forty years wandering in the wilderness. Under the leadership of Joshua, Moses’ successor, the LORD God gave the Land of Canaan – Palestine – to Israel, using miracle after miracle. During the time of the Judges, the LORD God delivered Israel from their various enemies. And, there would be further deliverance through the One whom God promised to send into the world to take away the sins of the world – Jesus Christ. So, Samuel says, “Be sure to fear the LORD.”

“Fear the LORD,” not with slavish fear out of concern for punishment, but, rather, out of reverence and respect for God’s deliverance and forgiveness. “Serve the LORD God with all your heart in repentance. Serve the LORD through faith and reliance on him alone. Continue to listen to his Word.”

Samuel says, “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to intercede for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right” (12:23). Samuel would continue to pray and intercede with God for Israel, and he would “teach them the way that is good and right.” In other words, Samuel would teach Israel God’s Word. That Word of God would continue to call them to repentance, assure them of forgiveness, and guide them in the way they should go in their daily lives. That Word of God would point ahead to the coming of the Messiah, the Christ – ahead to Jesus, who would intercede and be their mediator with God.

APPROPRIATION

Jesus has given us all of his Word – the entire Bible. As with Samuel, the Bible calls you to repentance; assures you of the forgiveness of sins; and, guides you in the way you should go in your daily life. Jesus intercedes for you before the Throne of God. Jesus is your Mediator. Your sins are forgiven; now follow what Jesus wants you to do. Follow faithfully his Word.

CONCLUSION

Godly leaders intercede for God's people – as well as for those who have not yet been brought to faith in Jesus. Jesus intercedes for you at the right hand of God. Jesus prays for you that you may remain in repentance for your sins and in faith in him alone as your Savior. Jesus also guides you through his Word as to what you should do and should not do in your daily life. Trust in Jesus alone your Intercessor and Mediator and Savior. Amen.