

Three Principles Seen in Epoch Making Men

by Lance Lambert

Lance Lambert's sermon emphasizes the critical role of intercessors like Samuel and Hannah in fulfilling God's purpose through total commitment and obedience.

Duration: 1:12:30

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:4

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Spiritual Commitment"

Description

This sermon focuses on the life of Samuel from the book of 1 Samuel, highlighting the importance of total and unconditional commitment to the Lord, total surrender of one's will to God, and total obedience to His commands. The speaker emphasizes the significance of hearing the voice of the Lord and following His guidance, drawing parallels between Samuel's life and the essential qualities needed for believers to be overcomers in challenging times.

Transcript

I would like to turn you to two scriptures from the same book, the first book of Samuel. Samuel, first book of Samuel, chapter one. I'm going to read from verse nine.

So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli, the priest, was sitting upon his seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore.

And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but will give unto thy handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.

Therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.

I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I

spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

And she said, Let thy handmaid find favour in thy sight. So the woman went away and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And chapter 3, same book from verse 1, And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli, and the word of the Lord was precious in those days.

There was no frequent vision. And it came to pass at that time when Eli was laid down in his place, now his eyes had begun to wax dim so that he could not see, and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, that Jehovah called Samuel and said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli and said, Here am I, for thou callest me. And he said, I called not.

Lie down again, and went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, Here am I, for thou callest me.

And he answered, I called not, my son. Lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, Here am I, for thou callest me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down, and it shall be if he call thee that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy bonds lay here. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.

Then Samuel said, Speak, for thy bonds lay here. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel of which both ears of every one that hears it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I've spoken concerning his house from the beginning even unto the end.

For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I've sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering forever. And Samuel lay until the morning and opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord has spoken unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me.

God do so to thee, and more also if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he spake unto thee. And Samuel told him every wit and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord.

Let him do what seemeth him good. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

We've already prayed, but just let us recognize our need of the anointing. Dear Lord, we want to thank you this evening. We've committed this time to you and this time of the ministry of your word.

And all we want to do now, Lord, is to recognize that without you we can do nothing. Lord, let that anointing, power and grace be upon the speaking of your word, and also, Lord, upon our hearing. And let your purpose in this time and in these days be fulfilled in full measure.

And we ask it in the name of our Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Amen. As you all know, we've been talking about links.

I'm not sure that's the best term. It reminds me golf courses. But what we mean is something that somehow links us to the Lord in a day of great distress and darkness.

And it is one of the most wonderful things in the word of God that at every single point of confusion or darkness or distress, the Lord has had that servant of his or servants of his who have provided that link with him and have been a turning point in the purpose of God. The greatest turning point was Abraham. Up to that point, the Lord had only dealt with people as individuals or as families.

But from that point, he began to deal with the people. It was a people that was then in view. One of my friends once said something that I believe he said it in a moment of inspiration, which I believe was really truly from the Lord.

He said, when the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, he placed within him the whole genetic history of redemption. From that point onwards, we hear of the Lord's redeeming plan for mankind. And of course, we who are the Lord's, we are all, if we are of the law, the Jews, we are saved and we are, Abraham is our father.

But if we are Gentiles, non-Jews, we are also of our father Abraham because he has saved us with the same living gift of faith that Abraham had. Moses was another great turning point. He saw him who is invisible.

And he had turned away from the riches and sophistication of Egypt. It cost him everything. He was Pharaoh's grandson.

Adopted it is true, but nevertheless, he was the grandson. He was educated in the highest education in Egypt and in military tactics for we learn from our Jewish sources. But the most amazing thing is that Moses was at a turning point in the history of God's dealings with mankind.

It was now a people that was about to be born. And Moses was the key person in that. Of course, there were others with him, Aaron, Miriam.

There was Joshua. I have in my home a little silver plaque from hundreds of years ago and it depicts the whole Red Sea and the Jews passing through the Red Sea. And at the same time, the Pharaoh's crack army being drowned in the sea.

And one of the things that intrigued me about that engraving in silver was a little figure that was by Moses. It was Joshua. He was but a boy, just like Samuel.

And he stayed in Moses' tent. And he learned how to serve in Moses' tent. These are all turning points in our Jewish tradition.

Samuel is one of the greatest, far greater than David and far greater than Solomon and far greater than Daniel. They were all turning points in the economy of God. But Samuel, for some reason, has always been understood by the rabbis to be one of the most amazing turning points in the history of God's dealings with mankind.

It was, of course, the producing of the king. Samuel actually anointed the wrong king and the right king. He actually anointed Saul.

We sometimes forget that, that he anointed him and blessed him. But Saul was a man of the flesh. David was a man after God's own heart.

And these amazing turning points, we could talk about a number more, but I'm here to talk about Samuel and what Samuel means to us and should mean to us. But another one of the greats was Daniel. The children of God would never have a return to the land.

We built the city of God. We built the temple of God. We built Nazareth.

We built Bethlehem. We built other places all through the land that were already prophesied by some of the prophets as being part, having part to do with the coming of the Messiah. If it had not been for Daniel and his incredible intercessory ministry, we would never have come.

So important was Daniel's intercessory ministry that the Archangel Gabriel was sent to him with a message. Oh man, greatly beloved. From the moment you began to pray, your prayer was heard.

But so important was Daniel's ministry that we understand that the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Peace waylaid the Prince of Israel, Michael, and they were having a fight. And so fierce was that fight. It sounds like a fairy tale, a legend, doesn't it? But it wasn't.

It was very real because all human history is the expression of spiritual being. And in that incredible manner, Gabriel said, I'm so sorry I'm late. I was caught up with this fight that the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece were having with the Prince of Israel, Michael, and I felt I had to help him.

And so I stayed with him for three weeks. And now I've come. And the most amazing thing is that he gave to Daniel a mathematical prophecy.

And that mathematical prophecy led directly to the coming of the Lord Jesus. It doesn't matter how you take that mathematical prophecy, it all ends in his birth, his ministry, his life, his crucifixion, his death, and his resurrection. And his coming again.

Now that reveals to us just how important these servants of God are to the Lord. It may also make us question, why doesn't the Lord do it himself? Why does he have to have Abraham and Moses and, in a lesser scale, Joshua and Samuel and David and Daniel and John the Baptist to usher in the King? It's a good question because, as some of you have heard me say before, the Lord could do it much more easily without us than with us. You and me and myself, we are the problems to the Lord.

We, generally speaking, cause a lot of confusion, a lot of distress, and a lot of delay. So why in the world doesn't the Lord do it himself? He's sovereign, he's self-sufficient, he doesn't need us. Why then does he wait in every turning point in divine history for the right person to be there, to be with him? I have only one answer to it, fellowship.

In some extraordinary way, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit believe in fellowship. They will not act without the redeemed. They will not fulfill their purpose without those who belong to him, to the Lord.

There is really no other explanation. And, of course, Stephen spoke to us this morning about the overcomers. Really, that's what the Lord's waiting for.

Why? Because he is training us. He called Abraham, my friend. He spoke of Moses as one he spoke to face to face.

When Moses died, there is a very strange Hebrew construction. It says he died according to the English translation. He died by the word of the Lord.

But the Hebrew says he died on the lips of the Lord. And now rabbis tell us that God the Almighty loved Moses so much that when he'd come to the end, he kissed him and he went to be with the Lord. We shall never really understand why the Lord waits for us.

Why he doesn't get on with it and just do it himself. But the fact is wherever you turn, you will find the intercessor at every single turning point. In my estimation, and this is, I'm going off my subject, but I will just say it as an aside.

I believe the Apostle Paul was another turning point. He, in some incredible way, became an apostle to the Gentiles. So tremendous was the ministry that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit gave to him that he had in the greatest exposition of the gospel in the 66 books of the Bible, he took three whole chapters to deal with the Jewish people.

He was so afraid that the fact of his apostleship to the Gentiles would be misunderstood as if God had finished with Israel, finished with the Jewish people. It is incredible. So here you have in these marvelous chapters about the gospel, eight whole chapters covering the whole gospel.

You have three whole chapters that deal with the problem of the Jewish people. Can God unelect what he has elected? Can God unchoose what he has chosen? Doesn't this bring home to us how important intercession is? Because the Apostle Paul opened those three chapters, Romans 9, 10, and 11, with these extraordinary words. He said, I could wish that I was anathema, cursed, for my brethren's sake who are Israelis.

That is intercession. It's not just in the head, it's in the heart. And it is that passion and burden in the heart that brings us who are the redeemed of the Lord into the closest communion that we can have with the intercessor, the Lord Jesus.

So this whole question of links is for me a tremendous subject. And you cannot deal with it without understanding intercession. Abraham, Moses, and Samuel are called the three greatest intercessors up to that point in the world.

Wouldn't you think this extraordinary? Are you aware of just how remarkable it is? Do you realize that the Lord wants you to be an intercessor? And that you cannot, in one sense, be an overcomer without being an intercessor. Now this word intercessor has been bandied around like being born again and has lost its meaning. Many people say they're intercessors and they're not intercessors.

They are prayer warriors, but they're not intercessors. Because intercession begins with a knowledge of what is the will of God. Once you know what God is planning to do, then intercession by the power and ability of the Holy Spirit begins.

And why the Lord wants intercessors, I will never understand until I'm in the presence of the Lord. But all I know is this, that the Lord says I won't do it if there is not an intercessor. Indeed to Ezekiel on one occasion he said, I sought for a man to stand in the gap and build up the wall, but I found none.

Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon the land. Well, why? If you followed me so far, we can come to Samuel. One of the most incredible things about Samuel is he stood between a murmuring, gain saying, stiff-necked people and the Lord.

When he had made in one sense a mistake, of course from one point of view it wasn't a mistake because he had told the people don't make this, don't have a king. You are making a big mistake. Saul was a magnificent man, hidden shoulders above all the rest.

There were many things about Saul that made him realize he was a man of men and somehow or other an absolutely seemingly divine choice to be king. It took in Samuel until he discovered that Saul was a man of the flesh and could not obey the Lord. He obeyed the Lord partly, but only partly.

He couldn't obey the Lord. He undid the work of the kingdom and brought tragedy to the people of God. But Samuel again and again interceded, called upon the Lord to have mercy upon Israel and the Lord had mercy.

And in the end, well we all know the story, Samuel discovered this shepherd boy and as he looked at him, nothing like Saul. Saul's height, Saul's breadth of shoulders, Saul's whole muscle. This boy was just a shepherd boy and the Lord said to him, this is the man.

Anoint him. He is a man after my own heart. Samuel was a turning point in the divine dealings with the people and in the fulfillment of the divine purpose.

We can learn a lot from Samuel and I want to just speak of three things this evening. I will talk about others at other times, but tonight I only want to talk about three things and I've been a good preacher because each of them begins with T. The first is total and unconditional commitment to the Lord. The second is total surrender of my will to the Lord.

And the third is total obedience, whatever the cost. It is no wonder that Samuel stands so high in the Jewish view of it, of the history of Israel. Total commitment.

Dear Hannah, she found it unbearable that the other wife of Elkanah, Penina, had so many children and she did not have a single child. The friction in the home only caused her more agony and anger. And she went to the Lord in a travel of prayer.

She poured out her heart. The word says she wept sore. And in her anguish, she never made some big noise, a silent prayer, but her lips moved.

Eli thought she was drunk, but Eli was not exactly perceptive or discerning. He said, you're drunk, woman. Stop drinking wine and strong drink.

And she said, I'm not drunk. I've not drunk wine nor strong drink, but I have such anguish in my heart. And I have sought the Lord that he should give me a man child.

And then she made this vow. She'd already made it silently to the Lord. He said, and if the Lord grants the request of this his handmaid, I will commit him and dedicate him to the Lord for the rest of his life.

That's something to say for someone who wanted a child above everything else. And if they had this one child, I was going to give him totally to the Lord. That is total commitment.

Now, let me just say something and I'm straying again from what I should be holding to. You mothers, you have no idea the influence upon your children you will have. Hannah is one of the great figures in Israeli history because it was her commitment to the Lord, total and unconditional, that led to the gift of a son and his being set apart for the rest of his life.

You have within these first chapters of the first book of Samuel, Hannah's great son. Read it. It is extraordinary.

It reveals the fact that a mother can have enormous influence on the course of a son's life. You would have thought that when Samuel was born, he might have been a little upset that mother was going to leave him in the temple, in the tabernacle, but it never happened that way. So great was her love for Samuel, and so great her own personal commitment to the Lord that it affected Samuel.

She called him, in Hebrew, Shemuel, name of the Lord. I find it very difficult to name the unmentionable name of the Lord. I know in some messianic circles, it is bandied around very much and I personally have a very real problem with it.

I always either say the Lord, Adonai, or Hashem, the name. Because that unmentionable name was only mentioned three times on one day in the whole 365 days of a year. That was the day of atonement, and in the public courtyard, the high priest lifted up his hands and three times he blessed them in the unmentionable name of the Lord.

That's why we really don't know how the name was pronounced. We know the vowel sound, but that's all. So some people say Yahweh, some people say Yahweh, some people say something else, and I personally find it a little dull.

I think it's much better just to say the Lord or the name. But isn't it amazing that she called Samuel the name of the Lord? You know, it's interesting because in the first letter of Peter, in the first letter of Peter and chapter three, let me just read it to you, and verse, I think it's 14. It reads this, listen carefully.

I've not got the right thing. Just let me look at it. It says, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart.

The fact that she called Samuel the name of the Lord, it seems to me was an indication of what her longing for Samuel should be, that it should be a sanctifying of the Lord in his heart. Set apart, we're taught in the old English way, for sanctified be thy name. Is that not interesting? I think so.

And here is the second thing. In these, well first of all let me say one last thing to you, dear mothers. You will have a lasting impact upon your children if with love and grace you teach them concerning the Lord and rear them in the fear of the Lord, not in some slavish fear which many have done unfortunately with dire consequences, but with love and with grace.

That brings me to the second thing I wanted to say and it was simply this, that Samuel had to make his own commitment. I find it amazing that Samuel did not argue. He wasn't embittered.

He had no quarrel with the Lord or with his mother. When she left him after he was weaned, she left him in the tabernacle with Eli and she would only have seen him on certain occasions when she made a journey to the tabernacle. So Samuel had to make a total commitment to the Lord that was unconditional.

There were no ifs and buts. It was total commitment. No one will ever be an overcomer without a total and unconditional commitment to the Lord Jesus.

Without that personal commitment you will never be an overcomer. It is the very root of overcoming to be wholeheartedly for the Lord, wholeheartedly for his lordship, wholeheartedly for the truth that he is, wholeheartedly for the church that he has brought to birth, wholeheartedly for the gospel. It requires a total and unconditional commitment.

Don't think you can get away with half measures. The greatest problem we are facing today, not only in the United States but in all the western countries, is the half committedness of Christian people. They are not committed.

They are half committed, a third committed. It means that you go to at least one meeting a week, that somehow or other you sort of coast along, you're complacent. As long as you're happy, you've got what you want.

It's all that matters. This Laodicean condition condition is the greatest problem we face. Why do you think the Lord has allowed this to happen to the United States? Because the church itself is basically uncommitted.

It has not spoken up against things it should have spoken up against. It has not been light in darkness. It has not been salt in corruption.

It has not held the testimony of Jesus in purity and obedience. And therefore the Lord has allowed these things to come to pass in the western nations. Where do you find the church of God today? You find it in Asia.

You find it in Africa. You find it in South America. There you will find a living expression of the church, maybe with its faults as in the New Testament, with its failings, but it's nevertheless a living expression of the church.

But the west, we've got this half and half kind of manner. As I said to a few days ago to somewhere I was speaking, it might have been in Franklin or it might have been here in Virginia, you know, you want the kind of thing where someone preaches on Sunday, the pastor preaches a message. You can all go home to have a meal at home and you can discuss the message comfortably, whether he was right, whether he was wrong, what he said or what he didn't say.

No such thing as a revolutionary message. That would be too much. If there was a revolutionary message that turned the church upside down and inside out, we would be upset.

It would mean for the first time we would be challenged to really play. It would be the first time we would be challenged to be totally committed to the Lord. It would be the first time that we made a personal

commitment to the Lord.

I find it very sad to have to say such a thing. But those of you who know me, you know I've been saying for years that the United States is like the Titanic. It is sailing into an iceberg and has no idea that it will sink within 10 minutes when it hits the iceberg.

This kind of commitment that Samuel had is absolutely a necessity. It is not optional. It is not something you can either accept or reject.

There is no way that you and I can be overcomers without such a commitment, total and unconditional. Let me take it one step further. There is no alternative to such total commitment.

No substitute for it. That is the gift that Samuel is to us. He was but a little boy.

It says he did not even at that point know the Lord, but he was committed to the Lord. And then he himself ratified Hannah's commitment of him. If there is any young person here, maybe your parents committed you to the Lord when you were born.

Maybe they consecrated you to the Lord. But maybe you have never ratified their commitment. You've never confirmed it by your own personal.

So this is something tremendous. I cannot over, I cannot exaggerate the importance of this matter. It is total.

I think of what it says also in this same book that Samuel, those that honor me, I will honor. To honor the Lord doesn't just mean that you take his name on your lips in prayer or you sing about him. It means that you are totally committed to him, away with any other kind of Christianity.

As far as the Lord is concerned, there is no. And then of course, there is this other thing, total surrender of my will. Most of us have a very great problem here.

We are generally speaking people of a will and we have problems when the Lord wants that will of yours and mine surrendered. We are not happy with that. That's not the gospel.

The gospel we want is that the Lord will save us, clean up our messes, make us happy, help us to get to middle age, to the middle age spread. And then finally we can be complacent, not too active for the rest of our years until we are partly deaf and partly blind. And then the Lord will take us.

Is this the gospel? Is that what the Lord came into this world to die for? The surrender of our will is the biggest battle in any Christian life, whether young or old. Don't think it is just a question of when you're in your teens and you have your life before you. Then you have a great battle about that will of yours, what you will or what he will.

It can also be for those of you who are older, how many times as we get older does the whole question of our will come to the fore. So here you have another thing. I, forgive me, I don't want to bash you this evening, but I can't help it.

I mean, the point of the matter is we are responsible for this mess. You think the Lord is just happy about that and sort of saying, I'll go along with them. They don't really want to surrender their will to me, so I'll just play ball with them.

I'll go along with them. No, that's not what the Lord will do. It means that you will not reign with him in eternity to come.

As Campbell Morgan said many, many years ago, the kingdom of God is bigger than the city Jerusalem. In other words, you can be born again and see the kingdom, but not necessarily part of the bride. It is obvious, isn't it? Do you think the Lord is only interested in some kind of Marilyn Monroe figure? Beautiful figure, beautiful eyes, beautiful eyelashes, beautiful hair, beautiful everything, nothing between the ears.

Maybe that's being unkind to Marilyn Monroe, but you know what I mean. Do you really believe the Lord wants to marry a bride like that? Of course not. He wants a bride that has learned how to overcome in small personal situations, in family situations, in relationships, in business, in church life, and in national life.

He wants that kind of people who've learned how by his indwelling power and grace to overcome. It is so simple, this matter. Some years ago, I was asked to preach in Melbourne Hall in Leicester, in the Midlands of Britain.

The pastor had been pastor for 34 years there and he asked if I would speak on Romans 9, 10, and 11. I went with great trepidation, but the brother who took me had been the man that he, that pastor, had led to the Lord and had personally helped in discipleship in his early years. I stood in the pulpit.

I remembered that Dr. F.B. Meyer had founded that assembly. And as I stood, I preached on Romans 9, 10, and 11. And in the course of it, I happen to say as an aside, I was saved by the grace of God through the life story of C.T. Stout.

I said he upset everybody, writing parodies on Christian hymns, backward Christian soldiers marching as from war with the candy floss going on before. That upset the Christians and especially those wooden, half-hearted, uncommitted Christians. They believed he was a drug addict, a kind of alcoholic or something.

Then he wrote another little parody, someone to live within the sound of chapel chime and bell. I'd rather run a rescue shop within a yard of hell. When I read that book of the life story of C.T. Stout, it was the first Christian book I'd ever had in my hand.

I partly read it because the Sunday school teacher had dished it out to all the other boys and didn't give me one. So I had to go and ask him for it. So I almost felt that I had to read it.

And the fact that it said missionary statesman, famous cricketer, and something else, I can't remember the other thing, caught me. I thought, how can a person be a Christian who's an athlete? That's impossible. I thought all Christians were diseased, hypocrites or diseased.

So I read the book in one week and at the end of it I remember I stood and then I thought, I don't think they do stand, I think they kneel. So I knelt. Then I felt uncomfortable kneeling.

So I got up, then I put my hands up and I said, oh God, will you please do in me what you did in C.T. Stout and make me what you made him? I don't think I realised what I was asking. I had very little idea of the total commitment that C.T. had made. When he had to have a doctor's letter to say he was fit to go as a missionary, the doctor wouldn't give him the letter.

He said, you are a museum of illnesses. You can't make it neither in China nor anywhere else. He went with the Cambridge Seven to China and then he went to India and then he went to Congo and he spent the rest of his years in Central Africa.

When he died 30,000 ex-cannibals came to his funeral. He never went back to England on a furlough. He wasn't a chocolate soldier.

I told them that little story and after the service I went with this dear man who'd been there for 34 years into the vestry and as I sat down he said to me, Lance, did you know that you stood tonight in the pulpit that C.T. preached his last message that he ever gave in Britain? He never came back. He went to China, to India and to the Congo. No, I said.

He said, you know, Dr. F.B. Meyer was so impressed with C.T. that when he got him into the vestry he said to him, tell me, what is the secret of your life and ministry? And C.T. thought for a while and then he said, I have surrendered my will in its entirety to the Lord Jesus. There is no alternative to a total surrender of the will. All your arguments with God are because of your will.

All your arguments with one another is because of your will. Our church catfights and dogfights are nearly all to do with somebody's I and somebody else's I. And when you've got I, I think, I know, I feel, I want and I feel, I think, I know, I want, you have a dogfight. And generally speaking, the Lord retires.

He leaves you to the fight. Fight it out amongst yourselves. If you're not prepared to totally surrender your will, this is what you'll get.

It's amazing to me that when we follow our own will, we're not happy. We get what we want. We will into being what we want.

But we're not happy. Samuel surrendered his will to the Lord. I find it amazing that the Lord stood in that tabernacle and called him by name.

He'd been named with the name of the Lord. And it was the Lord who said, Samuel, Samuel. And he ran off to Eli and said, you're calling me, I'm here.

And Eli said, I didn't call you, don't lie down. He went three times. Eli, who wasn't very good at perceiving what was happening, said finally, after three times, it's the Lord.

When he says your name again, go and say to him, here I am, your bond slave. And he used the word in Hebrew, not servant, not a hired servant, but bond slave. Your bond slave.

Yes, there is so much within the word of God about this matter of hearing. I don't want to belabor this matter, but total surrender of our will is the key to overcome those that are going to be these links we're talking about. With the Lord in the last stage of world history, we need to be not only totally and unconditionally committed to the Lord, we need to have surrendered our will to him.

Then it is his will, not mine. It is the fulfillment of those wonderful words in the Roman letter where the apostle writes this, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work of his good. No conflict there between your will and his will.

He will work out his plan for you. He will will and work. Isn't that amazing? I find it so anyway.

Lastly, there is this question of total obedience. This question of hearing the Lord is so important. Many Christians, especially men, have a problem about hearing the Lord.

I don't know why, but they do. Normally ladies don't seem to have that problem, but the men all have this problem about hearing the Lord. Well, I've never heard the Lord, someone said to me a few years ago.

I've never heard the Lord. I don't expect him to speak to me. So I said, well, if you don't expect him to speak to you, you won't hear him.

When the Lord Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice, he meant it. We should expect the Lord to speak to us. Now I know there are people who hear weird things, not necessarily the Lord at all, but I mean really to hear the Lord.

Do you think the Lord can protect you from other voices? Of course he can. So this is an important matter, this question of hearing. For instance, did you realize that when the Lord gave the 10 commandments, as we call them, the 10 words, he followed it with the story of the jubilee year.

He said, if you have a bond slave in your home, and he says, I love my master, I don't want to be free. Then the master, he said, shall take him. This is in Exodus 26.

Then the master shall take him to the doorpost, and with an oar put a hole in his ear. What the Word of God doesn't tell us, but what the Talmud does tell us, is that a ring was put in so that everybody could see that person is his master's bond slave forever. Why do you think the Lord talked about the ear? Isn't the bond slave or servant all to do with hands? Wouldn't it have been better to put a ring on his finger so that everybody could see that ring on his finger? No, instantly he belongs to his Lord.

His hands are all the time the things that he has to use, preparing things, cleaning things, building things, whatever else he has to do for the master. Or better still, shouldn't he have an ankle chain around his ankle? I mean, after all, it's his feet. You can't do the will of God or the work of God without feet.

They carry you into doing it, just as you can argue forever what is the most important, hands or feet. Well, if your feet are crippled, what can your hands do? But the Lord himself gave the order. I don't want any ankle chain, even if it's in gold, on my bond slave's ankle.

I don't want a ring on his finger. I want his ear. If he can't hear what I'm saying, his service is of no use.

How can we be a link in a turning point of history if we have ears that don't hear the voice of the master? Then again, we had the incredible story in the Old Testament of the cleansing of a leper and what he is to do. He is to go to the temple or to the tabernacle and he is to see the priest. And then the priest will take the blood and put it on his ear and then take the oil, put it on his ear and his leprosy will be cleansed.

Why the ear? Why not the big toe? Why not one of the fingers of the hand? Isn't that interesting? It's almost as if the Lord is saying, yes, I need redeemed feet and I need redeemed hands. But if I don't have redeemed ears, it's all useless. There can be no service without an ear to hear.

And you know, as well as I do, all of you who are well taught, you know very well that when the Lord spoke to the seven churches, every single message ended with the same refrain. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. This ear of ours is the most important thing in overcoming.

It is to hear the Lord and to obey the Lord. Samuel really was a great servant of the Lord. In one place he said, when he rebuked Saul, he said to him, obedience is far more important than sacrifice.

Remember that. If you don't hear the Lord, you might feel you don't need to obey him. But total obedience is the only way that you and I will come through the days that lie ahead.

But we will come through if we will hear him. If we hear him and trust him, we will come through and we shall see the purpose of God finally fulfilled. So Samuel stands like a great monolith to warn us that if we had not total unconditional commitment to the Lord, we will fail.

If we do not have total surrender of our will to his will, we will fail. If we do not have an ear to hear and obey what we hear him say, we will fail. May the Lord reach our hearts this evening and touch us because we are now at one of these great turning points in history and we need the Lord more than we have ever needed him before.

Thank you.

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