

Here I Am

Pastor Craig Sweeney | February 9, 2025

Thread: There is a difference between people and the holy, sacred God.

“Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there...And if the man said to him, ‘Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,’ he would say, ‘No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.’ Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.” I Samuel 2:12 – 17 ESV

No respect for the Lord or for their duties as priests.

- They did what they were not to do.
- They did not do what they were supposed to do.

They were treating the gifts and offerings to God like they were common meals.

- The offering is holy, set apart for God.

Learning the meaning of sacred.

- Gifts with God’s name on them reflecting our sincere hearts. (Hebrews 13:15 – 16)
 - Praise, acts of kindness, financial gifts
 - This has everything to do with the heart I bring before God. (Psalm 51:17)

What are you giving to God that is sacred—from you and for Him?

“Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, ‘May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord.’ So then they would return to their home. Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord. Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the

tent of meeting. And he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?’ But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.” I Samuel 2:18 – 25 ESV

The greatest mistake they made was not turning away and seeking forgiveness.

- Eli should have removed them. His sin was inaction.

“Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.” I Samuel 2:26 ESV

God was raising up a priest that would serve Him and the people sincerely.

“And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, ... I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares:...And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.” I Samuel 2:27 – 35 ESV

What do we do with hypocrisy and church hurt?

“Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.” I Samuel 3:1 ESV

The Lord will accomplish His work one way or another.

- Let’s not leave our work for someone else.
- Let’s not lose the reward God meant for us.

Challenge:

- What are you offering to God from a grateful heart?
- When you give to God, do you honor Him by giving your best?
- What hurt do you need to ask God to heal?
- For some of us, it’s time to reengage with God’s Church, His Bride.

For practical, cross-cultural Bible studies related to sermon topics, visit Dougbrittonbooks.com/resources

Life Group Homework

Here I Am

Winter 2025 | Week 5

Message Date 2/9/2025

MY STORY

- 1) If you had to replace one of your fingers with a tiny functional gadget (like a flashlight, mini whisk, or laser pointer), which gadget would you choose and why?
- 2) If you had to invent a completely useless but mildly entertaining superpower, what would it be and how would you use it?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

1 Samuel 2:12-26 (NLT)

12 Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the Lord or for their duties as priests. Whenever anyone offered a sacrifice, Eli's sons would send over a servant with a three-pronged fork. While the meat of the sacrificed animal was still boiling, 14 the servant would stick the fork into the pot and demand that whatever it brought up be given to Eli's sons. All the Israelites who came to worship at Shiloh were treated this way. 15 Sometimes the servant would come even before the animal's fat had been burned on the altar. He would demand raw meat before it had been boiled so that it could be used for roasting. 16 The man offering the sacrifice might reply, "Take as much as you want, but the fat must be burned first." Then the servant would demand, "No, give it to me now, or I'll take it by force." 17 So the sin of these young men was very serious in the Lord's sight, for they treated the Lord's offerings with contempt. 18 But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the Lord. He wore a linen garment like that of a priest. 19 Each year his mother made a small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband for the sacrifice. 20 Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the Lord give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the Lord." 21 And the

Lord blessed Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord. 22 Now Eli was very old, but he was aware of what his sons were doing to the people of Israel. He knew, for instance, that his sons were seducing the young women who assisted at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 23 Eli said to them, "I have been hearing reports from all the people about the wicked things you are doing. Why do you keep sinning? 24 You must stop, my sons! The reports I hear among the Lord's people are not good. 25 If someone sins against another person, God can mediate for the guilty party. But if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede?" But Eli's sons wouldn't listen to their father, for the Lord was already planning to put them to death. 26 Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew taller and grew in favor with the Lord and with the people.

- 4) What does this passage teach us about God's holiness? What were the sons of Eli doing that dishonored God?
- 5) How does Samuel's behavior contrast with that of Eli's sons?
- 6) What did Eli do in response to his son's behavior, and what didn't he do? What was Eli's sons' response to him?
- 7) Are there things in our lives that we know are sacred but that we treat as common? Are there things that we know represent God's holiness, but we treat as less than?
- 8) How can giving be considered a modern-day sacrifice?
- 9) What steps can we take to cultivate a heart like Samuel's rather than like Eli's sons?

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection questions for Chair Time. Think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) Is there something in your life that God considers holy that you have treated as common?
- 2) How can you cultivate a relationship with God that is more like Samuel?
- 3) Who can you encourage this week? I encourage you to call them and do it.