

# Westwood Baptist Church



Grounded. Growing. Going.

Worship Guide for April 16, 2023

## Sermon Notes

### Genuine Repentance, Unending Mercy, and Faithful Leadership

1 Samuel 7

1 Samuel 4–7 is a unit that begins with Israel being defeated at a place called Ebenezer and ends in chapter seven with the Israelite victory at Ebenezer. Samuel is not mentioned in chapters 4–6, but after he is introduced to Israel in chapter 3 as the one who brings God’s word, he is reintroduced in chapter 7 as he calls upon the people to return to God. Samuel leads Israel in genuine repentance, he intercedes for them as they see God’s deliverance, he leads them in worship and remembrance, and shepherds them through at time of security and peace.

#### The Radical Nature of Genuine Repentance

Confronted with the reality of their idolatry and the sinful lifestyle that it entailed, Israel seems to have reached the point of brokenness and grief because of their separation from God. Samuel calls for a genuine repentance that goes beyond an emotional response. He calls for a repentance that is tangible and includes specific action and undivided devotion to God. Returning to God in this way includes turning away from idols and separating from that pagan lifestyle. It includes a radical heart change – an exclusive, single-minded, wholehearted commitment. “Only Yahweh lays this either-or, all-or-nothing demand on his people.”

#### The Obvious Reality of God’s Deliverance

God had promised to provide for, defend and deliver his people if they remained faithful to him (Leviticus 26:3-ff). Here we see him keep that promise. Israel’s repentance is not the cause for God’s deliverance, but it is a condition of it. In response to their repentance and cries of desperation, God moves in power against their enemies. Early in the book of 1 Samuel, we hear Hannah pray, “*He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven.*” (1 Samuel 2:9–10). At Mizpah God does exactly that.

#### The Proper Response to God’s Constant Care

“*Till now the Lord has helped us*” summarizes the whole chain of God’s mercies that extends back far beyond the current victory over the Philistines. The memorial monument (Ebenezer – the stone of help) is a physical spiritual marker reminding God’s people of his consistent care for them in the past, and in faith looks forward to his continued mercy in the future. Samuel knows, “it is memory that keeps gratitude fresh, and that gratitude keeps faith faithful.”

#### The Brief Summary of a Lifetime of Ministry

The events of 1 Samuel 7 are a synopsis of Samuel’s ministry. Samuel led Israel in repentance when it was necessary, and he led them in righteousness as they walked in obedience. God had said, “*I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind.*” (1 Samuel 2:35). Samuel was that kind of priest. Israel was secure and stable, both externally and internally, under the judgeship of Samuel, for the hand of the Lord was against their enemies and there was peace between the Israelites and the Amorites.

## Life Group Preparation Guide

"Let the *Word* of Christ *dwell* in you(all) *richly*  
*teaching* and *admonishing* one another in all *wisdom*..."  
- Colossians 3:16a

### Focus #1: GOD

1. What does this passage reveal about the character or nature of God?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's eternal plans and purposes?
3. What does this passage reveal about how God interacts with his creation?

### Focus #2: ME

4. How does this passage reveal sin in my own mind, heart, or life?
5. In what ways does this passage help us to see how we need to be aligned with God's will?
6. What is one tangible and measurable way that the Spirit is leading me to respond to his Word?

### Focus #3: OTHERS

7. What is one truth that I can share meaningfully with someone, and with whom?
8. How can I specifically encourage someone or everyone in my Life Group from this passage?

Three contributions (reflections, questions, observations, etc.) I plan to include in our next Life Group discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### Westwood Staff

**Gerald Hodges:** Lead Pastor  
**Jonathan Taylor:** Associate Pastor  
**Jason Engle:** Pastor of Students  
& Discipleship  
**Deborah Rudd:** Children's Ministry  
Coordinator  
**Yvonne Hager:** Executive Assistant

#### Contact Us

(336)599-1982  
westwoodroxboro@gmail.com  
www.westwoodfamily.org  
Church Office Hours:  
Monday - Friday 8:30am-4:00pm  
Mailing Address:  
970 Leasburg Road  
Roxboro, NC 27573-5470

#### APRIL

20 BBA Spring Meeting @ 5:30 p.m.  
22 AHG Yard Sale benefitting Life Choices  
26 Evangelism Class-Session 4 @ 6:30 p.m.  
26 ODWG Volunteer Applications **DUE**

#### MAY

5 Membership Class @ 6:00 p.m.  
6 Student Yard Sale - 6:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
8 ODWG Online Zoom Training @ 6:30 p.m.  
10 Evangelism Class-Session 5 @ 6:30 p.m.  
11 ODWG In-Person Training @ 6:30 p.m.  
13 One Day with God - 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
21 Graduate Recognition Sunday  
25 Blood Drive - 10:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.