**A Godly man does Spiritual Things in a Spiritual Manner**

1 Samuel 5:1-7:1

G**ood Morning Beloved,**

* Our new series in 1 Samuel is guiding us to see what it means to be a man after God’s own heart.
  + What does a godly man look like?
  + What does a virtuous lady look like?
    - Our prayer is that God would raise up…
      * + Men of Faith, Hope, and Love
        + Women of Honor, Chasity, and Wisdom
* The irony is that… we can’t manufacture spiritual things…
  + We are active creatures…. Not computer circuit boards…
    - If only we put in the right algorithm… the right data… the clear instruction…
      * Then we could get… a godly man.
        + But that is not true.
    - That is what is so refreshing about studying 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles.
      * For example, 2 Chronicles 27 and 28 record the summary of two kings, a father (began reigning at 25) and a son (began reigning at 20).
        + 2 Chro. 27:6 - *So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and Ahaz his son reigned in his place.*
        + *2 Chro. 28:1ff - Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done, 2 but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made metal images for the Baals, 3 and he made offerings in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.*
* God must make us into the very thing he commands… godly men and women.
  + But our passage today complements that thought… by showing us that we are to do spiritual things in a spiritual manner.
    - Or to say it a different way… In light of God’s greatness and because of God’s grace… enjoy doing spiritual things in a spiritual manner.

**Reading of God’s Word**

*5:1 When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon. 3 And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. 5 This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.*

*6 The hand of the Lord was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god.” 8 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?” They answered, “Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath.” So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there. 9 But after they had brought it around, the hand of the Lord was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. 10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people.” 11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people.” For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. 12 The men who did not die were struck with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.*

*6:1 The ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.” 3 They said, “If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you.” 4 And they said, “What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?” They answered, “Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. 5 So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land. 6 Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had dealt severely with them, did they not send the people away, and they departed? 7 Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them. 8 And take the ark of the Lord and place it on the cart and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off and let it go its way 9 and watch. If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm, but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by coincidence.”*

*10 The men did so, and took two milk cows and yoked them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. 11 And they put the ark of the Lord on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. 12 And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. 13 Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. 14 The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. 15 And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the Lord. 16 And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.*

*17 These are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the Lord: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, 18 and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and unwalled villages. The great stone beside which they set down the ark of the Lord is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.*

*19 And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the Lord. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great blow. 20 Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?” 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the Lord. Come down and take it up to you.”*

*7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the Lord.*

**Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **The Prominence of God’s Greatness (5:1-12)**
   1. Situation…
      1. Eli… the most prominent leader of Israel for 40 YEARS dies (1 Sam. 4:18).
      2. His sons are slaughtered… as 30,000 soldiers fall (4:10-11).
      3. The birth of children… from this family would have led to national celebrations in the past… but now… Children are name “Ichabod… the glory has departed” (4:21)… for the Ark of the Covenant has been captured.
         1. Israel is utterly humiliated… but Israel’s GOD is NOT.
   2. The Philistines take the Ark as a trophy of War 19 miles south to the city of Ashdod.
      1. There the ark will be kept and… in part revered… as the Philistine Pantheon.
         1. Growing up in Nashville there is a life-size model of the Parthenon.
            1. If you go inside, there is a massive statue of Athena (42 foot tall).

We don’t know how large this statue was… nor what it looked like[[1]](#footnote-1)… but the idea here is an ancient syncretism.

* + 1. Illustration: Kung Fu Panda 3
       1. The Bad Guy… Kai… can absorb the *chi* (life-force) of other beings to make himself stronger for the next battle.
    2. The Temple of Dagon destroyed by Samson in Judges 16 was rebuilt…. To both humiliate and to harness others abilities.
       1. 2 Kings 1:2-3 – Ba’al-zebub
       2. 1 Sam. 31:10 – Ashtaroth
       3. 2 Sam. 31:9 – idols… and the slain body of King Saul
  1. POINT: The Ark of the LORD will show the Greatness of the TRUE GOD!
     1. Day One – Dagon falls prostrate before the ARK
     2. Day Two – Dagon falls dismembered before the ARK
        1. The way the story is written want us to see…
           1. “They took the Ark to Dagon… only to realize they will have to take Dagon from the ARK!”
        2. The Humpty-Dumpty humiliation of an idol instructs all the pagan PRIESTS (vs. 5) to see the prominence of God’s greatness.
  2. The Philistines thought they had captures a beaten-down, bruised- up slave… only to rediscover that the Egyptians could have told them…
     1. Ex. 15:3 - *The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name.*
        1. Throughout the Temple and the Townsquare… all those associated with Dagon are destroyed.
           1. The hand of GOD (vs. 6, 7, 9, 11) wages a battle no man can will… as Dagon’s hands still lay cut off on the floor.

Tumors… panic…death… make the people of Ashdod and Ekron look like 8 year old with a “hot potato”… you take it… no, you take it!

* + 1. YOU take IT!
       1. What was to be a sign of greatness… capturing the Ark of the LORD… turn out to be the greatest teacher…
          1. NOTE: the Humiliation of Idolatry…
  1. In Samuel’s generation… the Pagans and the People of God both had enshrined idols… and God wonderfully teaches through the man of God, David…
     1. Psalm 138:1ff - *I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;  
            before the gods I sing your praise;****2****I bow down toward your holy temple  
            and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,  
            for you have exalted above all things  
            your name and your word.****3****On the day I called, you answered me;  
            my strength of soul you increased.*
     2. **Transition: God shows us the pain of neglecting his Greatness…. And… enables us to cherish…**

1. **The Persistence of God’s Grace (6:1-7:1)**
   1. For seven months… tumors… fear… plagues… and now we find out… RATS (vs. 4-5)… have been destroying the Philistines.
      1. Did the rates bring the plague that produce the tumors?
         1. Maybe.
            1. But one thing is clear… they must “give glory to the God of Israel” (vs. 5).
   2. We will make a RANSOM… 5 golden tumors… 5 golden mice.
      1. Then to make sure that we are clear… so that we all know it was not a coincidence…
         1. Get a cart… and two milk cows (vs. 7)… but the ark on the cart… but the calves in the pen…
            1. If the milk cows go to Beth-shemesh… we will know that it was the God of Israel.
      2. Joyce Baldwin – “Since the cows were unused to pulling a cart, and had calves dependent on them, all their instincts would be to turn back.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
   3. Vs. 12 - *And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.*
      1. POINT: It was UTTERLY clear.
         1. All the people… thought it was a moo-ving example.
         2. Dale Ralph Davis… “Yahweh… spoke in a ‘low’ – but clear-voice.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
            1. Most commentaries don’t want to “butcher” the passage because the “steaks are high”.
            2. Others wanted to “milk it for all it’s worth”
         3. I was sharing these jokes with my wife… and she cautioned me… you are preaching the holy Word of God, sweetheart.
            1. To which I said… “you’ve been herd.”[[4]](#footnote-4)
      2. WLC Q. 159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?
         1. A. They that are called to labor in the ministry of the word, are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season; plainly, not in the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers; zealously, with fervent love to God and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.
            1. Once, when accused of making a joke in the pulpit, Spurgeon said, “If you had known how many others I kept back, you would not have found fault with that one” (Autobiography 3:346).[[5]](#footnote-5)
      3. Clarity: The passage is absolutely hilarious in mock the enemies of God and exposing the superficial religion of the people of God.
   4. The cart with the ARK goes straight to Beth-shemesh.
      1. Then verses 17-18… take on an incredibly serious tone.
         1. The Philistines NOW respect the ARK… or more accurately… the LORD of the Ark.
            1. There is a thoughtful placating… of this God with specific offerings… so that wrath and judgment would be removed.

Gold tumors… gold mice… names of the towns connected with these offerings… ransoms.

* 1. THEN… the Israelites treat the ARK with contempt as well.
     1. 70 men fall…. Not by Philistine swords… but by the Hand of God.
        1. All this story… with its humor and ridiculousness…
           1. Mice… tumors… our god’s head is falling off.
           2. Cows… carts… coffins…
     2. Vs. 20 - “*Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?”*
        1. 7:2 – The Ark will not move for 20 years!

1. **Conclusion**
   1. Beloved, we going through 1 Samuel with the specific prayer that God would make us to be a family of LOVE comprised of godly men and virtuous ladies.
      1. This passage is showing us that if we are to be spiritual people… we must do spiritual things in a spiritual manner.
         1. Thomas Watson notes – “A wicked man either lives in the total neglect of duty or else discharges it in a dull, careless manner… A godly man is not only for the doing of holy things but for the holy doing of things.”[[6]](#footnote-6)
   2. POINT: This passage shows us that God is not helpless, nor hidden, but is to be hallowed.
      1. **God is not helpless.**
         1. The Philistines try to control Yahweh, but he will show the Prominence of God’s Greatness (5:1-12) as Dagon falls.
            1. This points to the greatest humiliation when Jesus Christ, the seed of Eve, would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

For on the CROSS, the one who seemed to be captured and vanquished would by his blood….

*Disarm the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame (Col. 2:15).*

* + - * 1. Beloved, we must see that a man who does spiritual things in a spiritual way… can only do it through a Holy Fear of God.
    1. **God is not hidden.**
       1. Don’t you love the persistence of God’s grace to all men.
          1. All men deserve death… but God exposes…

the false worship of idols (Dagon)…

the superficial worship of man-made atonements (golden tumors and mice)…

and presumptuous acts without reverence or fear (Israelites)…

* + - 1. WHY?
         1. So that all MEN would ask the question…

Vs. 20 - “*Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?”*

* + - * 1. But O BELOVED… you know the answer that they would have long to have heard… For in the Gospel of Luke we read…

*10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

* + - 1. This is the Good News that has been revealed to all people.
    1. NOW as people who are new creations in Christ… preform your spiritual duties with the utmost intentions (to paraphrase Watson).
  1. God is to be HALLOWED.
     1. *1 Cor. 7:35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.*
        1. That we would boast in the ONE who has the power to lay down his life and to take it up again (John 10:18).
        2. That we would herald the only ransom for sins for those who deserve something far worse than tumors, but hell itself (1 Tim. 2:6).
        3. That we would be a people of prayer making melody in our hearts to the One who is standing NOW before the LORD as our advocate on HIGH (1 John 2:1-2).
           1. NOW we pray to our Father… “Hallowed be your name”
           2. Heidelberg Catechism 122 - Help us to truly know you, to honor, glorify, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them: your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy, and truth. And it means, Help us to direct all our living— what we think, say, and do—so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us  
              but always honored and praised.

1. No where is this more clearly seen and celebrated than at the Lord’s Supper… it is to this means of grace that we now come.

**Prayer (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)**

*May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.*

**Benediction (Numbers 6:22-25)**  
*24 The Lord bless you and keep you;*

*25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;*

*26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

1. The Hebrew at the end of verse 4 is translated “*only the trunk of Dagon was left to him*”. In the 19th and 20th century, scholars took the working to refer to Dagon as a “mer-man”. So that only image of the passage is of a decapitated… and dismembered… dead fish. The text doesn’t bear this out… but what an insult to [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 1 & 2 Samuel, 76 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 1 Samuel, 64 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.rd.com/article/cow-jokes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/blog-entries/21-funniest-spurgeon-quotes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *The Godly Man’s Picture*, 173 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)