

Samuel

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I hope that I will be forgiven for saying a few words to begin with, which will connect together the studies that we shall have before us, if the Lord will, for the rest of this week. I refer to the fact that Samuel is the first of the prophets, and all the characters whom we shall be studying this week are prophets. After Samuel, there are two, you might call them preaching prophets, miracle-working prophets, that is Elijah and Elisha. We have one writing prophet, Daniel, and lastly the great prophet of the New Testament, Paul, who speaks of his writings as the prophetic writings. Now it should be of interest to us to inquire in what sense it is [00:01:01] that Samuel is the first of the prophets, and it will help us to understand this portion of the Word of God, as help us to understand what may be said hereafter, if we reflect for a few minutes In what sense was Samuel the first of the prophets? Well, Moses, of course, was a prophet.

You remember his words that he promised that a prophet should come like unto me. It was Moses, it was his work to establish the laws and the polity of Israel. And after his death, for many centuries, and the continuing institution, a hereditary institution, that is that passed from father to son, which was the great link between the Lord, Jehovah, and his people, was the priesthood. Now our theme is very much connected with the fact that when we [00:02:02] come to the opening pages of the first book of Samuel, then the institution of the priesthood had come into very low water indeed. God had been raising up judges, as were necessary, but when we come to the beginning of our story, then the priest and the judge were the same person, Eli. And Eli, though personally a righteous man, failed to maintain the priesthood rightly, and his sons were notoriously evil lovers. And the discontinuance, the complete collapse of the priesthood in the Eli branch was obviously imminent. Well, if the one great link between God and his people was about to depart, to be finished altogether, how was God to maintain that link with them? How was God to speak exceptionally to [00:03:05] them? Since the king hadn't come, and the priesthood had entirely failed in that particular branch at that particular time, how was God to speak to the people? Well, it was for this purpose that he instituted the institution of the prophecy, the prophets. And always from this time forward, whenever the hereditary institutions God had set up in Israel failed, or came into low water or poor times, then God intervened directly and personally and spoke to his people by the prophets. You can see in Samuel how it was himself, as a link, a person speaking directly out from God to the people, passing by all established institutions and ignoring the loss of them. [00:04:03] God was speaking exceptionally and directly to his people. And that's the very great interest of these men that we're going to study. In times of darkness, in times of the most almost unbelievable confusion, as in the days of Elijah and Elisha, in days when the people of God and all their institutions had been carried away captive to Babylon, and above all when God had some absolutely new thing to say to the world, then it was done via a prophet raised

up by God for the purpose. And it is in this sense that Samuel is the first of the prophets, and Holy Scripture so speaks of him, for example, in the book of the Acts, when it says, all the prophets from Samuel, indicating that while you had the exceptional case of Moses at the very beginning, the first of the long line of prophets that so much dominated the Old Testament story from this point forward, [00:05:05] then Samuel was the first of the prophets. Now I want to speak about the theme of Samuel under the two sections that have been announced. One is the man, and second is his message.

But you'll forgive me for slightly subdividing them a little further. And I want to speak first of all about Samuel's birth. If you're making notes, I'll help you to do so. We speak first about Samuel's birth and the circumstances that surrounded it. Now the tabernacle that God had commanded Moses to set up in the wilderness, when they entered a promised land of Canaan, under Joshua, the tabernacle had been set up at Shiloh. And that name quite clearly dominates the story [00:06:04] for the few chapters which concern the story of Samuel. And we're told in Jeremiah chapter 7, verse 12, I won't ask you to turn to it for the sake of time, but it's a very important passage if you're writing down, write it down please, Jeremiah chapter 7, verse 12, where we are told that the thing that characterized Shiloh was this, that for the time being, God, the Lord, Jehovah, had set or placed his name there. That's the great interest of Shiloh in this story, that although ultimately Jerusalem and the temple there would be the place where God placed his name, for the time being, until the king came who brought about victory and peace and was able to build the temple of the Lord, for the time being, God, the Lord, Jehovah, had set his name at Shiloh. So Shiloh [00:07:04] becomes the place where Jehovah had set his name. Now the early story that we are speaking about centers very much indeed on the story of Samuel's birth was in circumstances enfolding themselves in connection with Shiloh. And the great thing that I want to present to you under this introduction concerning the birth of Samuel is the godliness in family relationships and worship at God's center that we see in Elkanah and his wife Hannah. And that's a very, very interesting theme indeed. Dare I point out that a substantial proportion of those persons for whom this conference is particularly called are young family people, young men and women, wives and husbands. [00:08:02] And it's tremendously important that we should gather up the instruction of the Word of God about such circumstances. And I take the liberty of addressing particularly my younger friends who are setting up house. Many of you in the near future can expect to be setting up homes. And let us look at this story of Samuel's birth that produced such a towering man of God to see what are the family circumstances out of which came such a character as Samuel. Well, although the beauty of the story very soon fades when Eli and his sons die and the Ark is taken captive, yet the story, the circumstances of this family certainly center around Shiloh. And the two great features that I want to emphasize and leave with you, I want to be quite clear about this, the two great features are Elkanah's devotion to taking the [00:09:06] pilgrimage to the name of the Lord at Shiloh. Elkanah is on alterable purpose to gather together with the people of God to the name of the Lord at Shiloh. And the second thing is the prayers of Hannah, his wife. And it is very lovely indeed to see the complete sympathy that existed even in times of difficulty between Elkanah and Hannah, the complete sympathy that existed between them. His determination, peacefully and patiently, to remain unawfully devoted to gathering to the name of the Lord at Shiloh and his wife's simple purpose very quickly manifested to pray through every difficulty and every problem that arose, Hannah had learned how to pray it through.

[00:10:06] And it's out of circumstances like this that the birth of Samuel took place. It's worthwhile, I'm sure, for the direct edification of the kind of friends that we have here this evening that I've mentioned that we should dwell a little longer on this. You will hardly need me to explain to you what in Christianity corresponds to Shiloh. It is the verse so well known to us in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 18, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

It's not impossible, but many of you will say, well, if there's one thing I've heard till I'm tired of hearing it, it's that verse. I've heard it so much that it comes upon my ears and I'll hardly hear it again. Now let me make a plea to you this evening, perhaps as though you'd [00:11:03] never done it before, to stop and consider something of the greatness of meaning and the blessing that there is in that New Testament Christian equivalent of the pilgrimage to Shiloh, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. Now this has been a very dominantly formative verse and truth in the history of the meetings from the beginning, and so it is today. We resolutely refuse to acknowledge any other description of the manner of our gatherings on this, that we are gathered together to the name of the Lord. And that verse comes in one of the only two references to the church in the Gospels at all. In chapter 18 of Matthew, there are certain rudimentary principles of church life laid down, and therefore in clear and simple reference to the gatherings together of the church, we have the word where two or three [00:12:06] are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. I shall have to be quick about this very important thing, but do I have your ear? Are you really willing to look at it again? Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. Depending upon the background of the people you're speaking to, some of them might say, you've not got a priest. Now this of course is very important regarding our studies for the rest of this week in the morning Bible readings, but they might say, you've got no priest. Indeed, in the sense that they mean, we have not got a separate priesthood. For every one of us who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, is being built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, and the Lord is there. What can we possibly lack if the Lord is there? And that's the truth [00:13:05] which from the very beginning penetrated the hearts of the brethren. If we have the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, if he is there and we can realize and rejoice in his presence, what can we possibly lack if we have the promise that if we are simply gathered together to his name, he is there with us? Some other kinds of people might say to you, but you haven't got the best preachers, and indeed it's true we haven't got the best preachers, but what can we possibly lack if we really have the presence of the Lord? I read the other day that the generality of Christendom acts as though Peter asked John to take charge of the meeting in the upper room at the last supper.

The Lord was there. How could they possibly have dreamed of such a thing if the Lord was there? [00:14:03] And if we really in our hearts are devoted to what is a weekly occasion, so far as Christianity is concerned, plainly from the word of God, it was an annual occasion for Alcanna, but if we are unalterably devoted to the weekly occasion when we see that two or three or twenty or thirty or two or three hundred are gathered together singly and solely in the name of the Lord, then they've got something beyond which you can have nothing greater, and when you have it you can possibly lack nothing, and that is that we enjoy the presence of the Lord. And I make bold to say that the older brothers and sisters here would testify in length and in depth of all that it has meant to them week by week to meet together to meet the Lord, and even the younger brothers and sisters will have had a glimmering of the fact that when we come together we realize the [00:15:03] fulfillment of this promise. The Lord says, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. That word in the midst is very interesting indeed. It's very striking how in the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, in the familiar story of the journey to Emmaus and how they returned afterwards and met together, it's a wonderful story of how the Lord Jesus Christ made himself known to them by the way, on the wayside, on life's journey, they got to know the Lord Jesus Christ. But before that day was out, they got to know the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst, and do you think that they would have been satisfied with knowing their Savior by the way once they'd experienced also the wonderful privilege of knowing him in the midst? And that is the promise that's attached to the place where his name is placed for us. [00:16:06] If two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the

midst. Now the second point about which I would like to say a great deal, if only I could say it, and I haven't time to say it anyhow, and that is that Hannah is obviously in this story, the first chapter and the first two chapters, a woman of prayer. When her heart was sore and bitter, when she felt deeply the sadness that laid hold of her, she knew how to take it to the Lord. She knew how to get through with the Lord in this and get through, and she knew how to praise him with one of the great songs of the Bible in the second chapter. She praised him for raising the beggar from the dunghill, and she even looked forward a prophet herself to the time when the priest would be blessed before the Lord's anointed king. Well, let us remember, let me most lovingly [00:17:10] ask all our young friends, whether they're married or about to be married, or that happy event is a little bit more distant, it's not likely to be very much more distant, let me ask them to remember these two things, an unalterable devotion to the place where the Lord has set his name, and the habit of praying through all the difficulties of life together.

Now, it was out of these circumstances that Samuel was born, and the next great feature which made Samuel what he was, for there's no question at all in my mind, that the devotion of Elkanah [00:18:02] to gathering together to the name of the Lord, and Hannah's life of prayer, they were the most dominant formative influences in making Samuel the man he was. And when we are thinking of Samuel the man, we can't think of anything more appropriately wonderful in that setting than to think of these influences that lay behind his birth. Well, of course, the next great part of the subject, and the last part of the subject that I would like to speak for a few minutes about relating to Samuel the man, is his call in the incident that we've read in the third chapter.

All the clock faces and watch cases seem to me to be reflecting in the wrong way, and I can't see what time it is, so by half past ten, if I'm not stopped, I hope somebody will call out. But I honestly can't see either my watch or the clock. The call of Samuel in chapter three. I suppose that there is not a more well-known story in the Bible [00:19:11] than the call of Samuel in the temple. Every little child in a Christian household is partly brought up on the way the Lord spoke to Samuel, and I don't think the story has ever been told with a greater drama and grip than that hymn that we sung. Hush was the evening hymn, the temple court was dark, the lamp was burning dim before the sacred ark, when suddenly a voice divine rang through the silence of the shrine. Is this your prayer, O give me Samuel's ear, the open ear, O Lord, alive and quick to hear each whisper of thy word, like him to answer at thy call and to obey thee first of all. If we had nothing else [00:20:07] than that hymn to take away with us about this part of our subject, we wouldn't do badly. That description of the dramatic scene and that prayer arising out of it. Why was Samuel able to remit the word of the Lord to the people? Why was he able to judge them so many years? Why was he able to recover them to the Lord and to remake the broken link and to give them victory over the Philistines? It was because his ear in this chapter had been opened to the voice of the Lord, and it was because his ear was open to the voice of the Lord that he was recognized in all Israel soon to be a prophet of the Lord. Only one thing I have time to say about this very striking the message that he got, very striking the foretelling that he got of the future, but the thing that I want to speak [00:21:05] about for a few minutes and leave with you is this, that the Lord called three times to Samuel and it was only on the third time that he understood it was the voice of the Lord. It's very striking that it says there that in those days it says the word of the Lord was precious. Now I've done my best to find out the meaning of that and it seems to me that it means that they rarely heard the word of the Lord addressed to them in those days. It was so rare a thing under Eli and his wicked sons that they rarely heard the word of the Lord in those days and therefore there was no vision, there was no recognition of the facts of the situation, there was no challenge coming from the broken link and all was open to the people in victory and peace if they only obeyed the Lord and served him only. The word of the Lord only came rarely in

those days. [00:22:03] Now it was perhaps for that reason that Samuel wasn't expecting the Lord to speak to him. Now that is the problem and the reason, one almost might say the great reason why we so often come to the meeting and go away unmoved. It's not often that we will go away disappointed but we'll go away unmoved. Why? Because we are not expecting that the Lord will speak to us. Do you realize that the Lord in the church has made arrangements that there should be prophecy that directly out from him in the power of his word and his spirit he's willing to speak to us but it's only too often so sad that we don't expect the Lord to be speaking to us and therefore we go away without the message that is directly applied to us like this word was addressed so clearly to Samuel. Oh let us, let us as we leave this particular part of our subject, let us all [00:23:03] make this purpose of heart before the Lord. For the rest of this week let's begin, no time like the present, let us come together expecting that the Lord will speak to us and if we come together expecting that the Lord will speak to us he will indeed speak to us and we'll receive those things which will do us good. In the end the Lord pressed his word upon Samuel and Samuel heard the word of the Lord and it was because he learned to hear the word of the Lord that he became the first of the prophets. Now although we didn't read it for Samuel's message I would like to turn over and just cast your eye down chapter seven because I think it is in chapter seven that we have particularly the detail that we want about Samuel's message.

[00:24:08] Now what I've just said about the call of the Lord reaching Samuel and expecting, let me address that particularly. I'm sure that if they've listened they've understood to the middle teenagers. Let us take in the very youngest of our gathering here. Let us take this simple point away with us from the story of Samuel that we will not come together on expecting, we will not come together with expecting the Lord will speak to us what he sees that we need and that we shall listen to it and will seek his grace to obey it. And so that voice of the Lord to Samuel is something that is certainly designed to help us all. Now in the second verse of chapter seven the intervening chapters have been filled with an [00:25:08] extremely enthralling story. From my childhood I thought what a dramatic story it was how they captured the ark and these two sons of Eli were killed and they set up the ark in the presence of the Philistine God and it fell on its face in the presence of the Lord. However I have I mustn't yield to any temptation to turn aside to this. I must come straight on to chapter seven where we are told the men of Kirgath-Jerim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord and brought it and so on. In verse two it came to pass while the ark abode in Kirgath-Jerim that the time was long it was 20 years and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Now when I was listening yesterday to Dr. Ledoon I couldn't help but think of this particular verse that occurs in in my chapters in my story. There was a time that came when so much they had been disciplined which [00:26:07] is exactly one of the things he said to us that their hearts were yearning after the Lord. They were sad at that long broken link between themselves and the Lord and they lamented after the Lord. Well I'm sure this little verse is a voice to us all confirming so strongly the message that came to us yesterday from Psalm 42. As the heart pants after the water brooks Mr. Wallace and all the Scotsmen could do it better than I and say as pants the heart for thirsting streams. Then the paraphrase is a wonderful version of that verse but it speaks to us of the thirst for the Lord, the thirst for the knowledge of the living God that will never go disappointed and when all Israel lamented after the Lord then the answer came and they got [00:27:02] Samuel's message. Now I want just you to see Samuel's message that's the second part of my subject so you see we're hastening to an end. I want you to see the second part of my message that is Samuel's message in verse 3. Let us look very carefully at it indeed and Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel saying if you will return unto the Lord with all your heart I'll put away the strange gods from among you prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. It was a call you see a call so often repeated in the word of God to the people of God in all times and not less in our time the voice that comes from the

preacher in Ecclesiastes my son give me thine heart.

[00:28:02] It's our hearts that the Lord wants and although it's extremely difficult it seems to me to put into words what it means to say that our hearts are either with or not with the Lord it often seems to be something like this we kneel down to pray and our hearts are seeking the Lord we are there because we are perhaps lamenting the Lord or perhaps desiring to know more of the Lord and then the thought comes to us that there's something else that we might be doing that's more important than this the thought comes to us there's something else that we might do we'd like to be doing more than this there is the point at which it's clear that the Lord does not possess our hearts it's not something which robs us of what is happy and desirable it's the supreme joy itself if the Lord has our hearts because the greatest possible blessing [00:29:02] is open to those whose hearts are turned to the Lord when we come to the story of Elijah we'll find the one great word um Mr Waller will forget this I hope and tell us what he's got to say about it but the one great word is about his work that they might know that he turned the hearts of this people back to the Lord the Lord turned the hearts of this people back to himself you see there's a very similar thread on which the message of the prophets is given the Lord is saying by the prophet here that he wanted their hearts and how was it shown that he didn't have their hearts it was shown because they were worshiping the gods the false gods of the philistines the false gods who lived in that land around them whose shrine surrounded them and the smoke of the sacrifices rose from every hill their hearts were after the false gods and it was because their hearts were after the false gods that their hearts were the Lord desired their hearts to be turned back to [00:30:04] if he returned with all your heart then I will give you the victory if you prepare your heart to seek the Lord well this reminds me of the message of one of the writing prophets the prophet Jeremiah it's in his second chapter that he says my people have committed two evils they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and they have hewn out for themselves systems broken systems that can hold no water the Lord will the Lord can by his word by his spirit by the prophet the Lord can turn our hearts back to him so that he may give us the blessing and in this particular case it was deliverance from and victory over the philistines who were oppressing them and robbing them of their joy in the land and the place that the Lord had given them [00:31:05] now it seems to me that the story of Samuel and David and the book of Samuel is so much occupied with the philistines and they occupy such a large portion in the sacred story in the old testament that it's worth stopping a little in order to see what for us is represented by the philistines the people whose false gods had stolen away the hearts of the people of the Lord well we'll be singing a prayer about this I hope we will be able to do so Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store that's the one thing pinpointed in the new testament as idolatry for the christian it's covetousness it's an over devotion to possessions and material things these are the false gods that stand in our way [00:32:02] against our hearts being solely the property of the Lord no blessing will be withheld from us if our hearts are turned to the Lord but we all have to feel humbled when we think of the disproportionate place that the material things of life occupy in our hearts and that make no mistake my brothers and sisters old and young that in the new testament is the idolatry concerning which the spirit of God says little children keep yourselves from idols now how did these philistines get to work well there are two verses I want you to look at I won't occupy much time with them but you'll be able to write them down genesis chapter 26 because the philistines were quite active in that early part of the story but because they're so active in our part I go back to this as a characteristic passage about them and that is genesis chapter 26 verse 15 I have no time [00:33:04] to tell the story in any more detail than this but all the wells which his father's servants this is about Isaac and his father Abraham all the wells which Abraham's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father the philistines had stopped them and filled them with earth now you might or might not understand what I'm driving at but that's a very simple passage but it's there's no typical a statement in the word of God that's more bursting with

powerful meaning and practical meaning day by day than that verse it was the philistines who stopped the wells by filling them with earth the philistines in the old testament represent earthly uh that is a fleshly mind in the things of God and this is represented you see by the disproportionate [00:34:06] attention that earthly things can have you understand don't you that all that I've been saying about Elkanah and Hannah these are earthly things it's not the same as worldly things it's earthly things and earthly things must have our attention earthly things both in the family in the household in our jobs and in very many ways earthly things have to have our attention but earthly things occupying a disproportionate part of the attention of the people of God is the philistines stopping the wells the deep spring of the life-giving power of the spirit of God they can be and they are frequently stopped up with earth the philistines stopped the wells with earth and it is really a disproportionate attention to these things that I've spoken of which are the earthly things concerning which the spirit of God in various places warns us [00:35:04] not to set our hearts upon earthly things not to let them be the dominant things in our lives but they are to be kept in their place under the lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the plain commands of his word and kept in the place the Lord will bless us in them but let us recognize the fact that the philistines the natural man in the things of God will certainly try in your life and mine to stop the wells by filling them with earth now the other thing is in first Samuel itself a little bit later in the story in first Samuel chapter 13 you have another snippet about what the philistines will do what the philistines are out to do and whenever we see it being done we can recognize the philistines at work robbing us of our enjoyment of the inherit inheritance [00:36:03] which is our possession in first Samuel chapter 13 I'll just read the few verses this time I will have difficulty in finding it if I persist in keeping in the first Kings first Samuel chapter 13 verse 18 hmm verse 19 now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel for the philistines said lest the hebrews make them swords and spears the philistines took away all the smiths so are impossible for the people to keep their swords bright there were no swords and spears [00:37:02] worth using except in the hand of the king and the prince because the philistines had made quite sure that there couldn't be a bright sword in Israel oh what a what a what an obvious parable that is the sword of the spirit is the word of God and to keep your arm bright is one of the first privileges and responsibility of the christian soldier and your knowledge of the word of God a two-edged sword that pierces us and convicts us where we need convicting but is the sword also that will indeed fight and win the battles of the Lord overcoming those who will keep us from the enjoyment of our heritage don't let us forget that the philistines will be always out to rob us of the word of God and whatever we see robbing us of the word of God it is the philistines at work it might be by persuading us it is not the word of God it might be by persuading us that it's too difficult for us to understand it might be by persuading us that it simply refers to the animals [00:38:04] of an ancient people all these things are what the philistines do to rob us of the word of God well this is the kind of things the philistines do and if we really set our hearts to the Lord to turn our hearts to the Lord and prepare our hearts for him then he will by his word and by his spirit give us the victory over the philistines and this will give us the enjoyment of the things of God which is our heritage and our just possession now finally I have to draw your attention to the fact that just as in the case of his mother Hannah it is very plain indeed that it was the prayers of Samuel it was the prayers of Samuel that gave him his power it was not primarily what he said to men that gave him the power [00:39:02] it is what he said to God that gave him the power and I just want you to cast your eye back over chapter 7 again I'm striving to keep in first Samuel safely and you can see how many times we're told that the Samuel was a man of prayer in verse 5 we read and Samuel said gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray for you unto the Lord and then they confessed their sins and in verse 8 the children of Israel thoroughly aroused by this time to their need and lamenting Jehovah they said cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us that he will save us out of the hand of the devil and we shall be saved for us that he will save us out of the hand of the philistines and in verse 9 and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel and the Lord heard him and so on

it's abundantly plain that Samuel [00:40:04] as his mother was a woman of prayer so out of this came the fact that Samuel is a man of prayer and he shows here in this chapter and the chapters around a very important truth that comes to us from the lives of some of these prophets that we are studying this week and that is that if the prophet takes his stand on the truth of God and his word then the prophet has power God puts forth his power you and I have not often experienced this perhaps but it's certainly there for us that if what we believe is right according to the word of God and we proclaim it and we stand to it then just as the Lord gave thunder in the time of harvest and just as the fire came down from heaven to burn the sacrifice in the days of Elijah so in the spiritual way the power that we need will be there the power that we need will be there if we are rightly pursuing the way of Samuel and calling upon the name of the Lord can I close with a special [00:41:07] message to the older persons who are here as well as all the young together and that is in chapter 12 of Samuel you're getting very well on to the end of the Samuel story and I've only taken certain heads out of it but in chapter 12 verse 23 that is the verse upon which I will close Samuel is telling the people that although they have done great wickedness then there's no need for them to fear if they turn not aside from following the Lord but once again the message serve the Lord with a whole heart how many times that message comes out of the books of Samuel and Kings David followed the Lord with a whole heart when you get later this king and that king they did some good things but they did not follow the Lord with a whole heart and the message is here again turn not aside for then should ye go [00:42:03] after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver for they are vain for the Lord will not forsake his people for his great namesake because it has pleased the Lord to make you his people and this here is the point verse 23 moreover as for me God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you I'm sure that more than any other single influence perhaps the meetings that prosper oh the prosperity to the steadfast prayer especially of older men and women as Samuel was retired you know gone back to live at his home but called out by the challenge of the terrific things that were taking place but he was a man who had made this purpose in his heart that to the very end he would not give up praying for the people of the Lord and let us all take this message this purpose to our hearts God forbid that I should sin against the Lord [00:43:04] in ceasing to pray for you lots of the things that you feel are wrong with the meetings are perhaps wrong because you are not praying enough about them lots of the things that you feel are wrong and are the subject of complaint if most earnestly you took them to God and prayed about them and for the responsible brothers and sisters who should take action these things you will do far far more for prosperity for the people of God than could be done by any other way here is the final word God forbid Samuel says that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you the story of Samuel begins with prayer his mother's prayer to God for him and the story of Samuel so far as we're concerned tonight ends with Samuel at the end of a long life of prayer he's not giving it up he says God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you