



CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to 1 Samuel 12:23

*Title: **Becoming a Soldier's Shield*** (For Veteran's Sunday)

*Theme: **Praying for Those in Harm's Way***

Introduction: *Our key text today is set in the time when the prophet Samuel is giving his farewell speech.* In this speech Samuel confronts the people with evidence of the righteous acts performed by the Lord for the people of God. (1 Samuel 12:7) Samuel tells the people, "If you fear the Lord and serve and obey Him and do not rebel against His commands and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God – Good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against His commands, His hand will be against you..." (1 Samuel 12:14-15)

It was harvest time and Samuel called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain so they would know what a great evil they had done in the eyes of the Lord when they asked for a king to rule over them as the other nations had kings. (1 Samuel 12:17) The same day Samuel prayed, the "...Lord sent thunder and rain and all the people stood in awe of the Lord..." (1 Samuel 12:18) Listen to the response of the people to Samuel, "...Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to our sins the evil of asking for a king." (1 Samuel 12:19) After a few more instructions, Samuel tells the people, "For the sake of His great name the Lord will not reject His people, because the Lord was pleased to make you His own." (1 Samuel 12:22) These words of promise lead us to our key text:

Listen as I read 1 Samuel 12:23, "[As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord for failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.](#)" Let us pray!

Proposition: *I would propose to you that when those whose lives are in danger ask for prayer, it would be a sin to fail to pray for them.* Born again Christians can take their rightful place among such giants of intercession (The Expositors Bible Commentary) as Moses, (Exodus 32:30-32) Daniel, (Daniel 9:4-20) the apostle Paul (Romans 1:9-10) And Jesus. (Romans 8:34)

Interrogative Sentence: *Are Christians called to pray for each other and for those who risk their lives for their country?* Just what are the benefits in praying for those in our armed forces?

Transitional Sentence: *God who called us to Christ sent His Holy Spirit to have the Apostle Paul write, "I urge, then first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone..."* (1 Timothy 2:1) Ephesians 6:18 tells us that Christians are to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers..."

Samuel could have said, “Now that you Israelites have the king you wanted and have sinned against God, go to Saul and have him pray for you.” God knew that Saul’s heart would not remain faithful to Him and His prayers would be superficial and self-centered. Therefore, the Lord would call forth a true man of God, Samuel, who knew Him and would pray so as not to be found in sin in his own life.

The Christian’s call is to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and they sin when they restrain prayer in general, and in particular when they cease to pray for those who ask for it.

Even though Samuel would no longer have political leadership, he still had spiritual influence in teaching God’s Word and through prayer. Christians do not need to have authority over those who serve in the armed forces and who are in harm’s way, but they most certainly can have a spiritual influence through heartfelt prayer.

As the prophets of God interceded in prayer for those they had spiritual responsibility over, Christians are to set the example before governmental leaders and armed force personnel in regard to prayer which is God’s way of overcoming anxiety in times of war. Samuel followed the example of Moses who interceded for the Jewish nation, and Christians are to follow the example of Samuel, the Apostle Paul and Jesus. Christians cannot forget the nation the Lord has led them into or called them to serve Him in. Nor should they fail to intercede for the men and women whom God raises up to protect the freedoms He has given them.

Prayer is mightier than a king’s power of authority and more effective than a warrior’s sword. Wars are going to come and it is the responsibility of Christians to hold up their generation of soldiers in prayer which the Apostle Paul understood to be a weapon that has divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:4)

The goal for every Christian should be to say as the Apostle Paul who wrote, “God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of His Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times...” (Romans 1:9-10) As Christians prayerfully examine the whole of Scripture they are led of the Holy Spirit to intercession. They know in their hearts that failing to pray for those who are in harm’s way, whether in fighting the spiritual or earthly battles of the Lord, is to sin. Pleasing God involves interceding for all of His works and for the people He is using to get His will done. (The truths found in this portion of the message came from prayerful study of the NIV Bible; Matthew Henry Commentary; The Bible Readers Companion; Commentary on the Old Testament; The New American Commentary; True the Bible Commentary; The Pulpit Commentary)

Transitional Sentence: *Christians are to be faithful in praying for those who are in harm’s way.* God has set certain principles that must be followed in order for a nation to enjoy God’s mighty intervention.

Samuel was married and had a family. (1 Samuel 12:2) He had served as priest (1 Samuel 7) and Judge (1 Samuel 7:16; Acts 13:20) and he was a prophet. (Acts 3:24) He also

got involved in directly praying for military situations, in calling a nation to repentance and in giving them directions on how to live.

According to the truth found in 1 Samuel 7, Samuel sees something in the people of God that indicates that they are repentant and they are disgusted with their foreign servitude and want a restoration of liberty and independence. They are evidently coming to Samuel to ask what can be done so they can be rescued from their bondage.

The truths that Samuel brought forth to the Israelites must be grasped by the church who desires to pray prayers that enable their armed forces to enjoy God's shield of protection. Samuel tells them to produce the fruit of repentance by ridding themselves of foreign gods, the Baals and Ashtoreths."

"Baals" (*baal*) means that the Israelites were guilty of worshiping many pagan gods along with serving the Lord. They included the worship of the gods of the country they lived in with the worship of the one true God. This is happening in America today, many claim to believe in God, yet by the expressions of their lives they are serving the worldly gods made up by mankind today.

"Ashtoreths," (*astarot*) refers to a false goddess, who was considered to be the goddess of love and fertility. It is also use as a plural word, denoting all the female divinities, whose rites were celebrated by the most gross and revolting impurities. Quite often she is worshipped in connection with Baal and she is depicted as being nude with horns on her head.

Jesus warned that to make possessions central in life is also idolatry. (Matthew 6:24) Paul in Romans 1:18-25 teaches that idolatry is not the first stage of religion, but it is the result of deliberate religious apostasy. When man sins against the light of God's Word and refuses to worship the Lord in Spirit and truth, God brings major chastisements. Idolatry is that which leads to the dethronement of God from the heart. The Apostle Paul warns us in Ephesians 5:5, "For this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-such a man is an idolater-has any inheritance in the kingdom of God." In giving rules for holy living the Apostle Paul writes, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immortality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5)

This nation uses sensuality to sell her manmade gods. Nearly everything uses women dressing and using sensual looks to draw people to their product in order to draw a person's mind off purity to satisfy the flesh. Pornography is rampant in this nation even among church attendees. Many who claim to believe in God have their Baals and Ashtoreths today as much as the Israelites did in Samuel's time.

In 1 Samuel 7 we read of Samuel a great man of prayer fulfilling his position as judge, prophet and priest. He tells the Israelites to meet in Mizpah. He gives them the great

news that he is going to intercede for them. (1 Samuel 7:5) The Bible says Samuel cried out to God on Israel's behalf. (1 Samuel 7:9)

The Bible says that God is the same today as He was yesterday. I believe that if America would truly repent of her sins, and begin to fully seek after the Lord, they would see Him do some great things in battle for her troops.

Only God knows what He is going to do for America in regard to protecting her borders from those who would put her people in harm's way. The church needs only to fulfill her calling to pray and teach Christians to obey what the Lord Jesus commands. (Matthew 28:20)

Transitional Sentence: *History records powerful truths of God's intervention for armed forces as people take time to prayer for those in harm's way.*

In May of 1940, Germany was on the move and it was unbelievable how much control Hitler got over Europe. Hitler had backed up nearly all the remaining Allied troops to the beach at Dunkirk, France. Our Allied troops were surrounded. Ten miles to their rear was the German army. In front of them the English channel.

An evacuation by water was their only hope however, it would not be easy. The English Channel was known for her terrible tides and treacherous winds. She was full of German mines and down the beach was Nazi artillery. The only other direction to go held German U-boats. 400,000 Allied troops were at Dunkirk and one English General said, "Nothing but a miracle could save them."

It was at this time the Holy Spirit of God moved upon Reece Howell and a group of 100 students in a Welsh Bible College to become intercessors for those who were in harm's way of Hitler's armed forces. For some time they prayed from 7:00 P.M. to 12:00 Midnight. While those Welsh Bible students prayed, the British Royal Navy rounded up practically everything that floated in England to go a rescue the troops.

During the rescue attempt there were several miracles. First, Hitler, for some mysterious reason stopped the Panzer tanks just 10 miles away. If he had kept moving he could have done great damage to our Allied Forces or destroyed them completely. Second, for an unheard of 9 days, the English Channel was perfectly calm, smooth as glass. Old-timers said, "We have never seen it like this before."

Heavy fog sometimes moved in and at other times smoke from burning oil fields drifted calmly towards the beach, thus, keeping the German air-force from seeing anything from the air during the evacuation. When the evacuation off the beach was finished, 338,000 Allied troops were rescued. The other 62,000 soldiers gave their lives so their fellow soldiers could get off the beach. They fought the oncoming Nazi Armed Forces when they finally made their move to attack again.

It is because of that kind of sacrifice we take time to observe Veterans' Day. It is because of God responding to the prayers of great intercessors that we enjoy the freedom that we have in America today.

In Closing: *Great Christian leaders know the necessity of coming to repentance, knowing the ways of the Lord and living according to God's Word. They spend time in intercession for those in harm's way.*

President Abraham Lincoln, in a National Proclamation of Prayer and Repentance in 1863 wrote, "We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." (The Presidential Prayer Team Website)

As we take time to honor our Veterans may we not forget the cost paid by the perfect Veteran, Jesus Christ. He bore public shame and His sacrifice got victory over the physical, mental and spiritual wounds of the war for the souls of men. The weapons of the flesh, the world and the lies of the devil were afflicted upon the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ.

There are many Veterans today who are in harm's way and many have not surrendered their hearts over to the Perfect Veteran, Jesus Christ. There are also Veterans who know Christ. They need our intercession for protection as well.

Let us Pray!