

Intro

- ~ A turning point is a point at which a significant change occurs
- ~ It's believed by historians that the turning point of WW2 was the Germans losing in the Russian city of Stalingrad
- ~ Prior to Germany invading Russia the Germans had successfully 9 different countries
- ~ The Germans had nearly defeated the Russians but the Russians held on to surround the Germans and win the 5 month long battle in the freezing cold
- ~ The turning point for the Israelites to go from discipline to blessing was their repentance
- ~ This sets up for this important truth that blessing is preceded by holiness, spiritual training and discipline. This is a pattern we see in the bible
 - Moses, Israel, David, Jonah, Peter
- ~ The Lord's help comes in the form of blessing but also discipline
- ~ A parent disciplines their child to mold their character and trustworthiness and so God does with his people
- ~ When a parent does discipline their child, while the child may not enjoy it, it truly is a help to that child
- ~ And, it's a help when God disciplines his child

TextOutline of the chapter

V1,2 = The ark is at Kirjath-jearim

V3-8 = Israel's repentance

- V3 – Samuel tells says return to the Lord, put away strange gods, prepare your hearts to the Lord, serve him only
- V4-7 = Israel's follow through
- V8 = Israel asks the Samuel to pray to the Lord for them

V9 = Samuel's offering, prayer and the Lord hears

V10,11 = The Lord thunders against the Philistines

V12 = Samuel's stone of help

V13,14 = Israel takes back their cities and the Philistines are subdued all the days of Samuel

V15-17 = Samuel is the prophet of the Lord and leads the people spiritually

Outline

- 1 The Lord's help is in blessing (the result of repentance)
- 2 The Lord's help is in discipline (the result of forsaking fellowship)
- 3 The Lord's help is behind us and ahead of us (the result of Ebenezer)

1 The Lord's help is in blessing (the result of repentance)

~ The turning point for Israel was when the lamented and turned back to the Lord

~ Samuel told them to return to the Lord in v3

~ When they returned to the Lord they put themselves in a position to be blessed by God

~ The Lord alone accomplished the victory by thundering against the Philistines

~ The Lord then restored lost cities back to Israel the Philistines had taken

~ Why was this reference to Ebenezer special? To get the full appreciation of chapter 7 we have to go back to chapter 4

2 The Lord's help is in discipline (the result of forsaking fellowship)

~ In 1 Sam 4:1 it's as if Samuel looked back twenty years prior and renamed the place where Israel's discipline started and renamed it Ebenezer

~ 1 Sam 4 chronicles how far Israel had fallen from fellowship with the Lord

~ Discipline had the purpose of restoring Israel back to fellowship

1. God allowed Israel defeated by the Philistines
2. God allowed the ark of the Lord to be captured
3. There was a pronouncement of Ichabod over Israel

~ Their relationship and fellowship with God had become a failure because it was 1) formal 2) forsaken 3) forgotten

~ An example of their failure of fellowship was Israel brought the ark of the Lord to the battle. Instead of crying out to God for mercy and help they brought the ark thinking that alone would secure victory

~ The ark of the Lord had become a "good luck charm" to Israel

- ~ The result is they lost the battle and the ark of the Lord was taken by the Philistines
- ~ At the end of chapter 4 we see a name used that characterized Israel, it's Ichabod
- ~ Eli's daughter-in-law names her child Ichabod meaning "the glory has departed"
- ~ Why did God allow the glory to depart? Because discipline was the means to blessing for Israel
- ~ What if God just turned grandfatherly and said, "oh they didn't mean it and I'll just reward them anyway?"
- ~ God would have fostered a bunch of spoiled people who didn't need him
- ~ We train our children and grandchildren for the purpose of maturity, growth and wisdom
- ~ So God trains his children for spiritual maturity and usability and finally, bless ability
- ~ Heb 12:10,11 speaks of discipline as the means to make us holy and then fruitful
- ~ While the Lord's discipline isn't enjoyable can we see it as the "Lord's help"

The Lord uses visuals to get our attention

- ~ God allowed the Philistines to defeat Israel and take the Ark of the Covenant
- ~ When trouble comes it may be the Lord's way of restoring us to fellowship
- ~ When trouble comes our way it shouldn't be, "Lord get me out of this trouble" it should be, "Lord, I thank you that you're with me in this trouble. Help me to lean on you and your understanding." May we recognize that God is in control
- ~ May we ask God for wisdom, patience, strength and guidance for the difficulty. May we ask God to transform us through the trial
- ~ Our fellowship is crucial. It's more important than escaping the trials
- ~ Another indicator was when Eli's daughter-in-law names her child Ichabod (the glory of God has departed)
- ~ The Lord uses visuals with us to get our attention

3 The Lord's help is behind us and ahead of us (the result of Ebenezer)

~ Ebenezer also appears in 4:1 and 5:1.

- 4:1 Israel prepared for battle at Ebenezer
- 5:1 The Philistines took the ark from Israel at Ebenezer

- ~ Samuel erected a stone to commemorate the Lord's work and deliverance. He called it Ebenezer
- ~ When Samuel placed erected this monument he named it Ebenezer (hitherto has the Lord blessed us)
- ~ This means God has been faithful (discipline) and will yet be faithful (blessing)
- ~ It's a look back and yet it's a look forward
- ~ We may not think of the Lord's discipline as help but it is because the Lord is concerned about our fellowship

Conclusion

In 1 Peter we see three callings

- 1.Call to holiness (1 Peter 1:15,16)
- 2.Call to suffering (1 Peter 2:18)
- 3.Call to blessing (1 Peter 3:9)

- Before there's the calling to blessing there's the calling to holiness and suffering

- 1 Holiness sets us apart to Christ
- 2 Suffering helps us identify with Christ
- 3 Blessing is experiencing the fullness of Christ