

## SLIDE

- **Service Time Changes**
- **No More Registrations**
- **Please Come to 10:30a**

## TITLE SLIDE

### INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 4. 1 Samuel 4. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 4.

### INTRODUCTION: SHOPLIFTING

I want to tell you about the one and only time I have been arrested. If you're new today you either like,

- "Hmm...I like this place already!"
  - or you're like,
- "What kind of shady dude did they give a face-mic to?"

When I was ten-years-old I was a baseball card collector.

- Every single penny of my allowance money
- would go to the purchase of cards.
- I would do extra chores to earn more card money.
- It was a 10-year-old's addiction.

Well, one day I was at the store with my family, and per usual I went right to the baseball card section to browse.

- I found a pack of cards I wanted
- and I brought them to my mom to ask if I could get them.
- She asked if I had any more allowance money left,
  - which of course was a silly question,
  - because that cash burned a hole in my pocket
  - the same day I got it.
- So, she told me that I couldn't get the cards.

Now, if you've been here a minute...you know this: I'm an idiot!

So, here's what I did:

- I walked the pack back to the isle with the cards,
  - but instead of putting it back in its rightful place,
- I slipped the pack into my pants.
- I was wearing sweatpants,
  - you know, with the tapered ankles,
- so, the pack fell down by my ankles
  - held conveniently in place by a thin strip of elastic.

Well, upon exiting the store two men in suits

- came up to my dad and I
- and asked us to come with them.
- And a long story short,
- I was arrested for shoplifting...
- One pack of baseball cards...
- At age ten.

And there were some pretty hefty consequences.

- I had to serve 50 hours community service,
  - but what's more,
- I had to take a criminal reform class...as a 10-year-old!

This was a day-long class, where all the harsh realities about breaking the law were shown to us.

- Now, I was the youngest one there, by a lot.
- And my crime was BY FAR the most minor.
- The next “smallest” crime committed by anyone in the room
  - was grand theft auto.

How do I know that?

- Well, we had to go around the room
- and share our respective crimes.

One guy had shot out his ex-girlfriend's car windows!

- Imagine me when I had to confess
  - that I had stolen a pack of baseball cards...
  - while wearing tapered ankle sweatpants.

## TRANSITION

But I guess that class did the trick, because I knew I would never shoplift again...

Church, I'm calling today's sermon: **SLIDE SCARED STRAIGHT.**

- Because we're going to be talking about sin today,
- and the grave effects that sin has on our lives.

And I hope in some good ways, we might be SCARED STRAIGHT.

You see, what I learned walking away from my experience

- was that there was no way I wanted to end up
- in the same place as the rest of the people in that class.

I saw, very clearly,

- that there was a path I was on,
- and it wasn't leading in the direction I wanted to go...
- and I needed to change.

And in our text today we're going to see the devastating effects of sin. And I hope it serves as a warning.

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## **CONTEXT**

Now, let's remember where we are in this book.

- Eli is the priest and judge of Israel at this time.
- But, as we have seen, he's been a pretty shady leader,
- and God has reached his breaking point with Eli.
- Eli's failure to take seriously God's commands,
- and obey God's precepts has led to what we saw last week:

Israel went to war with the Philistines,

- and in a great defeat,
- Israel lost 30,000 soldiers,
- the sons of Eli were killed,
- and the ark of the covenant was captured.

So, let's pick it up here. 1 Samuel 4:12

## 1 SAMUEL 4:12-13

[12] A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head. [13] When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out.

### EXPLAIN: TREMBLE

So, a runner comes from the battle to report to the city what had happened.

And 95-year-old Eli sits and waits for news.

And the text says that **his heart trembled for the ark of God**.

- Question: Why wasn't he anticipating good news?
- Surely the ark of the covenant would assure victory!

Remember last week,

- when the ark came into the camp
- the soldiers of Israel shouted with great joy,
- and the Philistines dismayed.
- What did Eli know that the rest of Israel did not know?
- Why was he trembling with anxiety?

Well, Eli knew the prophecy from a man of God given to him in chapter 2

- assuring him that because of the sins of his sons,
- and his unwillingness to deal with their sins,
- both sons would die on the same day,
- and his line would be cut off forever.

This was further confirmed in chapter 3 when Samuel received the same message from the Lord, and reported it to Eli.

## **POINT 1: SLAVERY**

And let me pause here to make my first point. We see here:

### **SLIDE THE SLAVERY OF SIN.**

You see, Eli knows!

- He knows that he's not followed God.
- He knows that he's not handled his son's sin correctly.
- He knows that he is going to be judged.
- And it has now enslaved him.
- And his heart trembled.

The hearts of sinful men are always uneasy at times of danger, because their consciences testify about their guilt before God.

As a ten-year-old, I knew the very moment those men approached us at that store what was going down, and I felt it in the pit of my gut!

John Calvin famously said:

- *"He who is the boldest despiser of God*
- *is of all men the most startled*
- *at the rustle of a falling leaf."*

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## ILLUSTRATION

We know this to be true.

When you are driving too fast.

- Driving above the speed limit.
  - Not that you would ever do that...but just imagine it.
- What are you always looking around for?
- Yeah, you're lookout for cops.
- You're always anxious of getting pulled over.

And so, when you see that police cruiser around the next bend,

- and you hit the brakes,
- and you try to act all casual as you pass by,
- and you watch in your rear-view-window...
- with that feeling...
- just hoping he doesn't pull out and turn on those lights.
- Right?

Or if you've got some shady business going on in your phone.

- You're going to be overly protective of that thing.
- No one's allowed to use it but you.
- Quickly hiding it when your spouse walks in the room.
- Just always on edge,
- a bit paranoid,
- with the fear of being found out.

Always afraid...just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

It doesn't matter what the sin is.

I mean, isn't it just exhausting

- trying to hide sin?
- trying to keep up appearances?
- trying to stay ahead of your sin?

This is the slavery of sin.

Oh church, I hope we can be SACRED STRAIGHT and find the freedom from the slavery of sin. But there's more here. Verse 14:

### **1 SAMUEL 4:14-18**

[14] When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?" Then the man hurried and came and told Eli. [15] Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. [16] And the man said to Eli, "I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." And he said, "How did it go, my son?" [17] He who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." [18] As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

### **EXPLAIN: ELI'S RESPONSE**

And thus ends the time of Eli.

Now, what struck me as the most fascinating part of these verses is that Eli seems almost uncaring at the first two pieces of news:



- that Israel had been greatly defeated, losing 30,000 soldiers,
- AND that his two sons had died.

I mean, he's almost flippant about those things. Doesn't he have a soul?

Well, if you remember back to chapter 3:

- there is evidence
- that Eli had resolved himself to his demise
- and that of his house,
- as seen in his response to the message of judgment
- from Samuel in chapter 3:18 –
- *"It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him."*
- So maybe he's just come to terms with that.

But then, when he hears about the ark of God being captured, he falls over and dies.

- He never seems to have imagined
- the far reaches
- and national effects
- his sin would have.
- Israel has now lost the ark.

After judging Israel for 40 years, his legacy is utterly destroyed.

## QUESTION

Question: How did things get to this state in his life?

- Well, we don't REALLY know,
- because we have no record of his early years.

We don't have any record of his accomplishments,

- though there must have been SOMETHING
- for him to become not only the priest,
- but the judge of Israel.

But everything would be left to conjecture.

Perhaps it was the loss of his wife.

- We assume she died at some point
- because there is no mention of her at all in this narrative.

Perhaps he overemphasized his work

- and subsequently neglected
- raising and training of his children,
- as many men do.

Perhaps he was actually the one who modeled the sins to his sons,

- and they were simply following in dad's footsteps...
- that might explain his obesity.
- That's a weird little addition to the text.

We don't know...but we DO know.

## **POINT 2: SLOPE**

And it's my second point about sin. We see here

**SLIDE THE SLOPE OF SIN.**

Eli's disgrace and fall would have happened the way that it always does:

- One step at a time.
- One decision at a time.
- One compromise at a time.
- One sin at a time.

The slope of sin is always downward.

Galatians 6 was read over us this morning:

### **SLIDE GALATIANS 6:7-8**

[7] Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

- First we sow,
- then we reap.
- And the slope of sin...
- the sowing of sin...
- will always reap corruption.

### **SLIDE**

To quote author Ralph Waldo Emerson –

- *“Sow a thought and you reap an action;*
- *sow an act and you reap a habit;*
- *sow a habit and you reap a character;*
- *sow a character and you reap a destiny.”*

We're getting a picture of the downward slope of sin.

- It starts with small disobedience;
- and it goes down, down, down,
- until it ends in total spiritual disaster.

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### **APPLICATION: TUESDAY**

But it never starts there!

- No one just wake up on a random Tuesday morning and says,
- *"You know what I think I'm going to do today?"*
  - *Ruin my life!*
- *It's Tuesday,*
- *so, I'm going to do something*
  - *that will destroy my marriage,*
  - *or my relationship with my kids,*
  - *or my career."*

NO!

- Adulterous relationships at 40
  - begin as addictions to porn at 20.
- Eating disorders in your 20s
  - begin with jealousies not dealt with in high school...
- An impenetrable, rebellious heart at 50
  - begins with resisting God-given authority early in life...

## TRANSITION

It always starts small. But the slope is slippery.

- It's a pack of baseball cards,
- shoved in your pants...
- unless you're SCARED STRAIGHT.

Oh, beware the slippery, downward slope of sin!

I've said it before,

- but if you don't want to fall down,
- don't walk in slippery places.

Well, this story concludes with a disturbing and distressing anecdote from Eli's family. Look at verse 19:

### 1 SAMUEL 4:19-22

[19] Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. [20] And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer or pay attention. [21] And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. [22] And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

## **EXPLAIN: WIFE**

So, a new character shows up at the end of this tragic tale.

- Eli's daughter-in-law,
- Phinehas' wife,
- who's back in Shiloh,
- is pregnant.

And upon hearing the news

- of the ark being captured,
- and the death of all the men in her life...
- in her distress,
- she goes into labor,
- and the women around her even try to console her grief
- with the message that she has a son,
- but she dies nonetheless.

## **POINT 3: SPREAD**

And this is the final point I want to make on sin.

It's **SLIDE** **THE SPREAD OF SIN.**

This woman,

- even if she had pulled through
- and lived after the premature birth,
- would have been in dire straits.

All of the men in her life:

- her husband.
- Her father-in-law.
- Her brother-in-law.
- They're all killed in one day.

Her newborn son will now be raised without male family to raise him up.

And even more, this woman,

- who seems to see the reality of what has happened,
- knows that more than just a box was lost in the skirmish...
- but revealed to us in the naming of her son, Ichabod,
  - which means "no glory"...

She realizes that

- sometimes God must depart from us
- in order that we might seek him rightly.

Don't you see the spread of sin here?

- Eli's sin spread to his sons.
- His son's sin spread to all of Israel.
- And now it has even spread to their wives and children.

How little we imagine the spread of our sins.

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## APPLICATION: WHAT'S NEXT

Oh church, one of the most insidious things about sin,

- is that it is never a one-time-event.
- There is no such thing as an innocent sin.
- There is no such thing as,
  - *“Well, I’m not really hurting anyone...”*
- Don’t you see the spread of sin?

Often when I counsel people who are wrestling with some sin...

I like to ask them to do an exercise where I ask them to play the scenario out to its logical conclusion.

- *“So, you file for divorce.*
  - *Ok, what’s next?*
- *A long legal battle.*
  - *Ok, what’s next?*
- *You go home to an empty house after work each night.*
  - *Ok, what’s next?*
- *You think it’s easy to meet that elusive “the one”?*
  - *You’ll find her right next to a unicorn and a pot of gold!*
- *It’s hard enough in your 20s...now you’re in your 40s!*
  - *What’s next?*
- *What’s next for you financially?*
- *What’s next for your relationship with your kids?*
- *What’s next for your relationship with your grandkids?*
- *What’s next once the novelty of NOT being married wears off?*
- *WHAT’S NEXT?”*



Take any sin you want and play that game, and you'll begin to see the spread of sin.

## **EXPLAIN: MORTIFICATION**

Church, have I made my point about how big a deal sin is?

- The slavery...
- the slope...
- and the spread of sin?
- We need to be SCARED STRAIGHT!

Now, there is a theological term we use when talking about dealing with our sin as Christians: that term is **SLIDE MORTIFICATION**. It's the idea that we must take whatever drastic measures necessary to put to death the sin in our lives.

Now, real quick: I'm not talking about JUSTIFICATION here. Ok?

- Justification is what happens at our conversion.
- When you become a Christian, or get saved, or convert...
  - that's an event in which someone responds
  - to the call of God
  - with repentance and faith
  - and receives from God justification.
- It's the moment in time
  - when God declares a sinner as righteous
  - and restores that sinner to right relationship with himself.
- This is JUSTIFICATION.

But I'm talking about what happens after that!

- After you are saved...
- you start to pursue him.
- You go deeper.
- You grow up.
- You work things out.
- You keep repenting of your sin.
- You chase Christ!
- **And as you chase Christ...chains loosen.**

And MORTIFICATION is a part of that. It's putting sin to death in our lives.

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### **ILLUSTRATION: APEX PREDATOR**

Now, the very best illustration I ever heard concerning mortification was from Matt Chandler years ago, and I just continue to use it because, for me, I need this!

Have you ever seen one of those shows on the Discovery Channel

- where someone who raises bears,
- or wolves,
- or tigers?

Ok, Maryse and I were watching one of these a couple years ago,

- and it showed this one guy who found a grizzly bear cub,
- took him in,
- and started raising him as a pet.

Now, the bear would do tricks and was well trained...

But one day:

- during a training session,
- the guy was in the cage with the bear,
- and they were practicing one of their tricks,
- and there was a video camera capturing it all.

When out of nowhere

- the bear reached out
- and jacked the dude.
- He full on attacked the guy,
  - who had raised him since he was a cub,
- and ended up killing the man.

Now that was some crazy footage!

- But the even crazier thing
- was that they then cut to interviews with the man's friends,
- and they were just shocked that the bear would kill this man.

They said things like,

- *"That bear loved him.*
- *I cannot imagine why Bart would do something like this.*
- *He is such a sweet bear.*
- *Bart loved him."*

And I'm screaming at the TV,

- *"Are you kidding me?*
- *I know why he killed him...*
- *Because he's a bear!*

*He's a 1000-pound APEX predator!*

- *It's built in his DNA to kill prey,*
- *and you are the prey!*
- *Just because you give him a human name,*
- *and call him Bart the Bear...*
- *doesn't make him safe and cuddly!"*

## **APPLICATION: KILL IT**

But church, all too often, that's what we do with sin.

- We treat it like a pet.
- And we let it come into our lives when it seems small,
  - and innocent,
  - and inconsequential.
- But it will grow,
- and it will eventually turn into the APEX predator that it is.
- And one day it will attack you...
  - and take you down.

Don't pretend that this isn't a big deal, because it is.

And what mortification is:

- is taking that bear out into the street,
  - not to train it,
  - not to cuddle it,
  - not to give it a name,
  - and keep it as a pet,

But to take it out into the street,

- and to put two bullets in the back of its head.
  - Just turn that thing 90-degrees
  - and do it executioner style. Ok!

**Don't give your sin a chance to kill you, but rather, put it to death!**

## **ENDING**

So, Fathom, we might need to do some work with the Lord here today.

Maybe you're feeling scared.

- You feel the slavery of your sin...
- the deep fear of getting caught.

Or you're starting to see the slope of your sin...

- and it's taking you some places you don't want to be.

Or maybe you're even starting to notice the spread of your sin

- to those around you.

The call is to repent.

To turn from that thing.

To mortify your flesh.

There might be some APEX predators

- you've been cuddling up to for WAY too long,
- and today God's call to you
- is to take that sin out in the street,
- and put two in the back of its head.
- To kill it.

You can start that journey today,

- by confessing your sin to God and repenting of that sin,
  - and then start talking to someone about it.
- You gotta drag it out into the street!
- You gotta get it out of the dark.
  - Talk to me or a trusted friend or even to a counselor...
  - but do it.
  - Shoot that thing.
  - Put it to death.

We need to be SCARED STRAIGHT!

I set before you life and death.

I set before you blessing and curse.

The choice is yours.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Philips, Richard. *Ichabod!*
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The First Book of Samuel.