1 Samuel 1-4

Elkanah – acquired by God

Hannah - Gracious – anxious wife, bears the taunts of Peninnah, visits temple at Shiloh, where the ark of the covenant was kept, prays that if God will grant her a son she will dedicate him to God.

Peninnah - Pearl

Jehovah Sabaoth The God of Israel as Lord of all hosts in heaven and earth

Eli - my God – who had no control over his sons, Samuel ministers under Eli and after three times of Samuel coming to him thinking Eli was calling him, Eli realises that God was calling Samuel and tells him to go and listen to what God says to him. Asked Samuel to speak the truth of what God had told him. God will act in judgement because he had been turning a blind eye to his sons behaviour, eating consecrated meat and sleeping with some of the women who were bringing offerings to the temple. God told Samuel that no one of Eli’s would see old age.

Hophni - pugilist

Phineas - serpents mouth

Samuel - asked of God, or God heard

These are the main characters

4:2 This war was the one which fulfilled the part of the prophecy of the destruction of Eli’s house (2:31-36) and (3:11-14)

4:5 an example of empty religious shouting and noise making and a lesson to us all. God is not in every shout in honour of Himself, when sin is involved, He will not respect it.

4:6 To Israel the shout was an outburst of religious enthusiasm, but to the Philistines it was only noise.

INTRODUCTION

In the business world the new catch phrase is “thinking outside the box.” It is a challenge to go beyond the ordinary and do something extraordinary.

The church today is stuck in the box. Our focus has shifted from people to pews, from saving souls to Sunday assemblies. Today when you mention Christianity most people immediately think of the worship assembly. As long as we continue with this mentality we are stuck in the box without hope of growing beyond.

A prank that’s as old as most of us here today is to call up a store and ask, “Yes, do you have Prince Albert in a box?” When the assistant answers in the affirmative then you respond, “Well, you’d better let him out before he suffocates.”

Dangerous to take verses out of context reading a scripture to speak to you that day, always read the whole chapter or section. If we are reading the bible for a personal message what would we make of the verse in 1 Samuel where Samuel says to Eli, in your family line, there will never be an old man?

If we want to experience revival in the church, if we want this family of God to grow then we must let God out of the box and back into our lives before we suffocate. Revival, it’s really up to you what comes out of the box!

Samuel and the Israelites had an experience similar to the one facing us today.

• The Israelites were losing a war to the Philistines like we are fighting a war against Satan.  
• The Israelites’ answer was, “Bring us God in a box.” Our answer is “We all need to go to the box (church).”  
• The Israelites’ answer brought them defeat, not Victory. Our answer will lead us to defeat unless we decide to change.

Even in a time when “the word of the Lord was rare.” (1 Sam. 3:1) Samuel led the people in Revival. We can learn from the mistakes of Israel and move on to Revival!

I. Relying on the Box

A. Israel’s answer to defeat was God in a box. 1 Sam. 4:3

1. By bringing in the ark they thought they had secured the presence of God.

2. Their focus was on personal success and not on glorifying God.

B. Our answer to Satan has been faith in a box.

1. Listen to our vocabulary: “Do you want to go to church?”

2. We have associated our success with the box.

3. We speak of “going to church” instead of “being a church.”

II. Where has the Glory gone?

A. With the ark gone the glory was gone from Israel. 1 Sam. 4:12–22

1. Israel’s hope was gone without the ark.

2. The sad reality is that it was a false hope. God was never really with them.

B. When people put God in a box then they [lose](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/out-of-the-box-the-revival-of-samuel-mitchell-skelton-sermon-on-what-is-evangelism-59781.asp) the glory.

1. We associate the glory with “the box” (church building).

2. We see religion as a “fix” instead of a way of life.

C. The result of putting God in a box is that the glory is taken away from God.

1. We blame a decline in attendance on “the box.”

2. Maybe the “box” is broke and needs to be fixed.

III. When we decide to live for God, the glory will return.

A. The revival of Samuel shows that God lives where he is glorified.

1. Dead Church=Dead Worship=No Presence

2. Revived Church=Revived Worship=Presence of God

B. The Israelites repented, mourned and committed themselves to God. 1 Sam. 7:2–10

C. We must move “out of the box” and into reliance upon God.

1. Matt. 16: 24–27

2. Acts 17:22–28

CONCLUSION

If our religion is in a box then it is of no value to anyone. Religion is only effective if the love of God is in our hearts, the word of God is on our lips and the servant–hood of Christ is in our lives.  
Church we need to pray that God will take control, do his will and revive this church.

Where is God in your life today?

What will you do with the Glory?