I. INTRO:
   A. “Methods are many, principles are few; Methods always change, principles never do.”
   B. Last week (ch.11) Saul & the people rejoiced over the deliverance of Jabesh-Gilead from
      the Ammonites, & Saul was careful to give the glory to the Lord. (11:13b)
      1. The fact that Saul led the army in a great victory would tempt them to put their
         faith in their new king.
      2. Samuel wanted them to know their future success rested in trusting Jehovah
         alone. Samuel will mention the Lord 30 times in this message.
   C. Rousing speeches on big occasions can change human behavior. (JFK; MLK)
      1. Yet, Samuel's speech is not underwritten by clever rhetoric, it's a speech
         underwritten by the Lord himself who is responding to a rebellious people.
      2. It's a coronation address, a revival sermon, & a farewell speech.
   D. Outline: Our theme this morning is Faithfulness!
      Samuel’s Faithfulness; The Lord’s Faithfulness; & The People Faithlessness.
      1. In 1912 William Borden, a graduate of Yale University, left one of America’s
         greatest family fortunes to be a missionary to China. He got as far as Egypt
         and died of cerebral meningitis. He died - and was only in his 20s - but there
         was “no reserve, no retreat, no regrets” in his consecration to God.
      2. Was he unsuccessful? I think he was radically successful because he was
         wholly faithful.
      3. I think of David Livingstone, the pioneer missionary to Africa, who walked over
         29,000 miles. His wife died early in their ministry & he faced stiff opposition
         from his Scottish brethren. And, he ministered half blind. Words in his diary:
         Send me anywhere, only go with me. Lay any burden on me, only sustain me. Sever me from any tie but the tie that binds me to Your service & to Your heart

II. SAMUEL’S FAREWELL ADDRESS!
   A. SAMUEL’S FAITHFULNESS! (1-5)
   B. (1,2) The elderly prophet/judge Samuel addressed the nation of Israel publicly for the last
      time in his career.
      1. He now transfers the civil authority to Saul. The Israelites go from being led by
         Judges (for 500 years) to their 1st king.
      2. Before leaving office as Judge he sets the record straight his hands were clean
C. (3-5) A common response to leaders who find themselves needing to correct and rebuke is to have their character undermined as leaders. Samuel will have none of this.

1. Many would have known him since he was a child at the tabernacle in Shiloh.
2. He has spent his whole life serving them & now is old & gray-headed!
3. Almost sounds like what Jesus would say later in Jn.8:46 “Which of you convicts Me of sin?”
4. Samuel was a man of integrity; Saul would turn out to be a man of hypocrisy & duplicity. (Warren Wiersbe)

D. How wonderful to get toward the end of your life & be able to review your life/ministry & not be afraid or ashamed.

1. May we be able to say like Christ, I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. Jn.17:4

E. Samuel, a man of integrity:

If Ethics are your personal beliefs & values (what you say you believe); And, Morals are your ways of living your life (what you actually do); Then, Integrity is when your ethics are proven by your morals (that’s, when what you say you believe, is matched by how you choose to live your life).

F. **THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS!** (6-11)

G. *The 1 thing we learn from history is that we don’t learn from history,* & Samuel didn’t want his people to make that mistake!

1. But this wasn’t just a lecture from history; It was also a court trial!
2. In vs.7 Samuel uses words with a judicial flavor:
   a) Stand still - carries the idea of “stand up, court is in session.”
   b) Reason - means “to decide a case of litigation.”
   (1) Samuel was going to prove to the people that the Lord had been righteous & faithful in all His dealings w/Israel, but that the Jews had been faithless & disobedient.¹

H. It was God not the people, who appointed Moses & Aaron & who enabled them to do the mighty works they did for the people of Israel.

I. (8) Israel in Egypt cried out to the Lord for help & He sent them Moses & Aaron.

J. (9-11) Once they were in the land, they compromised their faith & joined in worshipping the false gods of their neighbors; so God had to discipline them.

¹ Warren Wiersbe: Be Successful; pg.61
1. These verses represent the book of judges w/its 7 cycles of sin to salvation disobedience, discipline, & deliverance. (See Judges 2:10; 16,17,18,19)

2. He mentions himself as the last of the judges!

K. THE PEOPLE'S FAITHLESSNESS? (12-25)

L. (14,15) They knew the terms of the covenant: if they obeyed, then the Lord would bless; if they disobeyed, then the Lord would chasten.

1. A wife who is 85% faithful to her husband is not faithful at all. Thus, there is no such thing as part-time loyalty to Jesus Christ! Vance Havner

2. Obedience or disobedience, either way God would be faithful to His Word. The issue was whether Israel would be faithful?

M. (16-18) Samuel prays up a storm during the dry season of wheat harvest.

N. (19) They recognize their past sins & their new big one.

O. (20) Samuel moves from fear to do not fear as he encourages the people to accept their situation their unbelief created & make the most of it now.

1. You made a bad mistake, but God would help them if they feared & obeyed Him

P. (22) For His great name’s sake - God’s purpose was to use Israel to bring glory to His name, & He would fulfill that purpose.

Q. (23) No matter what they decided Samuel would be faithful to pray for them & teach them the Word of God. [Prayer & Word always goes together!]

1. Acts6:4 but we’ll give ourselves continually to prayer & to the ministry of the word

2. Wow, For God’s people not to pray is to sin against the Lord!

3. Quote: God’s child can conquer anything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian or to hinder him in the use of it?

4. Did you know? There is a small group that meets upstairs on Tuesday nights to simply intercede for their children/young adults/adult children. (Eric Wells)

5. God will bless Elijah & send rain on Israel, but Elijah must pray for it. If the chosen nation is to prosper, Samuel must plead for it. God will bless Paul, & the nations shall be converted through him, but Paul must pray. God will effect lives around you saint, but you must plead & intercede on their behalf!

a) Oh that our prayers would be like lightening rods that pierce the clouds & bring down the mighty & mysterious power from on high! (Spurgeon)

R. (24) Fear Him; Serve Him; & Consider/thank Him!

S. (25) Swept away - which is what happened; they were swept 400 miles away to Babylon!

Andrew Murray
T. **YOUR FAITHFULNESS?**

U. When you think of the cross do you think *success* or *faithfulness*?
   1. What we are about as followers of Christ is not *success* but *faithfulness*.
   2. Q: Would you consider *your walk with Jesus*...Faithful?

V. Background of story: Gurkhas are best known for their history of bravery and strength in the Indian Army’s *Gorkha regiments*. The Gurkhas were naturally warlike and aggressive in battle, & possessed qualities of courage, loyalty, self sufficiency, physical strength, resilience, orderliness, the ability to work hard for long periods of time, & their fighting tenacity & military strategy.

   1. “*If a man says he is not afraid of dying, he is either lying or is a Gurkha*”

W. In his book *One Crowded Hour*, Tim Bowden describes an incident in *Borneo* in 1964. Nepalese fighters known as Gurkhas were asked if they would be willing to *jump from airplanes* into combat against the Indonesians. The Gurkhas didn’t clearly understand what was involved, but they bravely said they would do it, asking only that the plane fly slowly over a swampy area and no higher than 100 feet. When they were told that the *parachutes* would not have time to open at that height, the Gurkhas replied, *“Oh, you didn’t mention parachutes!”*

X. We think *giving our all to the Lord* is like taking a $1,000 bill and laying it on the table - “*Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.*”

   1. But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank & has us cash in the $1,000 for quarters! We go through life putting out 25¢ here & 50¢ there.

   a) You listen to the neighbor kid’s troubles instead of saying, ‘*get lost*’; you give someone a ride; you give a cup of water to a *shaky old man* in a nursing home.

   b) Usually giving our life to Christ *isn’t* glorious!...It’s done in all those *little acts of love*, 25¢ at a time.

   2. It would be easy to *go out* in a flash of glory; It’s harder to live the Christian life *little by little* over the long haul!

Y. Each ministry needs a Samuel to remind them of the *spiritual principles* that never change: *the character of God; the Word of God; the necessity of faith; & the importance of obedience*!

   1. *Methods* are many, *principles* are few; *Methods* always change, *principles* never do.

Z. Invite *Ives* back up.

**Prayer:** I’d like to end with a prayer *Bobby Richardson* offered (former NY Yankee 2nd baseman) that is a classic in *brevity* and *poignancy*: “Dear God, *Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else*. Amen.”