

## **FBC Family Sunday February 15, 2026, Ebenezer: More Than a Name: - 1 Samuel 7:12**

**Ebenezer: More Than a Name:** Around Christmas time many people watch Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol." It's amazing how much of an impression this classic Christmas tale has had on so many people.

The very name of the chief character has become a part of our vocabulary. Anyone who is a stingy sourpuss is known as a "**scrooge**." On the other hand, how many boys do you know named Ebenezer?

**Despite the Scrooge legacy, the name Ebenezer has a glorious legacy.** In fact, one of our classic hymns uses that term. "**Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.**"

The first verse reads, "Come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.

The second verse which has regretfully been removed from many of today's Hymnals reads - Here I raise mine Ebenezer; Hither by thy help I'm come. And I hope by Thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home."

**That line from the hymn, the name Ebenezer, all come from a single Old Testament verse. 1 Samuel 7:12.** I hope that after today's Family Sunday service, any time you feel discouraged or the pressures of life getting you down, you will repeat this strange word to yourself - **Ebenezer!**

People may think you're crazy, but I guarantee if you can say Ebenezer with all the meaning Scripture gives to it, it will bring freshness and new vitality to your faith

In our text, Samuel, the great prophet of Israel, calls a meeting of the nation's leaders. He tells them that if they want to experience the blessings of God, they need to return to their faith in Him.

The entire nation responded positively. At Mizpah, the nation gathered in prayer to seek God's blessing again. Just at that moment, the Philistine army, the dreaded enemy, saw an opportunity to attack while Israel's warriors were in prayer.

Samuel learns of their plot. The soldiers form battle lines. The Philistines are turned back in defeat. **The Lord Fought for Israel:** A great victory ensues for Israel!

To mark the occasion of this great military victory and the day of their return to faith, **Samuel raises a stone of remembrance.**

From that day on, whoever saw the stone would be reminded of the great events of the day. Samuel gave the stone marker a name. **He called it Ebenezer**, a term that meant "*Thus far has the LORD helped us.*" A visible reminder of how the Lord had delivered them.

As we look at the history and families of First Baptist, this verse isn't just ancient text; it's also our story.

We're assembled here today on Family Sunday. One that has a profound meaning for all of us! **We're not going to raise stone pillars or monuments.**

But we can in the prayer cards under the FBC Family tree, thank God for what He has done for us.

"**Ebenezer**" or **Stone of Help**, is like a "milestone" encountered on a journey. It could represent a beginning of a journey, or the portion of a journey already completed, or the many steps yet to be made.

All of us are partway through our journey, and only God knows where He will take us, but with great expectation, we look forward to joining Him in the accomplishment of His work here.

Wherever the terrain of our lives may take us as a congregation; whether smooth or rough - an "**Ebenezer**" marks God's help, His presence, faithfulness and blessing.

Samuel's stone represented the giving and keeping of God's promises. **It was a reminder of God's faithfulness.**

Here we raise our Ebenezer because *"Thus far has the Lord helped us."*

**This was an exhortation to remember.** Some things life throws at you, you never forget.

Every experience good and bad is filed securely in our mental memory banks. **Sometimes we forget where we put it, but it's still there.**

**E.G.** Many of us who are getting some snow on our roofs are a lot like the little old lady who was visiting with her pastor. He reminded her that at her age it was important to start thinking about the here after.

"Oh, I do," she assured him, "I think about it all the time. Why just this morning, I went down to the basement. No sooner did I get down there than I said to myself, **"What am I here after?"**

**We never forget most of the really important things in life.** Even when the memories start to grow dim, there are always lots of memories to recall of our families.

The passing of loved ones, and some difficult days. The grief may not be as deep or the tears as heavy as they once were. **But we don't forget. We don't want to. We shouldn't. We never will.**

The gravestone may be a simple stone monument with a few ordinary words. But it's a memorial to something far greater. **A life lived. Memories shared. Love that will last forever!**

Our memorials though are not all about places of grief. **Think of the Activity of God in Your Life.**

### **Ebenezers in Our Lives:**

**Where were you when a special person slipped a ring on your finger – marriage?**

**When you learned you were expecting your first child?**

**Can you recall that child heading off to school for the first time? Graduation, sports etc.**

**Can you recall when you came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?**

**The day you followed the Lord in believer's baptism?**

**Where were you when God revealed Himself to you during a season of adversity? Losses.**

**Do you remember those special deliverances?**

**Do you remember passing through those rivers, supported by the divine presence?**

**Do you remember those choice favours, those answers to prayer?**

**Draw strength and encouragement from all your spiritual markers today.**

**Strength for Future Trials:** **Is it not profitable for us to see the hand of God in our lives?** To look upon our own life's history as full of His goodness as in the lives of these saints of old.

Surely in our lives there are many incidents, refreshing to ourselves and glorifying to our God.

Think about the time in your life when you know you would have been injured or you would have possibly died if God had not intervened, or did something miraculous to help get you out of a dangerous situation.

**Identify those Ebenezer moments you have experienced in the journey of life.**

**Mark that day. Celebrate what God has done for you.**

Slow down long enough to pray through those spiritual markers. You may want to list them out specifically so that you can thank God for each one.

**Mark That Day That God Was Your Ebenezer – Your Stone of Help.**

Mark those times and remember what God has done because it will help you the next time you walk through the dark valleys in this life.

The God who gave Solomon the desire of his heart, has He never listened to you and answered your requests? The God of whom David sang, "*Who satisfies my mouth with good things,*" has He never done the same for you?

Have you never been made to lie down in green pastures?

Have you never been led by the still waters?

**Special days are also never forgotten.** Birthdays, anniversaries, all kinds of events will never again just be days on the calendar. They are memorials to a life shared.

**FBC:** The goodness of God has been the same to us as to the Israelites that day at Ebenezer.

**Here We Raise Our Ebenezer. Thus Far God Has Helped Us.**

That's the memorial we need. God is nigh! He has not abandoned us. He was with us in the valley of the shadow of death. He will be with us whatever the future brings. **That's a truth we must never forget.**

**Generations:** That's a precious promise that we must memorialize for the next generation and the one after that!

**Here we raise our Ebenezer! Thus far, the Lord has helped us!**

This Ebenezer stone that was raised up was something durable. - **A stone!**

It was something that would withstand the unknown tomorrow - **Future storms and trials** - as a reminder that God's help has been with us both now and will be also in the future.

As you depart from the service this morning and come to future church services, think of Ebenezer and remember what God has done? I hope it will assure you that our God is a Rock. He does not change.

What He has started here, He will bring to completion. **The God of Samuel is our God too.**

**Family of Families:** As we celebrate Family Day, let's realize that First Baptist is more than a building; **it's a family of families.**

We don't know what this year holds. We don't know what challenges our fellowship will face.

**But we do know this:** the God who was faithful in 1 Samuel, is the same God who stands with us today and our children's children.

**Let's leave here today not just carrying a memory but carrying a conviction.** The Lord has helped us. And because He has helped us thus far, we can trust Him for everything that comes next.

**He Was Our Help in Ages Past and Is Our Hope for Years to Come!**