

== IN SEARCH OF A KING ==

Understanding 1 Samuel

Small group questions

1 Samuel 8 A King like the nations

Leaders - if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer - please contact the preacher!

1. **What is the passage about?** Read 1 Samuel 8
 - Briefly recap the story outlined here. Initial thoughts? Anything stand out for you?
 - Anything unclear - any questions?
2. **What does it teach us about God?** - *review and discuss each point*
 - a. Given half a chance, we'll reject God as King
 - b. Given half a chance, we want to be like everyone else
 - c. Sometimes - God gives us what we want!
3. **How does it point us to Jesus?** - *review and discuss*

Jesus is THE King. How does Jesus as King compare to the king Samuel warned Israel about?
4. Rejection of our Lord as King is sometimes through a sudden and blatant act of disobedience. At other times, it is a lot more subtle and sneaks up on people over time. Bill was a keen member of his local church for several years until his kids were teenagers. Then their music and other school activities seems to be allowed to take over the family plans. Bill's attendance at church became less and less. His kids now rarely came. He pulled out of his small group. He avoided contact with his old church friends. How should the pastor and his friends respond?
5. We all tend to place a lot of importance on what people think of us, and therefore standing out as Christian is sometimes very hard because we are opening ourselves up to ridicule or rejection. Yet God as so clearly called us to be different - by our gentleness and kindness and patience; through our speech; by our generosity, our integrity, our trustworthiness etc. How can we arrive at that point in our lives, where we are so confident in what we believe, so secure in who we are as God's people that it really doesn't matter if we face ridicule or rejection for standing out as Christians?
6. Why *did* God grant Israel a King?
7. Sometimes - God gives us what we want. Sometimes what we want is just foolish. At other times, it is something blatantly sinful. Why does God do this?
8. Despite Samuel's warnings - which came from the Lord himself - Israel still pressed on in their demand for a king. How can we wake up to those situations where what we want will actually cost us a lot more than anything we might gain? In other words, how can we avoid a situation where it could be said of us: "Well, they got what they wanted, but they lost what they had"?
9. Helen was going out with a non-Christian guy she was crazy about. Against the advice of her family, her home group leader, her pastor and many friends, she planned to marry him. You have been her friend for years and watched her struggle with her singleness as other friends were married off. Her boyfriend is a lovely guy, but has no interest in the Lord Jesus. What would you say to her?
10. Share with the group any implications you see for yourself from this passage and study. What things might you need to Start; Stop; Continue... as a result of what you have learned through this week's sermon and discussion?

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Services: all
Series: 1 Samuel – In search of a King
Passage: 1 Samuel 8
Title: A King like the nations

✘ INTRODUCTION

- Have you ever wanted something so **badly**, that it consumed all your **time** and came to totally dominate your **thinking**...?
- ... something that went *against* the advice of **others** but you didn't **care**... you knew **better**... //
- ...and then when you finally took hold of it, it was **great** at first, but as time you went on, you realised that all it had cost you along the **way**, and in fact all that it meant in the present... wasn't really **worth** it?
- Sometimes it can be quite '**innocent**' – I recall buying a car once that I dearly wanted. I wrestled over this decision for a long time. Did my **sums**. Took a **loan**. Did the **deal**.
- But once I **bought** it, I had no **peace** about it.... Ending up selling it some 6 months later losing **\$2000!**
- Sometimes it can be a bit more **serious**... like **Fred** (not his real name)... who liked fast **cars**... and after much **saving** went and bought his **dream car** and often went **drag racing** in the early morning hours... until one morning there was a terrible sound of **shattering glass** and **twisting steel** and a couple of mates lost their **lives** and he became a **paraplegic**...
- He **got** what we **wanted** – but he **lost** what he **had**.
- He got his **car**. Had his **fun**. But lost a **sound body**, his **independence** and **some mates**.
- Then there was a **Mary** (not her real name) whose parents were quite **strict** and reacted badly to her **nose stud** and all her **ear piercing** and what she **wore**... and after yet another **nasty argument** with her parents decided she wanted **out**. She took off in the middle of the **night**... and found her way to **Kings Cross** where she was taken in by the **nicest** of **people** who showed her how to make a **living** and **support herself**... and there she entered a **downhill spiral** of **prostitution** and **drugs**...
- She **got** what she **wanted**, but she **lost** what she **had**.
- She was **free** from her **parents**, but she lost her **dignity**, her **innocence**, her **health**, her **opportunities**... //
- Let me ask you this: – does God let us go our own **way** – even if it is going to **hurt** us?
- That is a **little something** of what we'll explore today as we continue in our **1 Samuel series** – today looking at **1 Samuel 8 – p 268**.
- And let's begin as we've been doing, by asking what this passage is **about**.

1) ✘ WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

a. ✘ Samuel's age and Samuel's sons

- as chapter 8 opens, we read that **Samuel** is getting **old**.
- he wants a **succession plan** in place for the leadership of Israel – and appoints his two boys – **Joel** and **Abijah** as judges.
- But have a look with me at 8:3 *his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.*

b. ✘ We want a King!

- So the **elders** of Israel gathered together and said – quite **bluntly** (8:5) – *you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.*
- Well not surprisingly, Samuel was **hurt**.

- He took it as a rejection of **him**, certainly a rejection of his **sons**, and a rejection of the **model** God had given them for the leadership of Israel.
- However, if **Samuel** was **hurt** – than **God** was even **more so...** he said to **Samuel** (8:7): *‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not **you** they have rejected, but they have rejected **me** as their **king**... which (by the way) they have been doing since I brought them up out of Egypt!*
- And the **Lord** said to **Samuel**: ‘Tell them then what having a King will be like!’
 - c. ✖**You don’t want a King!**
- So Samuel went back to them and said – ‘**you don’t want a king!**’
- (8:11) He’ll take your **sons** and **some** he will send into **battle**, **some** he will use to farm his **land**; and **others** he’ll use to make his **weapons** and **chariots**...
- He’ll take your **daughters** and force them to be **perfumers** and **cooks** and **bakers**...
- He will take your **fields** and **vineyards** and **olive trees** and give them to his **attendants**.
- He will take your **servants** and your **cattle** and your **donkeys** and use them for **himself**.
- He will take a **tenth** of your **flocks** – and **you** – you will become his **slaves**.
- And when that day **comes** and you cry out to the Lord for **relief** from the **King** you have **chosen**...
THE LORD WILL NOT ANSWER YOU! //
- Believe me – **you don’t want a King!** //
 - d. ✖**Yes we do!**
- Yes we do! We do want a king over us! Then we will be **like** all the other **nations** with a **King** to **lead** us and to go out **before** us and **fight** our **battles!** // // //
- And you know what the Lord **said?** // **Give them a King.** // **Give them a King.** //
- And so **they got what they wanted... but they lost what they had...**

2) ✖**WHAT DOES IT TEACH US ABOUT GOD?**

- It was a sobering moment wasn’t it when God said – *they have rejected **me** as their **King!** – as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt!*
- But it clearly shows that >>>
 - d. ✖**Given half a chance, we’ll reject God as King**
- Wasn’t that the issue with **Adam and Eve**...? **not submitting** to God’s **rule over them?**
- Wasn’t that the issue throughout the entire **history** of **Israel** which led to their **banishment** from the **promised land?**
- And wasn’t it the **issue** with the Lord Jesus **himself**... remember the parable he told in Luke 19... a noble man goes off to be appointed **King** and the people send a delegation after him saying – ‘**we don’t want this man to be our King...**’ Jesus was referring to **himself** in that parable!
- In fact given half a chance, we’ll not only **reject** God as King, but we’ll **string** him up on a **cross** - not only the most **tortuous death imaginable** but the most **degrading** and **humiliating!** //
- But the most **common way** God is rejected as **King today?**
- **Apathy, distraction, neglect...** replaced with those very impressive gods of sport, career, money, self...
- Given **half a chance**, we’ll **reject** God as **King!**; and >>>
 - e. ✖**Given half a chance, we want to be like everyone else**
- its another sobering moment in this passage (8:19) : *we want a king over us; then we will be like all the other nations!*

- The very thing they were called **not to be!**
- You will remember the commission God gave them in ✨Exodus 19:5 *'if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'*
- That **was** their **role!** – to be different – they **were** to **stand out...** As a kingdom of **priests** and a **holy nation**, they were **meant** to show the **brilliance** of being in **relationship** with **God**.
- And the fact that they **didn't** have a king like all the other nations was meant to show their **uniqueness** as a **nation** – and that **God** was their **King** and the **only King** they **needed!**
- But **now** – **now** they want to be like **all the other nations**.
- They wanted to **abandon** their unique **role** in the **world**. They didn't **want** to stand out **any more**. //
- Israel's commission was handed on to **us** as Christians! ✨ In 1 Peter 2:9 *you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*
- **We** are to **stand out** in **OUR** world as Israel was meant to in **THEIRS**.
- But often times around the **world**, God's people **don't want** to stand out **today**. They want to be like **everyone else**. And they want to follow the **culture** of the **day...** ✨
- A study done in the States recently showed that Christian people are only **10% more** conservative on a whole **range** of moral issues than the **general population...** and that when the **moral standards** of the **world** drop, then the standards of the **church** drop by an **equivalent proportion!** //
- Israel wanted to walk **away** from their **distinct** role... *"we want to be like everyone else"*.
- And **sometimes** – **I want that too!** I don't want to be **different** any more. Its too **exhausting**. I **just** want to be like **everyone else**. // . **AND YOU??** //
- But – here is the last point about what this passage teaches us about God >>>
 - f. ✨**Sometimes** – **God gives us what we want!**
- 8:21-22 - *When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. 22 The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."*
- **Why did he do that?** Was it **resignation?** Was it to **shut them up?**
- Or was it **judgement?**
- He **gave them** what they **wanted**. They **asked** for a **King**. He told them through Samuel that they **wouldn't like** what a **King** would **bring**. They **refused** to **listen** and **persisted** in their **request**. So he **gave** them a **king**.
- and did you notice the **sobering v18?** – *when that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day...*
- that wasn't the last word from the Lord to Israel... but it is a **stern warning** that when we **go our own way** we may just **reap** the **consequences...**
- **And you know what?** Subsequent kings **WERE** all Samuel said they would be.
- **Saul** was **good** for a **little while**, **David** and **Solomon** had there **high moments** – but with **one** or **two** **exceptions?** It was all **down hill** from **there**.
- their kings didn't **listen** to God, nor to his **prophets**. They **mixed** their **religions** with the nations **round about**. They set up **false altars** to **false gods**. They led people **away** from the **Lord** – and **eventually out** of the **promised land** and into **captivity**.
- **ISRAEL GOT WHAT THEY WANTED, BUT THEY LOST WHAT THEY HAD!** //
- They **lost** their **unique relationship** with **God** as their **only King**.

- They **forfeited** their **unique** role in the **world**. They **lost** their **temple**. They **lost** their **city**. They **lost** the **presence** of the **Lord**. They **lost** his **protection**.
- **BUT - THEY GOT THEIR KING!**
- And **sometimes - sometimes -** God just **gives** us what we **want**.
- **Adam and Eve -** wanted the **knowledge** of **good** and **evil**.
- They **got** what they **wanted**, but they **lost** what they **had**.
- They lost their **innocence**. Lost their garden. Lost their **intimacy** both with **God** and with **one another**. //
- The **prodigal son** got his part of the **inheritance** he so desperately wanted so that he could **get away...** but he **spent** all the **money** and the **friends** who he thought were **friends** **deserted** him and he wound up eating **husks** in a **pig pen**.
- **HE GOT WHAT HE WANTED, BUT HE LOST WHAT HE HAD.//**
- **SOMETIMES, GOD GIVES US WHAT WE WANT.**
- And we are left to **deal** with the **consequences** of our **foolishness** or our **disobedience**.
- ✖In the words of **Paul -** (Rom 1:21) *although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, 24 therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts... 28 he gave them over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done...*
- **YES, SOMETIMES, GOD GIVES US WHAT WE WANT.**
- **AND WE GET WHAT WE WANTED, BUT WE LOSE WHAT WE HAD. ✖ blk**
- Like the man for whom his **career** was **everything**. He longed for this new **dream position**. **He got it.....** But it **got him** in the end. His **family suffered**. His **marriage ended**. He **hardly** saw his **children**. He became **desperately unhappy**.
- **HE GOT WHAT HE WANTED BUT HE LOST WHAT HE HAD.**
- Or the woman who set her heart on the man she wanted even though both **she** and **he** were married to **other people**. They had a **dream weekend** together, but were **found out**. She became **pregnant** to **him**. **Both marriages, both families** were **destroyed**.
- **SHE GOT WHAT SHE WANTED, BUT SHE LOST WHAT SHE HAD.**
- Brothers and sisters in Christ... is there any thing in your life you are pursuing at present that you know **isn't right**? You **know** its not **God's will** - not his **best** for you?
- It may be merely **unwise**, or it may be something **disobedient**.
- **DON'T PURSUE IT ANY FURTHER!**
- God may just **give** what you **want** and **leave** you with the **consequences**.
- **YOU MAY GET WHAT YOU WANT... BUT LOSE WHAT YOU HAVE! //**

3) ✖HOW DOES IT POINT US TO JESUS?

- And this is really very **simple** this week - but **profound**.
✖**Jesus THE King!**
- For it reminds us of the **ultimate King**. The one completely **unlike** the king, **Samuel** described.
- **The perfect King**. The one in the **line** of **King David**.
- **Jesus is that King**. The **opposite** to the **King** the **people** wanted. The one who came not be **served** but to **serve**. The **king** who instead of **taking** from his people actually gave his **life** for them in their **service**.

- The king who **by that death, atones** for all our **stupid failures** of the **past** and **forgives** our **sin** and **puts** our **lives back together** when we've **mucked up**...
- And the one who God has **now exalted** to the **highest place** and given the name above **every** name that at the name of **Jesus** every knee should **bow** and in **heaven** and on **earth** and **under the earth** and **every tongue confess** that Jesus Christ is **Lord** to the glory of **God the Father**. ✖ blk

CONCLUSION

- I can now wrap this up very briefly....
- Here is a good question to ask:
- **Can we trust God?**
- Can we **trust** God as our **King**? **Adam** thought he **knew better**. Israel **thought** they knew **better**. Many since have **thought** they know **better**. And so have taken matters into their own **hands**.
- We need to **trust** God and his **wise plans** for **us**. They are **much wiser** than **ours**. He is on **our side**. He is not out to make our life **miserable**. And by following **him** and his **will** for us, **every possible need** of ours will be **met**, so that we can say '**there's nothing I want**'. //
- We need to so **deeply trust him**, so **radically obey him**, so **stubbornly resist** what is **foolish** or **harmful** or just plain **sinful**... that it can **never, EVER** be said of us:
- ✖ **THEY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED, ✖ BUT ✖ THEY LOST WHAT THEY HAD.**