

== IN SEARCH OF A KING ==

Understanding 1 Samuel

Small group questions

1 Samuel 9-12 The rise of Saul

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

1. Apart from the Lord Jesus and what he has done for you, has there been something significant in your life you can share with the group, for which you are forever thankful when you remember it? How has that incident impacted your life?

What is the passage about?

- Skim over the chapters and remind yourselves of the key points
- See the key verses as Saul is chosen and anointed as king - 9:20, 10:1, 10:24
- Anything unclear - any questions?

What does it teach us about God?

2. Despite the appointment of Saul as earthly King, God was still clearly in charge and calling the shots. What are the implications of this for understanding our world today... Or - does this fact raise some questions for you? What is God's ultimate plan for our world?
3. **12:24** *But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.*
Consider what great things he has done for you - a great inspiration to serving the Lord with our all heart. Do some *considering* as a group and recall how blessed we are!! See also Romans 12:1-2.
4. How can we ensure that we more regularly *consider* what great things he has done for us?

How does it point us to Jesus?

5. God acts through his authoritative word. Through these chapters, Samuel heard from God and obeyed his word. Saul would be required to lead by listening to and obeying God's word. What are the implications for us of having a God who speaks and whose word has authority?
6. We are engaged in a battle today. Read Ephesians 6:10-12. What is the nature of the battle we face?
7. We know who has already won the victory in this battle - see Colossians 2:13b-15. What difference does that make as we struggle?

Conclusion

8. Pray with this verse in mind: *But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.*
9. 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?

Date: 6 August 2017
Services: 730, 930 (P), 630
Series: 1 Samuel - In search of a King
Passage: 1 Samuel 9-12
Title: The rise of Saul

✧ INTRODUCTION

- **CONSIDER WHAT GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE FOR YOU...**
- Grateful remembrance is a common theme for motivating behaviour...
- We gather on Anzac day and we pledge, out of grateful remembrance to be ever diligent in maintaining peace
- When people are dramatically saved by flying doctors or care flight helicopter, they will often make a donation to such in grateful remembrance for their rescue
- Or at a funeral... you may be asked to make a donation to the cancer council or something similar in grateful remembrance for a person's life.
- We read here in 1 Samuel 12:24, in Samuel's parting words to Israel *Be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.*
- **Consider what great things he has done for you.**
- That's something of what we'll explore this morning/tonight... but we're going to ask the same three questions we've been asking throughout the series:
 1. **what is the passage about?**
 2. **what does it teach us about God?**
 3. **how does it point us to Jesus?**
- So:

1. WHAT IS THE PASSAGE ABOUT?

- We're introduced to Saul - a young man out looking for his dad's **donkeys** one day when the **strangest thing happened**.
- They had been gone a few days and he and his servant were ready to head back thinking his dad would by now, be more worried about **him** than the **donkeys**.
- But his **servant** said that there was a man in **this town** who was highly **respected** and everything he says comes **true**... 'let's go talk to him - perhaps he'll tell us which way to take.'
- They were given directions as to how to find him and then as it happened, **ran into him** as he was going up to **sacrifice**.
- His **name**? **SAMUEL**. ✧ blk
- Samuel **immediately knew** who Saul was and told him that he was to **eat** with him and that he would tell Saul all that was in his **heart**.
- He told Saul not to worry about the **donkeys** as they had been **found**... but **then** he said the **strangest** thing:
 - *And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father's family?*
- Saul couldn't work out **what** he was saying. He was a **Benjamite** - the **smallest tribe** - and then from the **smallest clan within** that tribe...
- Well - they went to **dinner** - and Saul and his servant were seated at the **head** of the **table**.. there was about **30 there**.... And Saul was given the **largest bit of meat you'd ever seen**... **more** than anyone **else** and was told it had been set aside just for **him**!

- After that, **Samuel** and Saul talked all **night** on his rooftop till **morning**.
- As it was time for them to **go**, Samuel told Saul's servant to go on **ahead** of them and that Saul should **stay** as he had a message from **God** for **him**.
- Saul was kind of **overwhelmed** by all of this... and then – then Samuel took a flask of **oil** and **poured** it on Saul's **head**... and **kissed** him and said '*has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance?*'
- He gave him a series of **instructions** and **signs** to follow and said that the **Spirit of God** would come on him in **great power** and that he will **prophesy**... and that the Lord would be **with** him in **whatever** he **did**.
- Everything Samuel said **would happen did**.
- And the **Spirit of God** came upon Saul in **power**.
- He began **prophesying** and everyone was **asking** whether he was now a **prophet!**
- Then **Samuel** had all the leaders of **Israel** gather at **Mizpah**.
- He told them off once **more** for rejecting **God** and asking for a **king**.
- but then (by lot) – **one tribe** was **chosen** – the tribe of **Benjamin**.
- And then out of all the **clans**, Saul's clan of **Matri** was **chosen**.
- Then from that clan, **Saul** was **chosen**... he wasn't actually **there** – he was so **embarrassed** and **overwhelmed** – he was **hiding** among the **luggage**.
- They came and **found him**... and everyone saw that he was a **head taller** than any of the **others**... and **Samuel** said there and then – *Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.*
- And then they shouted – **long live the King, long live the King ...!**
- Samuel explained how this system of having a **king** would **work**... that he as **prophet** would be **essential** in **guiding** the **king** and **revealing** the **Lord's will**...// and then **everyone** went **home**.
- After a **terrifying battle** against the **Ammonites**, Saul was **again** confirmed **King** at **Gilgal** and there were **sacrifices** and a **great celebration**.
- Samuel charged the people of **Israel** – **again rebuking** them for having asked for a **King** – and said now that the Lord has set a **king** over you – **fear the Lord** and **serve** and **obey him** and do not **rebel** against his **commands**... if you **obey** – **good!**. But if you do **not** obey the Lord and if you **rebel** against his **commands**... his hand will be **against you**.
- And then in an amazing **display** of God's **enormous power**... Samuel said – **stand still** and see the thing the **Lord** is **about** to do... I will call upon the Lord to send **thunder** and **rain** and you will realise what an **evil thing** you did in the eyes of the **Lord** when you **asked** for a **king**.
- That day there was thunder and rain just as Samuel said, and everyone was in **complete awe** both of **Samuel** and **God**... and they asked Samuel to **pray** for them that they would not **die**...for they **realised** that to all their **other sins** they had added the **evil** of **asking** for a **king**.
- And Samuel **comforted** the people – telling them not to be **afraid** and urged them to serve the Lord with all their **heart** and that the Lord would not **reject** them because he had been pleased to make them his **own**.
- He said he would **pray** for them and **teach** them what was **right**... and urged them to fear the **Lord** and **serve** him with all their **heart** – *consider what great things the Lord has done for you...* ///
- Quite a story...
- So let's ask then

2. WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD?

✧ He is still the King!

- God may have given them a **king** like the **nations** to **lead them** – but there is no doubt that he still **calling** the **shots**.
- **He arranged** for Saul's **donkeys** to go missing so he would run into **Samuel**
- God **revealed** to **Samuel** the day before that he would run into **Saul** and he was to **anoint** him **King**.
- God had **arranged** for **Samuel** to anoint Saul **King** whom **HE** had chosen to be **King!**
- He put his **Spirit** upon **Saul** for the task of **being King**.
- He who arranges how the **lots fall**, **arranged** for Saul to be **elected King** in front of **all the people**.
- He granted **Israel** success over the **Ammonites**.
- Through Samuel, the **Lord rebuked Israel** again for asking for a **King** and caused thunder and rain which dramatically reminded Israel of his great power.
- God is King. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- He's still calling the shots. //
- He has a plan for the world... to bring everything under the reign of Jesus; to finally end all evil and usher in a new heavens and a new earth – and nothing will stop those plans...!

✧ that God's people still owe him our complete allegiance

- have a look with me at **12:24** *But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you*
- consider what great things he has done for you!
- For keeping in mind what he has done for you will cause you to **LONG** to fear him and serve him faithfully with all your heart. //
- For Israel... what was it they were to remember... what great things had he done for them?
- Brought them into being as a nation – according to the promises made to Abraham....
- through Joseph, provided for them in the great famine
- With great power, rescued them from the cruel slavery of the Egyptians
- After a 40 year delay wandering in the wilderness, he brought them into the promised land
- And then with patience – he fought their battles... was patient with them in their rebellion... he persisted with them... loved them...
- He showed himself again and again as *The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.* Exodus 34:6-7 //
- We too are to consider what great things he has done for us...
- Loved us in creation and all that he has provided for us
- Loved us in the gift of His son to reveal himself to us and show us the way of compassion and love
- Loved us in the life, death and resurrection of his Son so that we might be reconciled to him
- Loved us in the gift of the Spirit to empower us in love and service and obedience
- Loved us in the gift of the church – his body – our family – so that we might spur one another on to love and good works...
- Loved us in the promise of a future with him – without sin and evil or pain or death or tears... ////
- **Consider what great things he has done for you //**

- Consider what great things he has done for you!! //
- Romans 12:1 *therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.*

3. HOW DOES THIS POINT US TO JESUS?

✘ everything happens through God's word

- the Bible teaches us that God speaks.
- Through his word, God expresses and enacts his purpose.
- God rules things by his word (see Heb 1:3).
- By his word, creation was brought into being (see Gen 1:14, Psalm 33:6, Heb 11:3).
- Jesus Christ himself is God's word that became flesh (John 1:14), and the good news (Gospel) about Jesus is now God's word to the world (Col 1:25).
- In other words, we see the significance of the events recounted in these chapters only when we see that the word of God was at the heart of it all.
- God said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king" (1 Sam 8:22a). Then he said, "tomorrow . . . I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin" (1 Sam 9:16).
- Everything that happens in these chapters was according to God's word.
- Saul became Israel's king by the word of God and he would be required to listen to and obey the word of God.
- So even in the seemingly mundane details of the story, God was sovereign.
- God was making Saul king by his word and he rules over the mundane details, appointing Saul to be Israel's leader.
- God spoke definitively in the person of Jesus... the WORD of God... and speaks now through his written word... we ignore it at our peril!

We are involved now in battle fighting but with a difference

- We don't go out and fight the Ammonites... but we are involved in a spiritual battle.
- Paul in Ephesians 6 - *our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*
- Every day – we're in that battle field – whether we like it or not.
- But here's the thing: Jesus has already won the battle... Colossians 2 - *He [Jesus] forgave us all our sins, 14 having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross*
- So we are involved in a battle which Jesus has already won... but we're involved if you like in a mopping up operation... we continue to fight against the loser... but we're clearly on the winning side...
- The notice above him read "the King of the Jews"
- The thief says 'Jesus remember me when you come in your kingdom'
- Jesus... King of the Jews... God's appointed King – the ruler of the Kings of the earth... the one who will return and take us into his eternal kingdom... Who fought NOT the nations who were enemies of Israel – but the powers and authorities, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Col 2)
- Jesus – God's ultimate King... who conquered evil...

CONCLUSION

- Our time is gone. Let me leave with you the line from these chapters which caused me to search my heart this week:
- As Samuel was urging Israel to 'fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart' he said *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- And I want to urge you this morning to - *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- Indeed - in view of his mercy - to offer your body to him as a living sacrifice.
- Hear Jesus say - I came not to be served, but to serve - and *consider what great things he has done for you*
- Look at Jesus before Pilate, and being flogged, and walking out to Calvary and *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- See him on the cross... *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- See the empty tomb and the risen Lord standing in the midst of the disciples and *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- Sense the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit - dwelling within you - and *Consider what great things he has done for you...*
- *Consider, what great things he has done for you!*