

4-16-23

1 Samuel 8:1-22

God had called Abraham to be the father of a Jewish nation, not because they were something special. In fact, it was quite the opposite, they weren't much; what made these Jewish people special was the God that chose them. Through their failures, fractions and a few faithful, He (God) would be glorified and provide all of mankind's greatest need, forgiveness.

God called Moses, and then used Joshua, but after Joshua God used Judges, prophets and priests to rule the Jewish people and His land.

In our previous studies God raised up Samuel, from a womb of a barren and faithful woman. Samuel was the answer that the people of Israel needed as the answer to Eli and his wretched son's (Phinehas and Hophni "Hoffni). God always has an **THE** answer, **THE** plan and it is always the right one.

In **1 Samuel 8**, we find the Jewish people in a similar situation as they had been in before. Samuel had restored them back to God (**chapter 7**) and he was their leader for another 20 to 30 years. That's when we see a familiar situation come up.

Read 1 Samuel 8:1-3.

Samuel was old and couldn't do all the judging and work that he used to be able to do, so he appointed his two sons to help him. But his two sons were not like Samuel. God's Word says, **"But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice."** (v.3)

The Jews had scene this play out before. Decades before Eli had appointed his corrupt sons to help him carry out his duties and they too were abusive and unqualified to pour a cup of water in God's name. Did his two wayward sons trigger old memories and feelings in the older generation, maybe they told the younger generations what had happened.

I wonder if they did share all that they had been through, did they share how they didn't trust in God's directions before and where it left them? Did they trust in their faithful God? Did they pray and wait for Him to make things right?

Read 1 Samuel 8:4-5.

"All the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel..." That was quite the undertaking. Twelve tribe's elders come together and agree to go see Samuel. Let me remind you of the heart of the people in those days.

Judges 17:6, In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 21:25, In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

So, to get twelve tribes to agree on anything was a miracle in itself. But look at what their plan/decision was. **"Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."** (v.5)

They didn't come seeking God's plan or will. They didn't come to address the sinful behaviors of Samuel's sons. Or even allow Samuel to make the situation right. Could it be that they lumped him in with Eli? The

elders of the twelve tribes came with their list of demands, their will, their plan, and they were not looking for input. God had been leading the Nation of Israel for a long time. He had protected and provided for them time after time although they were continually disobedient to Him. They didn't care!

Can you see yourself in this passage? Don't we get tired of waiting on God? Don't we push Him off the throne of our lives when stuff hits the fan, or just doesn't make sense? Aren't we guilty of forgetting how God faithfully provided in the past and fall back into trusting in our ways?

Isn't it hard to trust in the process? When you are tempted to not trust God's direction, plan, and or how He is moving in your life in a way that seems the wrong direction, be careful...

I. Watch Out for Excuses.

- **Verses 3-5.**
- **Excuse 1 "You are old..."** At this point Samuel is probably 65 to 70 years of age. (Which is by the way a lot younger than it used to be.) They seem to be suggesting that Samuel is "as good as dead" and that his leadership is over.
- Have you ever had a whipper snapper, gitter-bug, yutz remind you of how old you are? Call you an old head or boomer? They tease you because your joints sound like a fresh bowl of rice crispies when the milk gets added.
- They make the mistake that your physical weakening means your inept. The one thing that you can't get without growing older is experience. As Andrew was getting older I would tell him, I was once 14, 15, 16 before, I was 14, 15, 16 for a whole year. So, I know what you haven't even thought of yet.
- **Excuse 2 "Your sons do not walk in your ways"** in other words your sons are not fit to lead. Ouch that must have hurt! This must have been true for it is never denied. But it seems to be more of a convenient pretext than the elder's real motives to overthrow the theocratic system in favor of a human king.
- The elders used the sins of Samuel's sons to blaze a path for their sinful plan. Let us trade in God's rule for man's.
- Friendly reminder, **1 Samuel 7:3-5**. Looks like things changed over the years. Was it God that changed or the people?

II. Excuses Can Reveal Intentions

- **Excuse 3 "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations."**
- Finally, the real reason is given, in the last part of verse five, we want to be "like all the nations." But Israel was never designed to be just like the other nations, they were to be unlike them and superior to them in every way.
- Those other nations were unified and had one strong army, (or so they thought). The grass is always greener on the other side- Isn't it? Let me tell you the obvious- Until you have lived in "other people's" shoes, you don't have a clue.
- Just like the Christians of today are not to appear just like the world but that according to **1 John 2:15**, we are "not to love the world or the things in the world." Unfortunately too many Christians are still trying to follow the world's example, to look like, sound like and act like unbelievers.

- Up until this point in history of the life of the nation of Israel has been characterized by disunity, each tribe did its own thing. There seems to be no real pattern for the selection of judges. Viewed this way the desire for a king probably seemed very logical, except that it left God completely out of the picture. There is not the slightest indication that they wanted Samuel to determine God's will regarding a king. There is no reference to prayer on their part and no evidence of humility. They wanted what they wanted, and they wanted it right now. That sounds thoroughly modern, doesn't it? (BK have it your way, You Rule!)
- Queen's song, I want it all, I want it all. I want it all, and I want it now!
- The problem isn't just that Israel requested a king; it was insisting that God give them a king immediately. **"Now make us a king..."**
- In **verse 6** we read the elders request for a king, **"... displeased Samuel.** The Hebrew word for "displeased" means "to see the evil in something."
- Samuel left the scene convinced that he had been rejected by the people he had spent a lifetime faithfully serving. As any godly leader would Samuel probably agonized over whether what is happening is due to some failure on his part.
- Have you felt like Samuel? You poured out your life to honor God, serve others to only be told, get out of the way, or we want something different?
- Parents, how many times have your beautiful children responded to your sacrifice and support with entitlement?
- I can only imagine how heartbroken Samuel was.... even more so, God!

III. Investigate the Intention.

- Had they slowed down and allowed for some inward inspection maybe they would have seen they were once again rejecting God.
- **Read verses 7-9**
- God knew their hearts and tried to comfort Samuel. God tells Samuel twice to **"heed their voice..."** Let them have their way.
- **"They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me..."** God knew the truth, their desires for a king were a clear statement to God. They didn't want God to be their king, they wanted their own.
- Entitled people, selfish, self-centered people are the worst, aren't they? It is so hard to deal with someone who believes they deserve something better or more. What's even worse is if it wasn't for you, they wouldn't have anything at all.
- God has always been so faithful to His people and repeatedly His people turn their back on Him and desire something else.
- Could you be God for one day?
- God instructed Samuel to warn them of the consequences of what they are demanding. **(v.9)**
- Could the same be said of us? I can speak for myself, I demand things of God, expect things of Him to go a certain way, and when it doesn't, oh boy!
- I see God's warning to me in verse 9, do you? He is either all in (as in charge, priority) or all out.

IV. Be Careful What You Ask For.

- **Read verses 10-22.**
- Israel's demand of a king in the face of all the bad things they have just heard is unreasonable. They thought that they knew what was best, they took counsel of their own hearts and having chosen a course independent of God, they proceeded at once to follow it up.
- No one could do for Israel what God had already done. It was also ungrateful because it ignored the evidence of God's past goodness. In spite of all the Lord had done for Israel from the call of Abraham to the conquest of the Promised land, they decide to turn their back on Almighty God and choose to have a mere mortal to rule over them.
- We have all heard the old saying, "You made your bed and now you have to lie in it." God will of course forgive the sin of our demanding our own way, but he may not remove the consequences of that choice. Sometimes the severest judgment God can give us is to let us have our own way.
- Notice the progression in rebellion evident in the text, they begin in **verse six** by asking Samuel to ... " **give us a king**" but then in **verse 19** they defiantly "... **refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."**(verses 19-20)
- I love how the Israelites think a man is going to fight their battles and make their lives better in any way!
- God has previously told Israel that she would one day have a king. God had promised Abraham and Sarah that kings would be among their descendants (**Gen 17:6, 16**). Jacob named Judah as the kingly tribe (**Gen. 49:10**).
- God promised Israel a king one day. Does that mean that it was alright for Israel to demand a king? No. The fact that something is prophesied in scripture is not proof that what is being told is good and right. The betrayal of Judas was foretold, as well as the fact that Israel would reject Christ as the Messiah. But that does not mean that either of these acts was good or right. It only means that God want us to know that it was part of his eternal plan.
- In **verse 21**, we are told, "**And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. So the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king."** And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "**Every man go to his city."** (**Verses 21-22**)
- One of the great mysteries of God's work among men is that the Bible is interwoven with stories of how God works with people even in the midst of their failures to bring purposes to be.
- He still does the same today. He hasn't changed how He works. So, no matter how disobedient you have been, God is here ready for you to start over again.
- When I read how idiotic the nation of Israel is, I am reminded, Cecil you are too. But our God is so amazing and works miracles through idiotic individuals.

Conclusion

The nation of Israel would eventually have 41 kings. Only 11 kings followed God at all and 7 of those forgot God at the end of their reign. This spiritual rebellion later caused captivity by foreign nations.

The people learned that a human leader was not an answer to their problems. Only God.

Just like the people back in Samuel's day, we too must be careful of making excuses. Often excuses cover up the intentions of our hearts.

Beware of rejecting God and His direction for your life.

Be careful of what you wish for. When we choose to do things our way and not God's there will be consequences.