

1 Samuel 9

Once again good morning, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. We're continuing in our verse by verse study of 1 Samuel, so would you please turn to chapter 9 of 1 Samuel.

If you recall, last week we studied Israel's refusal to allow God to be their king. Israel kept saying they wanted to be like all the other nations, which ultimately was a rejection of God's rule.

This morning, we see the story of the coronation of Israel's first king. We're going to study chapters 9 and 10 and the title of this morning's message is Answering the Call

Let's pray

1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. A mighty man of power means Kish was wealthy.

2-3

2 And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people. 3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys."

Donkeys were like pickup trucks in those days, and if you lost a couple pickup trucks, you'd send your son out too to go find 'em. So Saul and a servant go out to find the lost donkeys.

4-5

4 So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. Then they passed

through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.

5 When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease caring about the donkeys and become worried about us."

Now there are 2 ways to look at verses 4-5. We'll learn later that they've been searching for the donkeys for 2 days. That's a long time to be away from home, so it makes sense that Saul is concerned about his dad's potential worrying.

Yet the other perspective is that Saul is willing to stop short of the mission he's called to fulfill, which will be a reoccurring tendency the rest of his life.

6 And he (servant) said to him, "Look now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go." "Saul's servant says "wait a minute, we're at a place where there is a prophet. Let's ask him if he knows anything about the missing donkeys."

7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" Out of respect, Saul didn't want to approach this prophet empty handed. They've used up their supplies.

8-9

8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a

seer.) Prophets were known as seers because they could see things others couldn't.

10-14

10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

12 And they answered them and said, "Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because there is a sacrifice of the people today on the high place. 13 As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him." 14 So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place. Please notice that Israel's first king will be led to the throne because of some lost donkeys.

Folks, we have no idea how God will use, or is using the seemingly normal, mundane or even annoying circumstances of our lives. That's one of the great joys of following God isn't it!

God allowed these circumstances to guide Saul, just as God will often use circumstances in our lives the same way.

15-16

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, 16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand

of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me.” It’s fascinating that the Lord whispered in Samuel’s ear the day before this event took place to let him know what was ahead.

Haven’t you experienced the same thing, where the Lord gives you a heads up about something before it happens?

Now we saw in our study last week how Israel rejected God as their king, but notice God was still in control. He didn’t step off His throne just because Israel asked Him to. He would indeed give them a king, but as the nation will soon learn, every earthly king is a flawed king.

17-19

17 So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, “There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people.” 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, “Please tell me, where is the seer’s house?” Remember, young Saul has no idea what’s taken place behind the scenes, or how the Lord has orchestrated these circumstances up to this moment.

19 Samuel answered Saul and said, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. Picture the scene-Saul must have been amazed. He looked for a prophet, and the first man he asked about the prophet was the prophet Samuel himself. Clearly this was the hand of God!

Samuel continues...

20 But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father’s

house?” With talking about all the desire of Israel, Samuel hinted at Saul’s destiny. All Israel desired a king, and Saul will become the answer to that desire.

And in verse 21 we see Saul’s response

21 And Saul answered and said, “Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe[fn] of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?” “I’m from the smallest tribe,” Saul protested. “And my family is the smallest family in the tribe.”

At first glance it appears Saul is being humble, but I’m not so sure. Humility and insecurity look a lot alike - but they’re two very different attitudes.

Humility is an others-centered attitude. Humility is the attitude of caring so much for others that you don’t worry about yourself.

But insecurity is carefully concealed selfishness. Insecurity says ‘I’m so concerned about my image, I’m afraid to step up lest I fail and embarrass myself.’

I mention this because as we continue to study the life of Israel’s first king we’ll observe several different instances where Saul was far more insecure than really humble.

22 Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there were about thirty persons. In that culture the seating arrangement at dinner had a special protocol. The seat of honor was always on a particular side next to the host. This was a big deal for Saul to be seated in this place next to the prophet Samuel.

23-24

23 And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Set it apart.’” 24 So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, “Here it is, what was kept back. It was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day. Not only was he given special seating, Saul was also given the select portion of meat as a further sign of honor.

25 When they had come down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the top of the house.^[fn] Houses in that region were flat-roofed, providing a place where people could sit in the evening and enjoy the cool breezes. And the prophet Samuel and young Saul have one of those late night chats-what they discussed, we can’t say for certain.

26 They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, “Get up, that I may send you on your way.” And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel. It’s interesting, it appears Saul fell asleep on the roof-perhaps unable to get much sleep because of the shocking events of the day perhaps? Maybe it was a sleepless night, his mind running a million miles an hour?

27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us.” And he went on. “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God.” “

1 Samuel 10

1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: “Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?^[fn] From our earlier OT studies you’ll recall ceremonial anointing was a physical act

involving the smearing, rubbing, or pouring of sacred oil on someone's head as an outward symbol that God had chosen and set apart the person for a specific holy purpose. Prior to this moment, the only things anointed with oil were the priests and the tabernacle.

This anointing of oil symbolized a more profound spiritual reality—that God's presence was with them and His favor was upon them. Saul is going to be the king of Israel.

Now, in the next several verses the prophet Samuel tells Saul of multiple signs coming from God that confirm Saul will be king.

2 When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' In God's mercy, the Lord gave Saul signs to build confidence in the work the Lord had for him.

Often times when God asks us to take steps of faith, He'll send us confirmation along the way. God didn't want Saul to doubt his calling later, so as we're about to see God gave Saul a lot of confirmation.

V 3-4 Samuel gives Saul another sign of confirmation.

3 Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. Pretty specific wouldn't you say? 4 And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. It would be unusual for men to simply give a stranger

like Saul loaves of bread. But as king, Saul will often receive gifts, so this was a good way to confirm his calling as king.

5-6

5 After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. 6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Most shocking of all these prophecies, is that the Holy Spirit will suddenly come upon Saul, and his heart will be turned upside down.

This HS coming upon Saul was the real anointing. The oil poured out on Saul's head was just a picture of this.

7 And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. God arranged for each one of these events to be a confirming sign to Saul of his kingship of Israel. God always confirms His anointing.

But notice that as verse 7 says, Saul had to 'do as the occasion demands'. Saul still had to make the choice to be obedient! It's the same choice you and I face multiple times each day-will we be obedient to God's calling in our lives?

8 You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do." In chapter 15 Saul's refusal to wait on Samuel will be Saul's downfall. Here Saul is instructed to wait 7 days. Imagine how hard this waiting was! You're told you will be king and then you have to wait a week before you do anything?

9 So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. The prophet Samuel didn't give Saul a new heart. Nor did Saul give himself a new heart. The new heart was a gift from God.

Every person can have another heart from the LORD, but we must receive it from Him. We can't receive a new heart from anyone except from God. Which also means, we can never make a new heart in anyone else. It has to be God

10 When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. This is another example in the OT of the HS falling upon a person, to empower a person for a specific period of time. The HS didn't come to indwell believers until Acts 2 at Pentecost

11-13

11 And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" 12 Then a man from there answered and said, "But who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" 13 And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place. This phrase 'became a proverb' describes the astonishment that Saul prophesied. To put it in in our vernacular today, it would be like Joe Biden standing up in front of congress and preaching like Billy Graham-we'd be astounded!

The changes God worked within Saul were obvious. Everybody saw that he was a different man. Isn't what happens when God transforms your life?

I don't know about you, but I'm so much different than I used to be prior to walking with Jesus. I was a rage-aholic, ready to snap and looking for the opportunity in a moments notice. I was the guy looking to buy cocaine before a RATM concert so I could go into a mosh pit and destroy some poor soul. I was such a raving lunatic, my friends told me I'd be dead or in jail within a year

I stand in awe at the work the Lord has done, and continues to do!

If you need a new heart this morning, surrender to Jesus and ask Him!

14 Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel."

15 And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you." Oh man-here we go!

16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said. Interesting. Is this humility, or insecurity? I believe it's insecurity. Even after multiple confirmations, even after the empowering by God's HS, Saul's still hesitant to trust in God.

You know, we can deceive ourselves by acting humble to cleverly disguise our unbelief. It's a whole lot easier to say, "O, God can't use someone like me that way, I'm not gifted in that way, I'm not good at that." It's easier to dwell on our insecurities then it is to step out in faith where God is leading us.

Starting in verse 17 Samuel calls the nation to Mizpah for a public revealing of their king, but before Saul is crowned, God issues a reminder to the nation.

17-19

17 Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, 18 and said to the children of Israel, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.’ 19 But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, ‘No, set a king over us!’ Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans.”[fn] God reminded Israel that He was still more than qualified to be their king, and their rejection of Him was because of their foolishness

As we read these words, it’s clear to see how Israel’s rejection of God made so little sense. It defies all logic to reject the one who saved you out of all your adversities and tribulations. But that is exactly what Israel did.

Tragically, this is still how some folks treat God. I’ve lost count of the people who, when hitting rock bottom or facing an insurmountable trial, finally cry out to God. And as they are either delivered from their trial, or work through their hardship, they gradually think they don’t need God as much because their circumstances are changing.

Hey we’re still the same as we were 3,000 years ago. **Jeremiah**

17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things,

And desperately wicked;

Who can know it?

So the nations gather together and Saul is about to be publicly selected as king, and this would be done through the practice of casting lots.

In spite of the many references to casting lots in the Old Testament, nothing is known about the actual lots themselves. They could have been sticks of various lengths, flat stones like coins, or some kind of dice; but their exact nature is unknown. The closest modern practice to casting lots is likely flipping a coin.

To be clear nowhere in the NT are Christians instructed to cast lots to help with decision-making. We have the Word of God, and the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us, there's no reason to be using games of chance to make decisions. The Word, the Spirit, and prayer are sufficient for discerning God's will for our lives.

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. God already chose Saul to be king over Israel. But that was done in private. Now God will show the whole nation that Saul was the right man.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. So the casting of lots falls on Kish, and his son Saul, and it's clear he's the very first king of Israel. And as soon as it's announced, what happens? Well everyone starts looking around for Saul. But they can't find him

22 Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?" (is saul here??)

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment." Notice Saul could hide from the people, but he could not hide from God. So it is today and forever more.

Remember, Saul wasn't an easy guy to miss. He stood head and shoulders over the crowd.

What is Saul doing? He's hiding from the call of God. Rather than taking a step of faith – and trusting God to lead and empower Him – Saul is shrinking back from the start.

Again I don't think this is humility, I believe it's insecurity.

Humility is aware of its inadequacies - but still moves forward and trusts in God to do He has ordained.

We just read a few verses ago that God prepared Saul for this day by changing his heart - by making him a new man.

But it's possible for God to change a person - and that person to fail to act on the fact that they've been changed.

Sadly, this is what happens to believers today. Haven't we all had times where we allowed our fears and insecurities to slip in, and keep us from doing what God intended?

We can't miss another aspect of what's happening here as Saul is hiding. He's ignoring the work God had done in his heart. Saul looked at the task God gave him, and instead of relying on God, Saul was relying on his own talents and attributes. And now his fear overpowers him, and causes him to flee and hide.

But again, he could run from the people, but he couldn't run from God. God tells the Israelites Saul is hiding...

23 So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?" So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!" Again, Samuel mentions Saul's natural advantages. The people wanted a king, and God gave them a man who looked like a king.

25 Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. In Deuteronomy 17 God gave instructions for the future kings of Israel, before they ever existed. God knew this day would be coming.

So Saul is now crowned king, and what happens?

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. At the time, there was no palace or capital. So Saul simply walked home with his future leaders, the valiant men who went with him.

It's interesting, God called Saul to be king and lead the nation, but Saul couldn't do it alone. He needed brave, courageous men around him, men whose hearts God had touched.

27 But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace. Despite the verbal attacks, Saul held his peace. I'm sure it was painful when those who despised him launched their tirades at him, I'm sure every hurtful word had struck deep into Saul's soul. But he held his peace.

James 1:19 So then, [fn] my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

We just studied the account of a man, who despite God's promises and God's empowering, was reluctant to do what God had called him to do.

Satan is smart. He will do everything he can to discourage us, to get our eyes focused on our inadequacies, and let's be honest- there's lots of inadequacies in all of us isn't there?! But Satan will

get us to focus on our weaknesses, instead of trusting in God's faithfulness.

I don't know what Lord has laid out before you, but please know wherever God guides, He provides. And in fact the best place to be is the place where you say God I can't do it, and He says I know-and He does it, and He get's the glory.