



Jason Smith - Our King

Part 2: When We Want a King

Scripture: 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Introduction: The Kings We Crave

This morning, I would like to confront one of the most subtle but dangerous temptations we face: the temptation to trust in human kings, leaders, systems, people, and even ourselves—instead of trusting in God.

As we begin today, I'd like to ask you a difficult question: **Who is sitting on the throne of your life?**

Who—or what—are you looking to for power, security, or identity?

We live in a world where people say, “**No kings!**” No one tells me what to do. I'm in charge of my own life.

But here's the irony: even when we say “no kings,” we're still looking for something to rule us. Something to lead us. Something to save us.

The truth is, **we all want a king.** We want someone or something to give us a sense of belonging, safety, and success. We want protection, direction, and leadership.

And this isn't a new thing, even the people of God in 1 Samuel 8 were no different. They wanted a king.

They wanted to be like the other nations. They thought an earthly king would solve their problems.

But what they were really doing was rejecting God as their true king. And before we judge them too quickly—if we're honest—we can do the same thing.

Let's look at their story as we preach a message:

When We Want a King

1. We Reject God When We Demand Earthly Kings

Read: 1 Samuel 8:4–7

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵ and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.”

And Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

Let's walk into the story together.

The elders of Israel come to the prophet Samuel with a bold demand: ***“You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”*** (v. 5)

Samuel is troubled. He knows this isn't just about leadership—it's a heart issue.

But God tells him plainly: ***"It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king."*** (v. 7)

And this is the core issue... Not only for them, but for us.

They weren't just asking for organization—they were trading trust for control. They wanted a king they could see.

A king they could measure. A king they could point to and say, "This is who saves us."

But in asking for that kind of king, they were **rejecting God's reign over their lives.**

And here's the irony: The whole story of Israel up to this point was about how God had rescued them, led them, protected them, and provided for them—as **their King**.

Reference: Exodus 15:18 – ***"The Lord will reign for ever and ever."***

God had been their Deliverer, their Lawgiver, their Warrior—their **King**. But now they want to be like the other nations.

Reference: Judges 21:25 – ***"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."***

Israel thought their problem was lack of leadership, but their real problem was **lack of trust**.

They didn't want to wait on God.

They didn't want to be set apart anymore.

They didn't want the kind of King who worked in invisible, upside-down ways.

They wanted control.

And if we're honest, we do this too.

The Kingdom of God is counter-cultural in the sense that the Kingdom requires faith, and the world requires sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith and not by sight.

We may not ask for a literal king—but we look to **other people, platforms, systems, or even ourselves** to give us what only God can provide.

- We crown success and expect it to make us feel secure.
- We crown politics and expect it to give us peace.
- We crown approval and expect it to give us identity.
- We crown ourselves and expect to be in control.

But just like Israel, in asking for other kings, we are **rejecting the reign of the One True King.**

Reference: Jeremiah 2:13 – “*My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*”

We trade the fountain of living water for a broken cup that can't hold anything. We trade the King who gives for rulers who only take.

Question for Reflection: Who—or what—are you tempted to trust instead of God?

2. Earthly Kings Always Take

Read: 1 Samuel 8:10-18

¹⁰ So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him.

¹¹ He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots.

¹² And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.

¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.

¹⁵ He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants.

¹⁶ He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men^[a] and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

¹⁷ He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸ And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

After the people demand a king, God tells Samuel to warn them—to tell them what a king will really do. And Samuel doesn't sugarcoat it. He says plainly:

“This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights...” (v. 11)

And then comes the list:

- He will take your sons and make them fight his battles.
- He will take your daughters to serve in his palace.
- He will take the best of your fields, vineyards, and olive groves.
- He will take a tenth of your grain and flocks.
- He will take your servants, your donkeys, your time.

Over and over again, the warning rings out:

“He will take... he will take... he will take.”

And then Samuel finishes with a chilling line:

“When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” (v. 18)

Here's the truth: **Earthly kings always take.**

They may come with charm. They may promise you strength and status. They may promise to fight for you, provide for you, or protect you. But in the end—they serve themselves.

Remember where Saul was when Goliath came on the scene?

Reference: Psalm 146:3 – *“Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.”*

They over-promise and under-deliver.

- They promise security, but bring slavery.
- They promise power, but bring oppression.
- They promise identity, but leave us empty

And here's what makes this so tragic: **The people of God were trading the generosity of God for the greed of human kings.**

They were exchanging a God who gave them everything—freedom, land, purpose, identity—for a ruler who would take it all away.

Reference: Isaiah 30:1-2 – “*Woe to the obstinate children,*” declares the Lord, “*to those who carry out plans that are not mine... who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help... but not look to the Holy One of Israel.*”

Just like Israel, we often turn to kings who take. We may not call them “kings,” but we serve them all the same.

- Maybe it's success—and it's taking your peace.
- Maybe it's people-pleasing—and it's taking your freedom.
- Maybe it's comfort—and it's taking your purpose.
- Maybe it's control—and it's taking your trust in God.

These kings always take.

They drain us, rather than filling us.

They demand from us, not give to us.

They break their promises and break our hearts.

But not Jesus.

John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Question for Reflection: Where have you trusted a king who only takes from you?

3. Only God Gives What We Truly Need

Read: 1 Samuel 8:19–20

¹⁹ But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, ²⁰ 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.”

Even after Samuel gives the people a detailed warning about what the king will do—how much he will take—they still dig in their heels.

“No!” they said. “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations.” (v. 19–20)

That sentence says it all: **“Then we will be like all the other nations.”**

That’s what they really wanted.

To belong.

To feel powerful.

To feel safe.

But in chasing what the other nations had, they were **rejecting what made them unique. (Christians should desire to be different)**

They were already a people unlike any other—a **people ruled by the living God.**

Deuteronomy 33:29 – “*Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword.*”

God had saved them, protected them, and called them His own. He had parted seas for them. Rained bread from heaven. Defeated armies without a single sword swing.

They didn’t need to be like everyone else—they needed to remember who their King already was.

And yet, they wanted more. But what they didn’t realize is that they were asking **for less.**

Earthly kings take—but God gives.

God gives life. God gives peace. God gives purpose. God gives His very self.

And ultimately—**God gives us Jesus.** The True King.

- A King who doesn’t take our lives—He lays down His own.
- A King who doesn’t enslave us—He sets us free.
- A King who doesn’t demand from us—He gives us grace.
- A King who doesn’t build His kingdom on our backs—He builds His kingdom by carrying our cross.

Romans 8:32 – “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*”

The people thought they needed a visible king. But what they really needed was **a faithful God.** And the same is true for us.

We chase after things we think will give us what we need—
Recognition. Comfort. Control. But only God can give us **what our hearts truly long for.**

Question for Reflection: Where are you chasing what others have, when God is offering you more than you could ever imagine?

Conclusion:

Dethrone Your False Kings

So let me ask you again: **Who is sitting on the throne of your life?**
Where are you putting your hope?

What are you trusting to save you? We all want a king. The question is:
Will you choose a king who takes—or will you surrender to the King who gives?

The people of Israel thought they wanted a king like the other nations.
But what they really needed was the King they already had. And what we really need is the True King—**Jesus.**

Let's not be a people who say, "*No kings!*" Let's be a people who say,
"No king but the True King."

This week, ask God to show you:

- Where have I crowned a false king?
- Where am I chasing security, power, or identity apart from Jesus?
- What would it look like to surrender to the True King in this area of my life?

Let's dethrone the kings that cannot save.

Let's surrender to the King who always gives.

Let's pray together.