

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday July 4, 2021. "We have one king. Be careful what you ask for."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're roughly halfway through 2021 and fully committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's and youth areas have been fully open also and are seeing a good response. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

### **II Sunday.**

This was a stand alone message that spoke to our celebration of the 4th of July. We used a lengthy passage in 1 Samuel that told the account of misaligned loyalties. The story showed we all have tendencies to turn in the wrong direction when things aren't happening the way we think they should.

**So, think about a time when you really wanted something and after you got it it didn't turn out the way you had originally thought it would?**

**What did you miss in wanting that thing?**

**Looking back and reflecting, what can you take from that event?**

The scripture is **1 Samuel 8**. It tells the story of the collapse of the system of judges God had put into place to help interpret The Law, and the people's desire to have a king, to be *"like everyone else"*. Read this passage and then we'll pull some truths for July 4th out of it.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**What do you think drove the people to want a king even though God advised them not to?**

Just a quick walk through this passage, we see why Samuel ended up where he did. He had to relent and get a king like the Israelites had demanded. The system of judges that God had established, even the great Moses had served as a judge, was crumbling. It wasn't working anymore, even Samuel's sons were corrupt, and the people felt like the only answer was to do what all of the other surrounding countries were doing. Which is always the answer to struggles...right?

So, Samuel talked to God. God said it wasn't Samuel the people were rejecting but actually God. To warn them how a king would rule. And then go ahead and anoint a king. This wasn't in the passage, but this is where we get the dumpster fire of a king Saul.

Here are some truths we can pull from this passage. And I want us to wrestle with some serious questions that rise up from this story.

**1. God is ALWAYS making allowances for our short sightedness and poor choices.**

This is not to encourage us to not care if we get it right or not. But we remember God's faithfulness, kindness, and generosity is not for his benefit...but ours. He will let us choose the unwise path, even when it's not his desire. This is the nature of love. It doesn't force or control. It allows us to have agency to make our own choices, and those will never affect his commitment towards us.

**2. Trust that God will not abandon us when we do get it wrong.**

Our relationship with God is thankfully not dependent on our ability to guess right. We are going to continually choose poorly, and just do and say some the dumbest things. But God's kindness and generosity will always move him towards us. Love ALWAYS perseveres...no matter what.

**3. We are called to live differently.**

This is a tough one. Because our default is to point out areas we are naturally different rather than intentionally choosing to be different. Nationalism tends to demand allegiance and loyalty to a country first, and then fit your faith around your earthly loyalty. As Christians, our lives should reflect the teachings of Jesus. **Where might you be living more like your ideology than your faith?**

**4. Be careful where your loyalties lie.**

We can be so stubborn. We continually blur the lines between sacred and secular in what we lift up. We are followers of Jesus first, citizens of this country second. When we vote, we're simply making a utilitarian choice, but that's not our true loyalty. We must always choose God first, then grow our allegiance to our country around that. Decide today who and what you will allow to rule you.

**5. God works through and with our imperfections.**

In Genesis 17 God tells Abraham kings will come from him. As we always say, what the Israelites demand looks shocking...but no one is surprised...especially God. God knows how we are, and doesn't abandon us because we turn from him. Again, this isn't for us to live however we want, but it does encourage us to go to God when we mess up. There's no shame, just a desire for reconciliation.

**6. Continually grow your ability to trust and seek God first.**

This isn't a red or blue thing. This is; where is God in how you order your life? God kind of does have our best interest at heart. This is the continual cry and call from God. He must be first. This is not first in the list of all of our priorities but first as in preeminence. That means the filter in which everything else is seen and understood through. It's always God first, then everything else.

**Where do you think you may struggle with any of these?**

**III Challenge.**

We live in a fantastic country. In spite of our many flaws and things we need to work on, this is really a great place. But we must remember Paul told us we are just ambassadors here. This is not our home, we are just guests here. And our loyalty and heart belongs to an even better place. So, we get to live here, and all that comes with that, and also help to be a part of the great work to represent the one true king we really do serve.

**In what ways can you reorder your priorities and practices to make sure you continue to serve the one true king?**

And...have a fantastic 4th of July!!