



THREE KINGS

CREW LEADER GUIDE: PRESENT YOURSELVES - THREE KINGS PART 1

Message Summary:

This sermon opens a new series called "Three Kings," covering Israel's United Kingdom era, about 120 years under the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. Using 1 Samuel 8 as the primary text, we examine Israel's demand for a king and what it reveals about humanity's tendency to seek earthly solutions rather than trust God. The sermon draws a clear line between the world's way of operating—self-reliance, ambition, and conformity to surrounding cultures—and the kingdom way of trusting in God. We acknowledge transformation is not self-generated but is the work of the Holy Spirit when believers simply present themselves before God. The sermon concludes in Mark 10, where Jesus redefines greatness as servanthood, contrasting earthly kingship with Christ's servant leadership.

Key Points:

- Israel's demand for a king reflected not a rejection of Samuel, but a rejection of God himself as their ruler, revealing humanity's recurring temptation to seek visible, earthly leadership over divine authority.
- The desire to be "like all the other nations" mirrors the pressure believers face today to conform to the world's patterns of thinking, spending, speaking, and living rather than trusting in God
- Samuel's warning about what the king would take from the people illustrates that what we think will bring freedom through earthly solutions often leads to a form of bondage
- God does not force obedience; he invites trust, and believers freely follow Jesus rather than being compelled to do so
- Romans 12 reveals that spiritual transformation and the renewing of the mind are works of the Holy Spirit, not achievements of human effort; the believer's responsibility is simply to present themselves before God
- Saul's leadership was undermined by deep-seated insecurity and a fear of man, demonstrating that unaddressed heart issues will eventually corrupt even outwardly gifted leadership
- Jesus redefines greatness in his kingdom as servanthood, completely inverting the world's model of ambition and authority. Christ himself is the ultimate example of servant leadership
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Key Scripture:

- **1 Samuel 8:4-19** -- Israel's elders demand a king, God instructs Samuel to warn them of the consequences, and God acknowledges that the people have rejected him as their king
- **Exodus 19** -- God declares Israel his treasured possession and calls them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, set apart from other nations
- **Isaiah 40:31** -- Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength and will not grow weary
- **Romans 12:1-2** -- Believers are urged to present themselves as living sacrifices and to allow God to transform and renew their minds rather than conforming to the world
- **Mark 10:35-45** -- Jesus teaches that true greatness in his kingdom is found in becoming a servant of all, and that he himself came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many



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Discussion and Reflection

1. The Israelites asked for a king because they wanted to be “like all the other nations.” In what areas of your life do you find yourself seeking to conform to the world's standards rather than trusting in God's unique provision for you?
2. God told Samuel that the people were not rejecting Samuel but rejecting God as their king. How does the desire for visible, tangible leadership or solutions in your own life reflect a subtle rejection of God's authority?
3. Ps. Jesse describes how God does not force obedience but invites trust. How does understanding God's non-coercive nature change the way you approach your relationship with Him and your motivation to follow His ways?
4. Samuel warned the Israelites that the king they desired would ultimately enslave them rather than free them. Can you identify any area in your life where something you pursued for security or freedom has instead become a source of bondage?
5. Romans 12 describes transformation and renewal as passive works done by God rather than by human effort. How does this challenge or reshape the way you approach your own spiritual growth and sanctification?
6. King Saul's insecurity and fear of man ultimately undermined his leadership. In what ways does the fear of other people's opinions or expectations influence the decisions you make, and how might a deeper trust in God address that fear?
7. Jesus told His disciples that greatness in His kingdom is measured by servanthood rather than by position or power. How does this vision of leadership challenge the way you pursue influence, recognition, or advancement in your own life?
8. Ps. Jesse describes prayer not as a list of requests submitted to God but as signing a blank page and trusting God to write the story. What would it look like practically for you to surrender control of a specific situation in your life to God in this way?

Practical Challenge:

Here are a few ways to help activate key next steps this week:

- **Audit Your Justifications:** This week, pay attention to how you talk to yourself when you are making decisions. When you catch yourself justifying something, ask: Is this rooted in trust in God, or am I looking at what everyone else is doing?
- **Practice Presenting Yourself:** God. Set aside intentional time this week, even just 10 to 15 minutes each day, to be still before God without an agenda. Bring no list of requests. Simply show up and let Him work.
- **Remember What God Has Done:** Take some time this week to write down specific moments in your life where God clearly moved on your behalf. Keep this list somewhere visible. When a new challenge arises, return to it as a reminder that the God who came through before is the same God you are trusting now.
- **Serve Someone Unexpectedly:** Identify one person in your life this week -- at home, at work, in your neighborhood. Do it without drawing attention to yourself.