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LIFE LESSONS – 1 SAMUEL: When God Is Rejected¹ 1 Samuel 8

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you here this morning. If you are a guest with us, thanks for joining us on this Lord's Day. We would love the opportunity to get to know you more. You can help us connect with you by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me, and I look forward to following up with you.

Or feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area. There we have a gift we would love to put in your hands as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. We are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

EASTER 2023:

Before we jump into our study in 1 Samuel, I want to let you know about Easter. You might be thinking, "Easter?" Yes. Easter is just 5 weeks away. Easter is a big deal for a couple of reasons. 1, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the event by which our faith hinges. Paul said if the resurrection did not occur, then we are the most to be pitied.

But a second reason Easter is a big deal is because this is the time of year where research tells us that our unchurched friends are most open to an invitation to church. I don't want to miss Easter, and I certainly don't want others to miss Easter. As a result, our staff has been planning and getting ready for an incredible Easter weekend.

We will have 4 services this year. Saturday, April 8, we will gather at 5pm. This will be a service for the entire family. We will have fun activity sheets for kiddos of all ages and it will be a blast. Then on Sunday, April 9, we will have services at 8am, 9:30am, and 11am. During each of the Sunday morning services, our Kids and preschool ministries will have a ton of fun things planned for children in the Kids wing.

We are anticipating a large crowd and we need all hands on deck to help us serve that weekend. We will not have Student and Adult Bible Study Groups

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that day to give you a chance to serve. Here's my ask... Attend a service and serve a service... or two.

We will have Easter training on Sunday evening, April 2 at 5:30pm. So, please see our staff and let them know you are "ALL IN" for service on that day. I'm looking forward to it as it promises to be a great weekend. More to come on that in the days ahead. I just wanted to get it on your radar.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Well, we are in the middle of a teaching series we have called "Life Lessons." We are studying the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. Today we are going to be in chapter 8 in a message I've entitled, "When God is Rejected." What happens when God is rejected? We are going to see that today.

But so far, we have seen God answering the prayer of Samuel's mother, Hannah. How Samuel was a leader that was different than the evil spiritual leaders of his day. We looked at how Samuel learned to hear God's voice in his life. We talked about the devastation that came as a result of evil leadership. And how God worked to bring revival back to the Israelites as they returned back to Him.

Chapter 8, now, is a turning point in the book. In this chapter we see the transition from Samuel's leadership to king Saul. The nation of Israel will change forms of government, from a theocracy to a monarchy. And the people's demand for this change will bring about more heartache.

We will study chapter 8 by looking at the rejection, the results, and then the refusal. Then we will draw some life lesson application points from our study.

MESSAGE:

Let's first look at...

1) The Rejection

The people of Israel are going to demand a king and in so doing will reject God's leadership in their lives. Let's read together beginning in verse 1 of 1 Samuel 8.

¹When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. ²The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah [Ah-bi-juh]; they

were judges in Beersheba. ³Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.

So, as Samuel grew in age, he turned to God's Word to execute what would be prescribed in that situation. By appointing his sons as judges over Israel, Samuel is obeying what is mentioned in Deuteronomy 16:18.ⁱⁱ So, Joel and Abijah are sent way down south to Beersheba.

But, as it turns out, Samuel's sons did not walk in his ways and turned aside after dishonest gain. They took bribes and were corrupt in their dealings with justice. Seems to be a similar situation to Eli, the only exception being that Samuel didn't play into the schemes of his sons.

Verse 4. *⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵and 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."⁶But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord.*

It became apparent to everyone that Joel and Abijah weren't going to cut the mustard. So, the people sent the elders to have a conversation with Samuel. Now, we know from the biblical account that this isn't going to go well for the people. We will get to that in a minute. But let's place ourselves in their shoes before we cast judgment on them. Think about it for a second.

Samuel is aging, he's led well, but his sons are not a good solution. The enemies of Israel are beginning to mount around them. Something has to be done. And in looking around at other nations, being led by a king, it seems to be a great solution. So, the logical thing is to follow a different model for government, right? Makes sense. So, they demand a king. Now, we are told that this breaks Samuel's heart. He was displeased. But why?

Well, he understands their request. I think he can even understand the logic behind it. But it broke his heart because Israel was supposed to be different from other nations. They served an invisible King, The Lord God Almighty. And God intended Israel to be a theocracy, led by Him. But the people now want a visible king.ⁱⁱⁱ What's happening here? **The people are seeking a political solution to a spiritual problem.** Beloved, that is always a recipe for disaster. So, Samuel took it to God. Let's see what happens.

Verse 7. *⁷And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for **they have not rejected you** [Samuel], **but they have rejected me** from being king over them. ⁸According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." God rightly calls this a rejection of Him.^{iv}*

God says, if the people would only look to their own history, they would know that I have led them well. The theocracy was working. God brought them out of slavery in Egypt. He opened the Red Sea. He provided food and water for them in the desert. They won great military victories. The walls of Jericho fell down and just in the last chapter, God thundered and defeated the Philistines. Things are going pretty well.^v So, when the people demand a physical, human king, it is a rejection of God's leadership. Oh, they still wanted God on their side. They didn't want to abandon God, but they looked at Him as a safety net instead of their leader.

Now, I think it is important to say, here, that the request for a king is not wrong. God had promised them that He would one day give them a king.^{vi} But what was wrong with this particular request is that the timing wasn't right, and the motive was way off. God was going to give them a great king, that ultimately being Jesus, but it wasn't the right time. And the motive to be like everyone else is not right. That's never a good reason to do anything. So, it was a rejection of God and His timing.

So, we see the rejection. Now, let's look at...

2) The Results

God, in His grace, is going to warn the Israelites about what the results of an earthly kingship would be. God didn't have to do that. It was by His grace that He did. So, God revealed it to Samuel, and he will pass it along to the people.

Verse 10. *¹⁰So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. ¹¹He 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. ¹²And 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. ¹³He will **take** your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴He will **take** the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵He will **take** the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶He will **take** your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷He will **take** the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸And 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.”* Do you see the key word in this warning? Take.

The results of an earthly king, right now, will be that he will take and take, and take, and take and take again. Seven times in the course of these verses it is said that an earthly king will take from the people.

In other words, God is saying, “Do you really want a king over you? Do you know what happens to other nations with kings? A king is going to be a burden to you.”^{vii}

A king will be a burden to your family. He’s going to take your sons by way of a military draft to serve in his army. He’s going to make them work for a low wage. He’s going to take your daughters and place them in government work. A king is going to be a burden to your family.

Secondly, he will be a burden to your finances. He is going to tax you. So, in addition to you tithing to the Tabernacle, you are going to have to pay heavy taxes. A king will be a burden to your family and your finances.

Thirdly, a king will be a burden to your freedom. Verse 17. *¹⁷He will **take** the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.*

Now, to be clear here, this is not an indictment on government. We need human government to serve as a means of protection and order. But let’s face it. Every time we look to government to solve our problems, we live to regret it.^{viii} Don’t we? That’s because we, like the Israelites, turn to political solutions to spiritual problems. So, God warns them of the results of a king.

We see the rejection and the results. Now, let’s look at...

3) The Refusal.

The people ask for a king; wrong time, wrong motive. Then God, being a gracious God, warns them of the result of such a request, and then gives them an opportunity to vote as to what they really want. Beginning in verse 19 we see the results of the vote.

*¹⁹But 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.**” ²¹And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. ²²And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”*

By way of spoiler alert, God is going to give them their desires. The New Testament speaks of this. Romans 1:24. *²⁴Therefore **God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.*** They will get a king and all that Samuel warned them of will come to fruition. That’s next week’s sermon. We’ve seen the rejection, the results, and the refusal.

LIFE LESSONS:

What do we learn here in this passage that is applicable in our day and time? I want to mention a couple of things...

1) Avoid the comparison game.

If you are in Christ, God has called you to be different from the world around you. As I mentioned before, the issue with the request for a king was not that they asked for that. But the reasoning behind it was off. Wrong time and wrong motive. They wanted to be like everyone around them. Verse 5 of 1 Samuel 8, *⁵and [they] 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.**”*

Listen, the comparison game is a dangerous game to play. And in our day and time it only seems to be proliferated. Right? Like, social media gives us a view into what others having going on in their lives. And we can fall into the trap of wanting to be like them. But God has not called you to live the life of others, but rather to be who He has created you to be.

I want us to consider the dangers of the comparison game. We look at others and want their jobs, their marriage and their looks. As a result, we can spend our lives chasing the lives of others and miss the life God has for us. God has a purpose and a plan for your life, and it is not to live the life of someone else.

By the way, have you considered that what people portray is only the best of what they have going on? Like how many times did it take them to finally capture the selfie they posted? And how many filters did they have on that picture? Know what I mean?

The motive behind the Israelites request for a king was in chasing the lives of those around them. Truth be told, we are no different. We have a tendency to take our eyes off of The Lord and play the comparison game, and want what others have, what we believe would be a blessing will wind up being a curse.^{ix}

For example, some people work hard to get a particular job or promotion. If I can just have a job like them and make what they make. But once they reach the apex, they realize what a burden it is on their family. The demands and stresses of the job can lead to more hours away from family and that can lead to relational dysfunction.

Or sometimes we look at marriage this way. Look at that couple. They seem to have it all together. And what happens then is that you take your eyes off of your marriage and fall in love with someone else's marriage and that makes you unhappy in your marriage.

Listen, I'm not saying that promotions and looking to others for inspiration is a bad thing. Don't misunderstand me. There's nothing wrong with desiring those things. I'm just saying that we should want for what God has for us, not what someone else has. You see the difference? The problem comes when we come to desire what others have and ignore what God has for us.

The comparison game is dangerous. You are not made to be like everyone else. You and I are called to live the life God has called us to. And when we take our eyes off of that, we, like the Israelites, find that what we think would be a blessing is actually a curse.

Avoid the comparison game. Number two, ...

2) Choose faith over fear.

I think one of the things that drove the Israelites to demand a king was fear. Look, again, at verse 5. ⁵*and [they] said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways."*

What are they saying? Listen, Samuel, we've been here before. Remember Eli and his sons? We don't want to go down that road again. They are fearful of the future. And really, they are saying that they don't trust God to raise up another Samuel. They are choosing to be fearful over having faith in God.

Wouldn't it be easier to trust God and follow Him if we had some sort of contract with Him? Like to know without any doubt that God would show up.

I remember when I first went bungee jumping. Anyone ever bungee jump? For those of you that have never experienced that, you get into a harness and then are tied to this massive cord that expands. Now, I bungee jumped off of a tower that was crazy high. But I know people who have done this off of a bridge. I couldn't do that.

But when I went bungee jumping, I went with my best friend and college roommate, Jason. There was a lady in front of me that, bless her heart, she didn't have the courage to jump. After about 15 minutes, she wound up just walking down the tower. So, then it was my turn.

When I looked over the edge of that platform, I thought, "What in the world are you doing?!" But then I saw a giant inflatable mat below us. I thought, and I don't know if this was just a stupid thought back then or what, but I thought, at least there is something to catch me if things go wrong. So, when the guy said, "3, 2, 1, bungee," I just jumped. It was exhilarating.

My buddy went after me. Now, something you need to know is that there was this giant pad that went around the bungee cord. Kind of like a pad that goes around a football field goal post. Know what I mean? So, when my friend jumped, he jumped and wrapped his arms and legs around that pad. I guess he wanted a little more of a safety net than I did.

It took faith to jump. I didn't know if they guy had placed me in the harness correctly or not. I didn't know if the cord would break. I for sure didn't know if the inflatable mat would stop my fall before hitting the ground. It took faith in

order to jump. But having a mat made it easier to jump, no doubt. My friend needed a little more security, I guess.

Many ways, this is how we approach God. We want God to be more of a safety net for us than a leader in our lives. The Israelites' request for a king represented a complete lack of trust in God.^x They weren't satisfied with just relying on The Lord to raise up another Samuel. They wanted something they could see.

Have you ever been there? I know I have. We get to a place where we can't trust God completely, so we take matters into our own hands. Or we just live and operate in a constant state of fear.

But here's the thing. When we choose fear over faith, and we seek security in something other than The Lord Himself, we wind up becoming a slave to whatever that thing is.^{xi} Isn't that what happened to the Israelites? They wanted a king because they wanted security. But they ultimately become slaves to the king.

Let me see if I can illustrate it and how this plays out in our lives today. For example, if you have to be married to be happy, you become a slave of marriage. You feel miserable all the time you are single. You feel depressed because you are alone. And what happens is that when you do get married, because you depend on marriage for happiness and security in your life, you'll become co-dependent.

Or if you have to be successful by the world's definition to find fulfillment, you become the slave to success. You'll become a workaholic because that is where you find your security.

If you have to have some escape to release stress or to feel relaxed, it can quickly enslave you and can lead to addiction of drugs, alcohol, overeating, debt, or you name it.

But it is God's design for our lives that we, instead, choose faith in Him over the fear of finding security in something other than Him. Only in The Lord is there true freedom.

Avoid the comparison game and choose faith over fear.

CONCLUSION:

I'm going to invite the band to come back up and lead us in a time of response.

Here's what I'd like to point out to us today. The people were looking for a king. In reality, the people were looking for Jesus. Only He alone can satisfy and save. But they were looking for that in all the wrong places and wound up placing a king over them that was not God's best for them.

You know, every heart has a king. Every person has something that drives them. Whether its success, relationships or even politics, every heart has a ruler. And I've heard it said that every king outside of the King of kings will disappoint. And that Jesus is the only Lord, that if you will receive Him, He will truly satisfy you. And even if you fail Him, He will forgive you completely.^{xii}

All earthly kings disappoint. But Jesus truly satisfies.

Perhaps you're here this morning and you are wondering what it means to make Jesus the Lord of your life. When I pray in just a moment, our elders will be here at the front, ready to receive you, ready to share with you about what it means to make Jesus the king of your life. If you have questions about that, or if you desire to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, you come this morning, take us by the hand and simply say, "I need Jesus."

Maybe others of you are here today and you have drifted a bit. You've turned to other things to find security and fulfillment. Return today, back to Jesus as Lord. Place Him as the ruler of your heart and life.

Others of you are in need of prayer this morning. You ware walking through something that is overwhelming to you. I want you to know that we are here for you today. We want to pray with you and over you this morning. Whatever it is, we want to pray with you.

My desire for our times of response each week is simple. I simply want you to have the freedom to be obedient to the promptings of The Lord on your heart. We make ourselves available to you. No manipulation. We're just here. There is freedom in this place. I'm going to pray, and I want you to just respond.

[PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996; Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, Holman: Nashville, 2016; Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2003; Ray Fowler, *Be Careful What You Ask*, published by Ray Fowler Ministries, accessed online: <https://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/1-samuel/be-careful-what-you-ask/>; Joel Arndt, *Be Careful What You Ask For, You Might Just Get It*, published by FaithLife, 2010, accessed online: <https://sermons.faithlife.com/sermons/114638-be-careful-what-you-ask-for-sermon-1-sam-8-1-22-8-8-2010>; J.D. Greear, *God is Great, but Give Us a King*, sermon preached at Summit Church, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/god-is-great-but-give-us-a-king>; Skip Heitzig, *Expound: 1 Samuel 8*, message taught at Calvary Church on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/314/sermon/4577>.

ⁱⁱ Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996, page 114.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pointed out by Skip Heitzig.

^{iv} Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, Holman: Nashville, 2016, page, 84.

^v Examples pointed out by Skip Heitzig.

^{vi} Ray Fowler brought this point to light.

^{vii} Borrowed this phrase and terminology from Skip Heitzig to explain the type of rule an earthly king would have on the Israelites.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Thomas and Greear used this phrase. Examples given after this were also taken from examples listed in their commentary.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*, page 179.