



Series: 1 Samuel

Date: February 19, 2023

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Text: 1 Samuel 8 and 12

Title: Let's Go to God

Feb 22 Night of Prayer & Worship

Everyday we've been praying at 3:10 for the Lord to speak to us. In the words of young Samuel "speak Lord, your servant is listening." And the reason is because God has given us a mission as a church. And that mission is to make disciples of Jesus. That's WHY we are here. And here at 7 years old we are just old enough that we could get complacent in going through the motions of church. Show up sing & preach & pray and go on. And we could comfortably drift right out of the mission God has called

us to. SO, I believe this season of prayer is VITAL for us. To renew our dependence on God to the level that it was the day we started this church and said "Ok Lord if you don't make this happen, it won't happen. So, lead us!" Most of you were not here then and that's why we are in this season of prayer.

So that we can all be renewed TOGETHER in who we are as a church. A Church hungry for God to move. A church who is so dependent on the Lord to accomplish his mission through us that we say like Moses Lord if you don't go with us, don't send us at all. We don't want to be on your mission without your presence. We want to go to God FIRST. And ask him to use us how he will. Seven years later a church that started as 60 now has grown and I believe he has brought you here FOR A PURPOSE. For his mission.

I Believe more than ever in our vision to see a gospel awakening in Charlotte carried to the ends of the earth. So, like I told you a month ago we are gathering this Wednesday night, February 22, for a night of prayer and worship. I don't often get us together outside of Sunday. Because I want you in the community on mission. But I sense a need for this. I think the Lord is doing a work in you all and I believe the 22nd might be an ebenezer type night. I don't know. We'll be at both campuses from 7 to





9pm. We will worship & we will pray. Some of you have seen God move, we'll give you time to share with the church what God has done. Some of you are sick, we will follow James 5 and our elders will anoint you and pray for healing. Some of you are burdened, we'll have time to pray over you. Confession & and worship. Our teams are putting a great amount of care into this night.

I invite you to fast with us on the 22nd. Jesus linked prayer & fasting in his training of his disciples. Abstaining from food was, and is, a way to redirect your hunger towards God. And to depend on him and to listen to him. I want to fast and pray and say **SPEAK LORD** your servants are listening. **We come to you FIRST**. And we will see what he has for us. And Lord Willing we'll walk forward united in our mission and expectant that God will move this year. Wednesday Night.

Ok here on Sunday morning let's open up our bibles and see what God has for us today. 1 Samuel 8. Today the Bible is going to work like a mirror. In fact, the New Testament writer James even says this is how the Bible works. It shows us our **TRUE** selves. All the ugly. This isn't like the mirror at the gym where you are like "I look fly, I look good."

Here's what is gonna happen: Israel is going to **AGAIN** turn away from God and experience the bad fruit of that rebellion. And if you've been following along, you are like wait, didn't they **JUST** repent like last week in chapter 7? Yes. And now here they are again.

I thought about titling this sermon "Oops I did it again." But decided a better title that captures the heart of the passage is

1 Samuel 8 & 12

Let's Go to God

Depending on how long you've walked with God you will be tempted to think "man, Israel, can they not get it together?" How many times are they gonna do this **SAME THING**? Stubborn Israel rejects God, discovers how terrible life is without God, repents & turns back to God, and God forgives them, and they experience blessing of life under God's authority. It's like a cycle. Why don't they just **STAY** close to **GOD**?

And at precisely that point the bible turns on mirror mode and is like: Ok now ask that question again but this time ask it of yourself. Why do you go everywhere else but God? Why don't you go to God? Ok I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's get into it. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to walk us through chapter 8 & 12 and just show **you how to Go to God**. As we go through it, my



encouragement to you is let the Holy Spirit do his thing in your heart. As we hold up this mirror, be willing to receive whatever conviction the Lord might stir in you. And then be equally as ready to receive the mercy of God he extends to you. After all, what makes grace amazing is that it saved a WRETCH like me. Right?

1 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. **2** His firstborn son's name was Joel and his second was Abijah. They were judges in Beer-sheba. **3** However, his sons did not walk in his ways—they turned toward dishonest profit, took bribes, and perverted justice.

Man, if this sounds familiar it's because Samuel as a young boy watched this happen. His mentor Eli was the high priest. And Eli's sons were corrupt. So, corrupt in fact that God decided no one from Eli's line would ever serve in the priesthood again. So, corrupt that God allowed the very ark of the covenant.... Israel's most sacred possession that symbolically represented God's presence...God allowed it to be captured and he, in effect, LEFT Israel. And Samuel was the young prophet who saw this happen. And then oversaw Israel through Eli's demise and through the ark returning back. SURELY

Samuel of all dads is the one who has to be on extra alert about his sons. And yet, the cycle continues.

Little side warning not a part of the main points today - Just because you WANT to be a different kind of dad than what you saw growing up doesn't mean you will be. Gonna take more than desire. Gonna take intentionality & prayer. Not just DESIRE.

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at Ramah. **5** They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations have."

The elders of Israel see the future on the horizon. Samuel won't be with them forever. His sons are not the future. And so, they ask for their current leader to appoint a new leader. Samuel is a prophet and judge. They want more than that. They want a king. And for a moment I want you to see how WISE this sounds. This **sounds** like wisdom.

We have a problem. The heir apparent is no good. So, we need a course of action. We've looked around and observed best practices in neighboring nations. And they



pretty much all have a king in charge. It's standard industry practice to have a king. We really should consider this.

ON top of that, a king isn't even a wrong request by God's standards. Deuteronomy 17:14 indicates a time would come when Israel would ask God for a king like all the other nations.

And God will say OK. It's not that God is anti-"king." It was actually in his plan. It's not the idea of king. It's the motivation behind it. Like other nations. What is the problem here? A king isn't inherently a bad idea. But what is missing?

They don't GO TO GOD for a solution to their problem, they go first to the wisdom of the world. And this is where we need to see the bible holding a mirror up to us.

We tend to approach our problems mechanically before we approach them spiritually. Ya'll I am so guilty of this and was so convicted this week. So many times, in my life when I encounter problems my first instinct isn't to seek God. In fact, I'm embarrassed to say it's sometimes my LAST instinct.

Ever been there? We look at all our options, get counsel from others, look at what others have done, make a pros and cons list, read 2 reddit articles by little Cyndi blogger loo hu, and then...IF we feel like there is no clear path forward. THEN AND ONLY THEN we'll say man we need to just pray about this. How backwards are we? Some of us consult the trinity of google, Alexa, and Siri before submitting ourselves to the father, son, and holy spirit.

What is happening there is a product of habit. We've trained ourselves to see prayer as something to do when all else fails. Our theology has not made it out of our bibles and into our lives ya'll.

- I love the Lord because he has heard my appeal for mercy. 2 Because he has turned his ear to me, I will call out to him as long as I live. -- Psalms 116:1-2
- Now he told them about a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up. -- Luke 18:1

Over and over in the epistles Paul says we have not ceased to pray for you & you should not cease praying for us.

- pray constantly -- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17



- Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. -- Philippians 4:6

Ya'll I could get lost forever in this, but the point is that the teaching of the bible is that the people of God have been granted access to the throne of God. And we should STAY THERE. To call ourselves the people of God, and not make prayer & consulting God's word our first move is like saying we are soldiers and the LAST thing we are going to do is listen for orders. No, the first thing we are going to do is ask command what our orders are. Because that determines everything else we do.

Instead of praying when all else fails we need to pray before anything else is tried.

When we live by the world's wisdom, we get the world's results. And if we do that long enough, we may live perfectly comfortable, reasonable, godless lives. Which is exactly what Satan hopes will happen.

Ya'll it's not that their demand wasn't rational. In light of the situation and what knowledge they had, it was rational. And sometimes our proposed plans to navigate our circumstances can be completely sensible and utterly godless.¹ I'm not dissing logic. I'm a big fan of using the brains the Lord gave us. BUT I am putting logic in its place - submitted to the kingship of the Lord. **Let's go to God FIRST!** Ask him to put our logical minds he gave us to work for what he wants.

6 When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand wrong, so he prayed to the Lord.

Notice his first reaction? Notice the contrast? Samuel thought they were wrong but instead of playing their game, he went to the Lord first. Let's go to God first.

7 But the Lord told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king. **8** They are doing the same thing to you that they have done to me, since the

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, [1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart](#), Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 86–87.



day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, abandoning me and worshiping other gods.

In other words, Samuel, this isn't new. This is the same stubbornness that I've had to deal with for generations. All the way back to when I brought them out of Egypt. Since the day I saved them, they've been rejecting me and abandoning me. God says I was to be their king. And they rejected me for the solutions of the world. For things they think they can control a little.

Instead of looking to God for help we are more interested in prescribing what form God's help must take. Our attention is not on God's deliverance in our troubles but on specifying the method by which he must bring that deliverance (therefore, we trust the method). We are not content with seeking a saving God but desire to direct how and when he will save.²

This is Israel. Interested in God's help - after all they go to Samuel - God's appointed prophet - and demand from Samuel that he appoints a king. They want God's help ON THEIR TERMS. GOD let me tell you what I need. I

need what they have. What they have would be best for us. God I've already done the hard work for you. I know the answer to my prayer. I just need you to do your thing. Like the way I used to treat my younger brother matt. He's 6'5. He can reach stuff in high places. Matt, I know what I want I just can't reach it. So, use your go-go gadget arms and get it. Now please. Ok I still treat him that way sometimes. And that's not ok. But its ok for me to treat God that way? What's happening there? I'm using Matt to get what I want. Same thing. I'm using God to get what I want. God is not my king. He's my extra strength butler.

They want their way, and demand God make it happen. Ok look how God responds. I'll read verses 9 - 18.

9 Listen to them, but solemnly warn them and tell them about the customary rights of the king who will reign over them." **10** Samuel told all the Lord's words to the people who were asking him for a king. **11** He said, "These are the rights of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his horses, or running in front of his chariots. **12** He can

² Dale Ralph Davis, [1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart](#), Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 86–87.



appoint them for his use as commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, to plow his ground and reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots. **13** He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks, and bakers. **14** He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his servants. **15** He can take a tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give them to his officials and servants. **16** He can take your male servants, your female servants, your best cattle, and your donkeys and use them for his work. **17** He can take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves can become his servants. **18** When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you've chosen for yourselves, but the Lord won't answer you on that day."

See the repetition? Tried to help you out a little with the underlining. There's a reason the Lord said it this way. God is warning them Ok listen let me tell you what an earthly king will do. He will TAKE. Take your sons, your daughters, your property, your livelihood & everything else you treasure. See the difference between God and a false idol? In this instance that's what the king is to them. Someone to replace God as their ruler, representative, &

protector. And the difference is such a good warning to God's people.

God has **GIVEN** them freedom, **given** them protection, **Given** them food. And yet they reject him. Because in their sin they want a king who they think they can control. And God is saying...you won't be able to control him. It will GO BADLY for you. He will not GIVE, he will **take**. That will be his right. He will use you for himself.

Look in the Mirror church. Some of you are giving your worship to false gods. What the bible calls idols. wooden or bronze statues that promise certain fulfillment in life if you worship them. We may not use the statues, but we still believe their promises. Work promises meaning & security. That's a false God. Sex promises intimacy and bliss. Fame promises significance. Alcohol & Drugs promise escape. Your phone promises escape. But just like the varnish wore off their false gods, so the varnish would wear off the king's leadership and will wear off of your god too. Think 'shine.' Eventually this god will take from you. Take drugs for a second because I've seen this in people I love. I've seen it take money in return for pleasure. But then take more money to get less pleasure. Then it takes relationships because you deceive others about how serious it is then they find out and then you



break away from them. Then it takes your job. Then it takes your brain. Then it takes your body as you turn into a shell of the person you were. Then one day it takes your life. Taking you away from people who love you. I've seen it. I've presided over those funerals.

4 The sorrows of those who take another god for themselves will multiply; -- Psalms 16:4

Some of you are like I'd never go down that road. Well, in love I want to say yes you will. Because humans need a king. And it will be God, or it will be somebody or something else. And it will take. See this is the spot in the sermon where some Christians are feeling this truth all the way down to their bones. Once you enthrone another king, experience its terrible effect, and then God in his grace delivers you - you want to beg others don't do it! You want to testify to the biblical truth that God is Better! Jesus is Better! **Let's go to God ONLY!**

That's the testimony of the church. Go to God ONLY! Don't waste your life on other kings. Don't waste another second. Go to God ONLY. He and he alone has the power to save you.

Sadly, Israel didn't respond here in chapter 8. And their response is a mirror moment for us too.

19 The people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We must have a king over us. 20 Then we'll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles." 21 Samuel listened to all the people's words and then repeated them to the Lord. 22 "Listen to them," the Lord told Samuel. "Appoint a king for them."

They rejected the Lord's warning because they believed they needed a ruler, a representative, and a protector. And they didn't trust the Lord to provide this. They wanted **A ruler, a representative, and a protector** who would fight their battles on their behalf. Yeah, if you been in church a minute you know where this is going. But something unexpected happens here. God grants their requests. Appoint a king for them. Go ahead. There is a real mirror moment here for us.

Sometimes God gives you what you desire - to your own peril. He lets you chase after your desires. Don't mistake that for his endorsement. No that is a sign of him releasing us to our rebellion NOT a sign of his favor. I prayed to God for a way out of my marriage because I'm



unhappy and God provided this woman at work who really gets me and thinks I'm funny. No, he did not. Don't put God's name on that. But pastor spence you said God speaks through his providence. Yes, I did. And I said his providence never conflicts with his word. You got a conflict right there. He may not stop you, but that is not his endorsement. And your sorrows are about to multiply.

And on the flip side, sometimes God refuses to give us what we ask for and it is a sign of immense grace from him. I told this to Courtney yesterday and she started singing Garth Brooks. If you know, you know. And if you don't, well you are like me.

But the point is don't put God's name on something that doesn't line up with his word. Because you will probably be asking God to save you from that very thing shortly.

I want to move to chapter 12 to show you how this end for Israel. We are going to cover chapters 9 - 11 next week and meet the king God gives them. King Saul.

But Chapter 12 shows us another moment between Samuel & Israel. The bookend to this moment. Samuel is old and is giving them his final public address. He goes historical on them. Reminding them how every time they

cried out to God, God had saved them. And when they forgot God, he handed them over. He brought up old memories of Moses & Egyptians, & recent victories over the Moabites. And said here you are afraid of enemies again and so you asked for a king when God has always been your king. But this time:

19 They pleaded with Samuel, "Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so we won't die! For we have added to all our sins the evil of requesting a king for ourselves."

They repented. They recognized they were sinners. And here friends is the mirror I hope you will receive today. Let's go to God as repentant sinners. Can we stop pretending? Because God will not be mocked. Until we repent, he will not help. He will not intervene. His grace is for those who confess they need it. And when we do, watch the grace of God.

20 Samuel replied, "Don't be afraid. Even though you have committed all this evil, don't turn away from following the Lord. Instead, worship the Lord with all your heart. 21 Don't turn away to follow worthless things that can't profit or rescue you; they are worthless. 22 The Lord will not abandon his people, because of his great



name and because he has determined to make you his own people. -- 1 Samuel 12:19-22

Someone needs this today. Even though. This is the great hope of the good news of the gospel. Even though. Even though you've done all that...don't turn away. INSTEAD - worship the Lord with all your heart.

THE LORD will not abandon his people. Not because of your name, but because of his name. Because he has set his affection on you. This hope is amplified and fulfilled for God's people today. Look in the mirror and see a sinner, but then look again and see a sinner DEEPLY LOVED BY GOD! See we are like Israel. Prone to give our allegiance to little kings that cannot really help us and eventually let us down. But there is a true King. Israel was looking for A ruler, a representative, and a protector. Jesus would be the ultimate fulfillment of all of these.

He is the true good ruler Who doesn't take from his people. No, He gives. He gives his very life for them. Romans 5 calls Jesus our representative. He became one of us so that he could represent all of us. And he's our protector who fought & won the battle against sin and death. That's Jesus.

For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life. See sinner when you repent that doesn't erase your wrongdoing. Because God is a just God, your rebellion must be punished. The gospel is the announcement that your punishment was transferred onto Jesus. So, your sins are paid for. IF, you will come to God and receive it.

Let's go to God because God first came to us.

Whether for the first time or maybe you are coming back today. For all of us, let's go to God first. Let's go to God only. Let's go to God as repentant sinners. Let's go to God because God first came to us. You ask how do I go to God? You can only go through Jesus.

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. John 14:6

So, are you ready? Are you ready to receive his forgiveness? Are you ready to come into his kingdom? Under his authority?

Others - COME BACK HOME! Enough with the pride & faking it while your life is filled with rebellion. If you



confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive you of
all unrighteousness! PRAISE GOD!

Close in a time of response.



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