

“Tyranny” // 1 Samuel 8:1–18 // *The Search for a King, #2*

Announcements:

- Church planting forum

We are studying the life of David. And, what is key to remember is that David’s life is not just a random personality profile of a cool guy in the Old Testament who killed some giants and slept with a woman who was not his wife.

No, the OT has a ton of stories in it... but they are all are part of 1, grand story, and that is the coming of Jesus Christ—all of these stories are designed to show you that Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to mankind’s problems and Jesus Christ is essentially what mankind is searching for.

David’s life, specifically, is the story of Israel’s search for a King.

- At this point in their history, Israel has taken possession of the land and now, in 1 Samuel 8, they are demanding a king who will protect them, and prosper them, and fulfill them.
- Now, there was nothing wrong with Israel asking for a king, *per se*... In fact, in Deut 17:20 God had told them one day He would give them one.
- But their request at this time was a complete lack of faith in God... God was supposed to be their real King. He was supposed to be the one they depended on to meet their needs.
- But they were like, “Yeah, well, it’s cool and all to have God there kind of like a safety net, something to fall back on in an emergency, and we don’t want to tick him off so He sends us to hell or anything, but in the here and now, we’ve got real bills to pay and real enemies who want to hurt us and real social issues to deal with. **And, frankly, we need something**

more than an invisible God who we don’t know where He is half the time; we need somebody we can depend on, someone who can hold accountable.

- And God calls this rejection of Him. It was not rejection like, “God, we don’t want you at all...” it was rejection by saying, **“God, we don’t really trust you, so we demand these other things in life to be happy and secure.”**
- Irreligious people reject God by not wanting Him to be a part of their lives at all; religious people reject God by letting Him be a part of their lives, but not really trusting in and depending on Him.

Now, before I actually walk you through this story, just consider: Aren’t we like this, too? Aren’t there a lot of times that we’re like, “God, I am really glad that you are a part of my life. But in order for life to work, to feel secure, I demand a great marriage; a secure job; lots of money in the bank.”

God for many of us is more like a safety net, like something that is more relevant for us when we die, but He’s not really who we serve and depend on in day to day life.

Let me give you a little word picture: **Leaning back on the rope...** I want to use that story as a metaphor for what we are going to talk about today. Both my friend and I had all the same equipment. Both of us were going the same general direction. We were both moving down the face of a rock. But there was a huge difference in what we were doing. When you repel, you are leaning your full weight on the rope, trusting it to keep you off the ground. When you are rock climbing, you are using your hands and feet to move up the mountain, and the rope is there as a safety net. My friend did not lean his weight back on the rope because he didn’t trust it. He trusted his own arms and legs, and wanted the rope there as a safety net if he slipped.

That’s the picture of what is happening with Israel here...

So, 1 Samuel 8. We're going to look at

- **what was wrong with their demand;**
- **what we devastating to them about their demand;** and then
- **what God, in His grace, did with their demand**

1 Samuel 8:1–9:27 ESV

[8:1] When Samuel (who was Samuel?) Samuel was the guy we studied last week who was born to Hannah. He grew up to be Israel's greatest prophet. He heard directly from God and told the people what God wants **became old, he made his sons judges over Israel... [3] Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. ...and ran for Congress**

- Unfortunately, his sons turn out to be dirtbags, and they don't follow God.
- Well, this provides an opportunity for Israel to request something they have been itching for, for some time.

[4] Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel... [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 other nations have."

[6] But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

- Now, why was Samuel displeased? Was this just a personal insult... you know, they wanted a change of regime? I'm sure that was some of it. But Samuel senses something deeper in this request than just disapproval of his children, and he is correct.

Watch this: **[7] And the LORD said to Samuel, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. [8] According 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 now.**

1. What was wrong with their demand

- It represented a complete lack of trust in and satisfaction with God. God was supposed to be their real King. They were supposed to depend on Him for everything.
- But from the very beginning, that had never been enough for them. They never trusted Him enough to say, "God, I'm just going to do your will, I'll let you worry about everything else."
- No, they had constantly demanded golden calves and strong armies and guaranteed food and water sources and safe land conditions to feel secure.
- They had never rejected God outright; they'd always said, "God, yes, we want you... but we also need a guarantee of this, and that..." There are two ways to reject God: one is to reject Him outright; the other is to say you follow Him, but then not really depend on Him and insist on a number of other things being present in your life before you will feel secure.
- Don't you have that problem, too?
 - Isn't it easier to "trust God" when everything that you feel like you need for life is right in front of you? Job is secure; your marriage is fulfilling; everyone is healthy... But when one of those things is missing, don't you have this feeling of insecurity or anxiety or unhappiness?
- Israel is not content to lean back and trust God. So what they feel like they need is something they can get their hands on and control.
 - Let me ask you this: Wouldn't it be easier to trust God and follow Him if you had some kind of binding, legal guarantee of what He'd do?
 - Some sort of guaranteed overdraft protection on your account that tied into God's personal account so that when you were out of money it would automatically dip into His, and you could look online and see how much money God had at the moment?
 - A security system on your house that automatically tied into God so that when a burglar came in a couple

of angels showed up, like those dorky guys on the commercial, to whoop up on the bad guys? And you could test it.

- Or, maybe a little God medical insurance card that came in the mail that said, “May get sick temporarily, but will be always be miraculously healed.”
- Or wouldn’t it be easier if you could meet with God each night and you could go over exactly what He was doing... and you could give Him some feedback... a little God-evaluation form. “God, I need you to pick it up in this area. And if you don’t, I’m going to have to penalize your tithe or revoke your Sabbath privileges.”
- It would be easier to trust God if we could control Him.
- But we can’t, and so we have a list of requirements that we demand be in place in addition to God... God, I’ll follow you, but these things are what I require.

God says that is a rejection of Him, because it is a rejection of trust in Him. Without faith it is impossible... To know God you have to trust Him, to lean on Him.

- You see, it is when you don’t trust someone is when you feel like you have to control them.
- The reason we require contracts enforceable by law with people we do business with is because we don’t trust them to keep up their end of the bargain up so we control them with contracts.
 - **I notice my kids do this with me.** I take one of my daughters out for some daddy/daughter time... and on the way to the mall, she is trying to get me to promise her a bunch of stuff... that we will get candy and go to the toy store and that if we eat lunch we can get ice cream for dessert. And I’m like, “Seriously child...” She doesn’t trust me, so she wants controls on me to guarantee I’ll perform to her expectations. If she only knew that my whole philosophy as a dad was to spoil her so much and take such good care of her that every boy she dates in the future is a letdown.

- **It’s why they won’t share...**

- Israel wants a king they can see and touch and control because they don’t trust God. And God calls this rejection because God should be able to be trusted.

Could I get you to reflect here for a minute before we move on?

What do you require in addition to God to feel secure and happy and fulfilled? I ask you this a lot, but what are you working to obtain? What are you most worried about losing? What do you hang on to? About what do you say, “These are what I need for life to be good”? These things are your king.

[9] Now then, (God says to Samuel) **obey their voice... and give them their king.**

Now, you say, “Wait, wait, wait. If this request if it was so bad, why did God give it to them?”

- Here’s why... God will sometimes answer your prayers to let you learn the hard way that what you were asking for was wrong. Have you ever had that happen?
 - Have you ever wanted something so badly... you desired it, you worked for it, you obsessed over it, and you prayed about it... and then you got it, and it wasn’t what you thought it was? Or it turned out to be more of a curse in your life?
 - Think about people who win the lottery... “oh, life would just be so good with that amount of money...”
 - Some of you, you worked so hard to get the job, the promotion... but as you look back on your life you are going to realize it turned out to be a curse, because it destroyed your family. Some of you have the job you always wanted but you are not a happy person; you’re always stressed; your relationships are terrible.
 - For some of you, think about your marriage: You demanded a husband... “Oh, God, I have to be married. Oh God don’t leave me single. Oh God I want to be married,

right now.” And God said, “Fine. You don’t trust me? Here is Mr. Perfect. Enjoy.” That’s why some of your marriages are so bad. They started in idolatry and God gave you what you demanded.

- One of the worst judgment statements in the Bible is Romans 1:26, “And God turned them over to the desires of their heart.” In other words, God’s judgment on them was to answer all of their prayers affirmatively.
- On the other hand, some of God’s greatest mercies to us are in the form of unanswered prayers.
 - Some of you are so mad at God right now not answering our prayer. Do you ever think He might be not answer your prayer... doing that because He is protecting you?
 - You say, “Well, it doesn’t look like He was protecting me. I’m still single. What would the harm be in getting married?” Or, “What would be the harm me in having gotten that promotion and making the extra 20 grand a year?”
 - The greatest blessing God could ever give to you is the ability to be happy and trust Him without those things, and the way He teaches you that is often by withholding it from you.
 - **Curt’s story**... overlooked for a clear promotion.
 - Let me give you an example from my profession that not many of you will relate to directly, but you can see where it applies:
 - There are some pastors who are really upset at God for not answering their prayers to make their churches big. Here’s what I have seen. I know some pastors whose churches have grown big and because of that they are incredibly arrogant... they’re not open to any kind of discussion or critique because, hey, they’ve got success and that proves they are right, right? Some of the people I’ve ever met that are the most closed off to God’s voice are leaders of large ministries... they didn’t

start out that way. Maybe God’s keeping of your ministry small is His mercy to you, so you’d trust in Him, and be fulfilled in Him, and not trust in or be fulfilled in a big ministry.

- You could apply that to anything. **The worst thing for you is for God to answer a prayer request and give you something that you allow to replace Him.**

Now, I need to clarify here, before I confuse you... I am not saying it is wrong to desire many of these things to ask God for them. Nothing wrong with saying, “God, I really want to be married. Or, I really want to have children. I really would like a raise. Or, God, I’d like for my ministry to grow.”

It is when you crave those things and feel like you could not be happy or secure without them. The word I’ve tried to teach you is *epithumia*: A craving you feel like you can’t live without. **Like Israel here craves a king.** Something in your life has become a king you could not live well without.

There is nothing wrong with asking for something, as long as it’s not something you feel like you couldn’t be happy without.

The Apostle Paul, in **Phil 4:6–7** gives you the perfect balance, **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

All your requests are bathed in thanksgiving, not because of some ridiculous name and claim it theology where you are sure God will give you what you ask for, but because God is what you need for peace and happiness and security; and since you know you have Him, you can pray for all things with thanksgiving whether you get them or not because you have Him.

So, when you ask for marriage, it sounds something like this: “God, I’d really like to be married—that’s my request; I’m thankful and satisfied being single.”

“God, I’d love this raise, but, if not, I trust you to meet my needs.”

Think of Hannah last week...

Phil 4:6–7 says that when you really trust God, the peace of God will guard your heart... as you ask, you have peace, because you don’t need the answer to your prayer for joy or security... because you have God.

So ask yourself? Where is your life not filled with peace and thanksgiving? Where are you unhappy and dissatisfied and worried? These are the places where you have substituted something else for God. Unhappiness and anxiety are smoke from the fires of idolatry. Follow your anxiety and unhappiness down to your idolatry.

So, God says, gives them their king, [9] *...only you shall solemnly warn them (Samuel) and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.*”

So Samuel does that, vs. 11: [11] *“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 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.*”

2. What was devastating to them about their demand

When you have other kings besides God, those kings tyrannize you.

The dominant word in this description is ‘take’. The king will take your sons and daughters; he will take your crops and your lands and the best years of your lives... and he will exploit them for himself.

The irony here is tremendous. You looked to a king to guarantee you prosperity and security. What you got was a king who took those things from you. You wanted a king whom you could control. Instead, that king ended up controlling you.

This is an Old Testament version of a New Testament principle: ***Whatever you depend on for happiness and security, you become the slave of.***

For example,

If you have to be married to be happy, you become the slave of marriage

- If you have to have marriage to be happy, and you’re not married, you feel miserable all the time. You live with depression that you are single. You make bad relationship decisions and end up dating or doing things with guys because you’re scared of losing him.
- If you have to have marriage to be happy, and you are married, you become co-dependent in your marriage; you constantly feel like your spouse lets you down; and you are

constantly tempted to leave your marriage and find fulfillment in a new marriage or an extra-marital affair.

If you have to be successful to find fulfillment, you become the slave of success

- You overwork
- You get jealous of others more successful
- You get resentful about opportunities or promotions you were overlooked for
- You are devastated when people talk about you and don't give you credit and recognize the value you are
- Sometimes they say about type-A people, "They are driven by success." a better way to say that might be "we are enslaved by success." We drive ourselves until we destroy our families, our health, everything... b/c we couldn't imagine not being successful.

Last week, we saw that Hannah felt like she had to have a child to be happy, so she was a slave of having children. She was unhappy all the time, she was jealous and bitter.

Whatever you demand for happiness, you become the slave of.

Maybe you depend on some physical escape for peace or relaxation... some pleasure you indulge in to release stress... It starts out as an enjoyable escape you can control, but it ends up as a tyrant that controls you

- A lot of guys have this experience with pornography... pornography starts a way of escape. Something you can go to, on your terms, to find escape and enjoyment.
- But then you start to crave it... more of it, and worse types of it. And you can't turn it off. And it starts to wreck your relationships... and you become ashamed of it.
- And you wish you didn't need it... but you can't stop.
- Rather than being something you control, it controls you.
- Same with alcohol, drugs. Eating

Or, if you have to have money... you become its slave

- And so, you are in credit card debt. You are literally enslaved to a credit card company.
- Or, you're always worried about the future
- Or, you're not generous: can't give away your money. Money is the currency of happiness and security.
- You are always jealous of others with more money

Do you catch my drift?

All of you have a King. A King in your life is whatever you must have to be happy and secure. And whatever that is, you become the slave of.

Paul says it this way in the NT: **Galatians 4:8** ⁸ *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.* ¹ You are going to serve something.

It's like Bob Dylan says, "You're gonna serve somebody." The Apostle Paul and Bob Dylan: cut from the same cloth.

- And all our 70's rockers said, "Amen." I'm trying to make up with our 70's rockers b/c I said on twitter... and a bunch of them really got bent out of shape over it...
- Everybody serves something. You are either enslaved to something that brings life (God), or you are enslaved to something that brings death.
- One quick objection: a lot of times guys are like, "Not me. I don't need anything. I'm not enslaved to any of that stuff. I'm free." A lot of times those same guys are scared of commitment. They won't ever commit to a wife and family because they don't want to lose their independence. See? they are a slave of their independence. They have to have their selfish independence to be happy.

¹ Romans 6:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey..."

So, chapter 8 ends with God warning them what will happen if they get a King. They demand one anyway, and in the next few chapters, God gives them exactly what they are asking for...

- In chapter 9, He gives them a king named Saul. Saul is everything they had asked for. He's smart, a good leader (9:3)...
- He promised them change... gave them hope they could believe in... guaranteed them that he'd restore their status in the world, make them proud again; promised them prosperity and security.
- And then, after a good start, he starts to do exactly what God said he'd do. He starts to use the people. He turns out to be a self-idolizing, self-willed tyrant.

So, is that the end of the story? Shut your Bible and go home depressed?

No. Saul is in being set up in contrast to God's true King, Jesus. It's like I told you at the beginning. You can never read these stories in isolation. There are lots of similarities and contrasts between Saul's life and Jesus' life.

- When Saul was anointed King, it says he was filled with the Spirit and he starts to prophesy things. When Jesus was anointed the Holy Spirit descended from heaven like a dove and Jesus began to speak with the voice of God.
- But here's the contrast:
 - Saul would start well; Jesus would end well, faithful unto death
 - Saul thought of his own interests. Jesus thought primarily of ours.
 - Saul made Israel his servants. Jesus said, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve."
 - Saul's sinful, selfish choices would cause many people in Israel to die. Jesus' loving choices would cause many

in Israel to live. Israel had to die for Saul's sins; but Jesus would die for ours.

- Saul was harsh and unforgiving with those who disappointed him. When Jesus' subjects disappointed and rebelled against Him, He laid down his life for them.

One of the saddest, and most hopeful phrase in all of these chapters is it says that *"all of Israel's hearts went toward Saul."* They longed for a king, and they had such high, high hopes for him. Sad, because Saul would fail... but hopeful, because God in His grace, would send One who didn't.

Jesus, God in the flesh, was the God they were seeking. He alone could satisfy and save.

- Every king says, "Please me, obey me, and I'll guarantee you happiness." **Money** says, "Find me, and I'll make you happy." **Marriage** says that. So does **family and success and fame**.
- Every king also says, "If you disappoint me, I'll make you miserable." Money says that. "If you don't get me, and you're poor, you'll be miserable." Marriage says, "If you don't get me, and you grow old single, life will be terrible."
- To borrow a phrase from my friend TK, **"Jesus is the only King that if you obtain Him, will satisfy you, and whom, if you fail Him, will forgive you."** **Tim Keller**

Jesus is the one our hearts were yearning for. All of Israel's hearts were yearning for Saul. What they were looking for was in Jesus.

What is your heart yearning for?

Saul/Jesus... And inbetween Saul and Jesus will be David... who is kind of a hybrid. He is a human king, yes, but he is of a totally different character than Saul. He's not physically impressive. He's a short, freckled shepherd boy who cleans up sheep dudu for a living.

But David has a mighty trust in God. And David is not going to use the people for his purposes... He is going to constantly point people beyond Himself to God. He is going to be a man after God's own heart. David is going to be willing for his own reputation to suffer if so that the people will yearn for God.

He's going to teach Israel things like,

- The Lord is your Shepherd. With Him, you'll never want. He'll make you lie down in green pastures. He will restore your soul. Yea, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you need fear no evil, for He is with you. His rod and His staff will comfort you. He anoints your head with oil. Your cup overflows. With Him, surely goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life."
- He would teach them to sing: The Lord is your rock and your salvation. Whom shall you fear? The Lord is the light of your life. Of whom shall you be afraid?
- Lift up your eyes to the hills, from whence cometh your help? Your help cometh from the Lord.
- Under His wings you will take refuge, His faithfulness will be your shield and your fortress.

David's life is going to be a shadow for us of the true King that is coming. A King who would be born in David's own hometown, Bethlehem; whose title would be Jesus, "the anointed One," Son of man, son of David, son of God.

And here's where I turn this all back to you:

We all have to choose a king. Each of you has already chosen one.

You are either enslaved to something that brings life, or enslaved to something that brings death. What, or Who, have you chosen?

All earthly kings disappoint.

- In chapter 12, when Samuel coronated Saul, he reviewed Israel's history (12:6–12)... He showed them time and time

again that God had been faithful, even when they, the Israelites, weren't." You were unbelieving in the wilderness, but God gave you manna." "You served idols and because of that God let other nations afflict you, but when you called out to God in repentance, He immediately came to help you and delivered you. You couldn't ask for a better King than God, for He is a King that not only supplies for you and fulfills, when you are His people, He forgives you and has mercy on you when you fail Him.

- Why would you want a king other than God?

So I offer you the chance to make the choice Israel did not. The choice of faith. And you have more to go on than they did. You've got a longer history showing that God has always been faithful to his people. And most importantly you have the cross, where you see the ultimate display of God's love and faithfulness to you. There is no King you could serve greater than God.

But here's the catch: To follow God, you must step out on faith in Him, entirely with no controls and no conditions. You have to lean back on the rope.

- **Most of us, we're ok with stepping out on faith, as long we can keep control. We'll follow God, but with conditions. "God, as long as you do this, or provide me with this, or don't let this happen to me, or don't send me there, I'll follow you."** That's not faith or obedience at all. That's rejection of God. Conditional obedience is utter disobedience.

Well, you say, How can I know God will take care of me? How can you leap out into the unknown and be sure God will catch you?

- Look at the cross... you can trust God. Lean back on the rope!

Got time for one last story? JOHN AND BETTY STAM

- I read this biography...
- The Communists came and took over a village, taking captive all the influential people and the foreigners.

- In the 4–5 minutes Betty had between when she knew the Communists were coming and when they actually took them, she wrapped the baby up and put a bottle in the blanket and even pinned some money in on the inside so the baby would be taken care of, because she knew what they would do. If they didn't kill the baby outright, as had happened to some of their other friends, they would just leave the baby to die.
- And that's exactly what they did. They look John and Betty out to a hill and shot and killed them.
- The baby girl laid there for 2 days... no one was there to hear it because the Communists had killed or evacuated the whole village.
- One of the Stam's friends heard about the massacre and came to the village, thinking he would want to bury John and Betty but as he was passing through the city, remarkably, heard the baby crying and went and got it and took it to some other missionary friends where the girl was evacuated. This is her today...
- One of their friends said later that God had so remarkably and providentially cared for this little girl they left behind... there is no doubt he could have saved their lives if he wanted.² Do you see that? There was no doubt that God was not supernaturally guiding all these events, and that he could have saved the lives of John and Elisabeth if he had wanted to. So, at the very least, you can be sure that John and Elisabeth's massacre did not happen because God was not in control. So the question is, "Were they willing to trust the plan of God, even when it didn't include their deliverance?" If you were sure a loving God were in control, would you be able to go through pain, and suffering, or a time of struggle?
- I say that because we have an even more remarkable evidence of God's sovereign, loving control than God's care for baby Helen. The cross of Jesus. There God proved that He was in control of all things using all things for our good, and that His compassion for us was beyond anything we could have imagined.
- Don't you understand that if God gave Himself like that for you at the cross, you can trust Him with all the rest of your life?

² 'Everything about her deliverance [they wrote] tells of God's love and power. And we know that if He could bring a tiny helpless infant, not three months old, through such dangers in perfect safety, He could no less surely have saved the lives of her precious parents, had that been in His divine plan for them.'" *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*, p. 116

Bullpen:

4 pursuits and how they end

Why this was a sin: Desire for a King:

- Why did God answer the prayer? to expose the sinfulness of their hearts
- God would be all that you are looking for in sin.

The message for us: The true King

- Saul and David: Contrast between Saul's idolizing and David's calm trust in God. David disappoints in his own way, but he is different than Saul and points us to Jesus

The appeal to you:

- Appeal to history (positive): every time you called to God, He answered. Even when you failed Him.
- Appeal to history (negative): false kings
 - Not only will God never let you down, every other king will. Rare to see someone who has devoted their life to knowing God regret it... do you think you'll be the 1st?

[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." [21] And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. [22] And 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."

[9:1] There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a

Benjaminite, a man of wealth. [2] And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

[3] Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." [4] And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

[5] When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." [6] But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." [7] Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" [8] The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." [9] (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) [10] And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

[11] As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" [12] They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. [13] As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." [14] So they went up to the city. As they

were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

(1 Samuel 8-9:14; 1 Samuel 9:15-27 ESV) [15] Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: [16] “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” [17] When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.” [18] Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?” [19] Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. [20] As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?” [21] Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”

[22] Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. [23] And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’” [24] So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, “See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.”

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. [25] And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. [26] Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

[27] As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.”

Now, the problem with that, as I told you last week, is that they don't consider God to be a good enough King, so they want a king in addition to God. They are not rejecting God outright. Not, “God, we don't want you.” They're rejecting Him in a more subtle way. God, we want you, but we want another King to. You can reject God by rejecting Him outright... God, I don't want you at all (this is what non-religious people often do), or you can reject Him by addition, meaning, God, I need something else besides you... you are not sufficient.

This was an important lesson: Most people, especially those of you in here, don't reject God outright... they want God in your life, but you serve something else beside Him, need something else beside Him... so your surrender to God has conditions. You'll serve God, so long as He doesn't interfere with these other things you think you need.

- When we are afraid someone is going to let us down, we try and control them. The wife who controls her spouse does so is because she is afraid that he is not going to meet her needs and he is going to let her down. And she needs her husband to be a certain way in her life and to feel a certain way about her in order for her to feel happy and safe, and so, the way she can guarantee that is to control him.

When you don't trust someone is when you try and control them.

But Israel said, “That's not enough. Give us a king... Plus, God, all the other nations have a king that guarantees their security and prosperity. So, they said, Give us the same things everyone else has!

But God did not want His people to be like the other nations. They were to be set apart... different. And what most distinguished them was their faith in a visible God that was more secure than riches and gave them more joy than could physical blessings. They were to be able to blow the world's minds by showing the invisible God through their security and joy in an unseen promise and provision.

And here's the thing... He starts well... He's actually quite humble (9:6), and when Samuel anoints him, Saul Saul gets filled by the Holy Spirit and prophesies (10:10)

But it all starts to fall apart because he starts to make his own decisions... he won't obey God... not a bad guy at first... just a guy that would rather do what he wants. God tells him to take over a city of the Ammonites, and destroy it, and Saul does indeed take it over, and destroys most of it... but he the best sheep and treasures for the kingdom and himself.

And Samuel confronts him, and says, "What are you doing? You heard what God said." Saul said, "Well yeah... this was some good stuff. But don't worry, I am going to tithe. And give some to missions. And adopt an orphan kid."

And Samuel says, "do you think God has as much delight in your sacrifices as He would in just obedience?"

Your compromise of obedience is the same in God's eyes as absolute rejection and the worship of Satan.

Saul is a "believer," but not fully devoted. Parts of his life are surrendered, but not all. And because of that God characterizes Him as His enemy, a Satan worshiper; as a guy who, though he is a religious and a competent king, and a moral guy, is the enemy of God's purposes on earth.

In Romans 6 Paul said, ¹⁶ "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey..." (Romans 6:16)

David's life is not just a random personality profile in the Old Testament. The Old Testament has a ton of stories in it, but they are all part of 1, grand story. David's life is the story of Israel's search for a King.

So, I want to explain to you why this was such a colossal failure to trust God, and what happened when they did this, and how you and I do the same things.

Or at least like a genie and we rubbed the lamp and He came out and said, "I am Jehovah... I am bound to give you the 1st 3 things you ask for... only, I can't bring anyone back from the dead, and I can't make anyone fall in love. No wishing for more wishes.

And God is going to call this rejection of Him. It's not rejection of God in that they hate Him and want Him completely out of their lives. It is rejection in that they don't trust Him.

- It's not that they rejected God outright. They didn't. Throughout all the story of Israel you will rarely find them saying, "We don't want God at all. Give us a new God." No, what they say is, "We need something *in addition to God.*"
- That's what religious people do.
 - Irreligious people seek things *instead of God*, religious people seek things in addition to God.
 - Things that have to be in place, things we demand, in addition to God, to feel secure. And, if those things aren't there, we just don't see how life could be any good.