

(1 Samuel) a Good Start for Saul

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores Saul's anointing as Israel's first king, emphasizing the significance of the Holy Spirit's empowerment and God's personal calling in our lives.

Duration: 44:00

Scripture: Exodus 20:2-3, 1 Samuel 10:1-24

Topics: "Following God", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the obsession of our culture with image and celebrity, rather than substance. He emphasizes the importance of looking beyond appearances and asking what kind of person someone truly is. The sermon focuses on the story of Saul, who was chosen and anointed by God to be king. Despite having many advantages and support, Saul's ultimate path is uncertain, as he has the choice to either follow God's ways or go his own way. The sermon ends with a reminder that Saul's actions and decisions will be explored further in the book of Samuel.

Transcript

First Samuel chapter 10, we're going to begin at verse 1 and continue on through the end of the chapter this morning. If you didn't bring a Bible, raise up your hand and one of our ushers will bring one to you because you are going to want to follow along with the text verse by verse. First Samuel chapter 10.

Now as we've been making our way through First Samuel, we've seen that we've come to this very critical point in the history of Israel where it's time for them to have their first king. And the first king is going to be a man named Saul. The last time we were together in this book, we saw how the Lord made it clear to the prophet Samuel that Saul was to be the one.

And Samuel and Saul spent some time talking about Saul's destiny as king. But he has not yet, as of yet, been revealed to the nation as a whole. That's going to happen here in First Samuel chapter 10.

But before he's revealed, God has to do something important here in verse 1. We read, then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over his inheritance? This was a literal anointing of Saul. I don't know if you've probably heard that word in a religious context sometimes before the anointing. Oftentimes it's said by a very sweaty evangelist who has a tremble in his voice, the anointing, something along those lines.

And oftentimes it's a very spiritual kind of word. It's used in a very almost mystical context. But what I want to understand is this word anointing, first and foremost, isn't a spiritual word at all.

It's simply a word. If you look it up in the dictionary, it just means to rub or to sprinkle on, to apply an ointment or an oily liquid to. To anoint something means to rub something on it.

Did you rub lotion on your hands this morning? You anointed your hands with lotion. Did you put shampoo on your hair this morning? You anointed your head with shampoo. Friends, just in the basic word in and of itself, it's not a spiritual word at all.

But the idea of anointing in the Bible is much bigger than just pouring something on something. You see what happened to Saul's head and Saul's body when Samuel anointed him with oil was just a picture of what God was doing in him spiritually. Just as much as oil was being poured out upon Saul, the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon him.

And why was the Holy Spirit being poured out upon Saul? So that he could have a wonderful spiritual experience? No, not in and of itself. The Holy Spirit was being put upon Saul because he needed to be specially empowered and equipped for the job of being king over Israel. And so we find in the Bible that whenever somebody had a particular job to do, a special calling, a special function to perform, God would give them an anointing.

The priests were anointed for their service. The prophets were anointed for their service. And now we see a king, the first king of Israel, was going to be anointed for his service.

And so God prescribed that there be a special anointing oil associated with the tabernacle, that the oil sometimes would be poured upon a person. Sometimes it would be sprinkled upon a person. But yet here, Samuel, the prophet, the priest, the judge of the Lord, is pouring out this oil upon the first king, Saul.

You know, the Bible says that we as Christians have an anointing. We as Christians have an anointing, the Bible says in 1 John chapter 2, verse 20, speaking to every believer, you have an anointing from the Holy One. And in the New Testament sense, anointing has the idea of being filled with and blessed by the Holy Spirit.

Friends, this is something that's the common property of all Christians. Oh, you can go to a Christian bookstore and get books on the anointing, tapes on the anointing, videos on the anointing. And most of the time they make it seem like some special higher ground.

That's just the property of a few unique Christians. It's almost presented in terms of I have the anointing and you don't. Don't you wish you had it? Maybe if I waved my jacket, the anointing would fall on you.

Maybe if I did this or that, you would get some of the anointing. Friends, I want you to understand that the anointing that the Bible talks about, this filling, this empowering of the Holy Spirit, it's something that's available to every Christian. You just need to come to God and ask for it.

And you know why it's available to you. Do you know why you need to be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit? Because God wants you to live a Christian life that's more than what you can live on your own power. If you can do it in your own power, you're not stepping out far enough.

If you're not in a place in your Christian life where you need the spirit of God to empower you and then fill you, you're not out in deep enough water. The Lord wants you to be deeper. He wants you to be into a place where only he can support you, where you need to be empowered or everything will fall to pieces.

That's the kind of place of faith and trust the Lord wants you to be in. So, friends, we find here in verse one, Samuel anointing Saul, but he didn't only anoint him. Look again at verse one.

It says he took a flask of oil and poured it out on his head and kissed him. The kiss was not only a greeting, but it was a sign of Samuel's personal support of Saul. It was very important that the king of Israel feel the support of the man of God.

So Saul could walk away from there knowing I'm anointed and I have the support of Samuel. And then why did he do it? Look at it. Verse one.

Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over his in his inheritance? I can just imagine as Saul walked away from this particular accounting with Samuel, what a memorable thing it would have been from. First of all, understand this was a secret anointing. This was not done in front of a great big crowd.

This was something that was between Saul and Samuel. It was a personal thing. Friends, the anointing that God wants to give in your life, he wants it to be between you and him.

He wants you to find yourself in a secret place with him and have him fill you with the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying God might not use another person to pray for you or to minister unto you, just like you, Samuel, and the life of Saul here. But friends, really, it comes down to between you and the Lord.

And not only was it a secret anointing, it was a very memorable and evident anointing. Saul knew that he had been anointed. You know how he knew? Because he had a mess of oil in his hair that he couldn't wash out for two weeks.

Friends, this was a real anointing. Psalm 133, verse two, describes how messy an anointing could be. It says that it is like the precious oil upon the head, running down the beard, running down on the edge of his garments.

And, you know, when somebody comes up for prayer here and maybe they're sick and the Bible says, if any are sick among you, let them be anointed with oil and prayer offered. And so we'll anoint somebody with oil. We have a little vial of oil.

It's from the Holy Land, an olive wood. Not that that makes any difference, but, you know, it's sort of special. So what we'll do is we'll put a little dab of oil on our thumb and we'll just kind of wipe it on their forehead.

No, it's a wonderful picture. And I think it's a fulfillment of the command in James. But it's not a true Old Testament Bible anointing.

If we did a true Old Testament Bible anointing, nobody would ever come up for prayer, my friends, because we'd need to issue a towel with everybody who got prayed for. I mean, they'd have oil poured out, dripping down over their head. This was so Saul would remember it and it was so Saul would know that this is how the Holy Spirit wanted to be poured out upon his life, not just in a few drops, but in a full

measure, wanted it poured out upon his head.

And why look at verse one again, because the Lord had anointed him commander over his inheritance, whose inheritance, the Lord's inheritance. That was something that Saul had to remember every day that he was a king. Saul, these people don't belong to you.

They belong to God. They're given to you as a trust. They're given to you as something for you to take care of, but they don't belong to you.

How we need to remember that, don't we? Parents, your children don't belong to you. They belong to the Lord. God's given you a trust.

God's given you some children for you to love and to take care of and for you to pour your life in, but they don't belong to you. They belong to the Lord. Raise them as the Lord's children.

Now, pastors need to remember that their congregation doesn't belong to them. It's something God has given them to take care of. Saul needed to remember he he was the king over the Lord's inheritance.

Now, I can just imagine Saul walking away from this encounter with his head spinning just a few days before it was like, look, I was just looking for some lost donkeys. And now I'm the king of Israel. What's going on here? And God knew that Saul's weak heart needed confirmation.

So in the next many verses, God is going to give Saul three signs whereby he can know that this is really from God. You know, God likes to confirm things in our lives. You know, maybe you're in prayer before the Lord or maybe you're during a time of worship here and you see God saying, you know, go to Africa and be a missionary.

Go to Africa, go to Africa and be a missionary. OK, listen, my friends, I'm telling you, you shouldn't leave this room and sell everything you have and buy your plane ticket to Africa. You know what you should say? Say, Lord, if this is really your word, confirm it to my heart and God will confirm it.

God does not mind confirming his word. As a matter of fact, the Bible says that out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established. So let God confirm his word.

Let God make it clear to your heart. Now, if you're here and you hear God saying, I want you to go to Africa and be a missionary. And then right after service, somebody says, you know, I just heard about this opportunity to be a missionary in Africa.

And wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody could fill that and go, wow, Lord, maybe you're confirming this. And then on your way out the door of the church, on your way to the car, somebody says, you know, somebody gave me this plane ticket to Africa and I can't use it. Can you use it? I think, well, Lord, maybe that's it.

But you see, God was giving that kind of confirmation to Saul. This was a big thing. Being the king, just as much as going to be a missionary somewhere would be a big thing.

Lord, confirm it. And so he's going to do this. Look at a verse two.

Here's the first sign. When you've departed from me today, you'll find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin's at Zalzah. And they will say to you, the donkeys which you went to look for have

been found.

And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you saying, what shall I do about my son? We see what Samuel says to Saul. Look, you're going to leave here. You're going to go to Rachel's tomb.

Two men are going to meet you. Not one, two. If there was only one man, then Samuel's word wasn't true.

And by the way, I was thinking about this this week and you might just think, wow, he's kind of weird for thinking about it. But I thought about it nonetheless. You know, there could have been three men there or four or five.

And Samuel's prophecy still would have been true. Because there can be two men, you're going to meet two men and there's really five there because two can be in five. But it couldn't have been one.

Right. Because you'll never get two out of one. But you can get two out of three or four or five.

And I'm wondering, well, what if there were five men at Rachel's tomb? They're talking to what Samuel's prophecy still been true. Yes, it would have been true, but it probably would have blown Saul's mind. So I said, well, wait a minute, there's two.

He said two, but there's five here. And I don't know if he would have figured it out. Now, I guess the point is this, friends, is that when a word is from God, it's always filled just as the Lord says, but sometimes it's not fulfilled the way we were expecting it to be fulfilled.

And that's exactly what could have happened here with Saul. But friends, there would have been two men. They would have said this to him.

And it happened just as Samuel said. Now, here's the second sign in verses three and four. And then you should go forward on from there and you'll come to Terabim three of Tabor.

There are three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you. One carrying three goats, another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying skins of wine. And they'll greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands.

How about that? Talk about specific, you know, three men, three young goats, three loaves of bread, a skin of wine, and they're going to greet you and give you something. Man, that's specific. Friends, can I tell you something? Is that when God is speaking something and when God wants to confirm something from our hearts, it's fully within the capability of God to be very, very specific.

Now, again, it's such a specific prediction that it could be exactly verified. Sometimes God has a place for very broad words or messages. For example, if a pastor stands in front of a congregation of 500 people and he says, God's telling me that somebody here among this 500 has a headache.

It's not a very remarkable word from God, right? No, it might be from God. It might be really led of the Holy Spirit that he says that. But you shouldn't go, wow, that's amazing that somebody among 500 would have a headache.

You know, it's probably tend to have a headache, back problems. It's it's it's there. It's not so specific that it's remarkable.

But do you see that the prophecy that Samuel gave was so specific that for it to be fulfilled was remarkable and it should have blown Saul's mind? And I'm sure it did. Look at verse five here. Here's the third test or the third sign to confirm it.

After that, you should come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen when you have come there to the city that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute and a harp before them. And they will be prophesying.

Then the spirit of the Lord will come upon you and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. And let it be when these signs come to you that you do as the occasion demands for God is with you. Well, the third side is almost more remarkable than the first two, because he says Samuel telling Saul, listen, you're going to come and you're going to meet a group of prophets.

And apparently this group of prophets were seeking the Lord and worshiping him at the place of worship. And there they are. They're they're speaking unto the Lord, not necessarily predicting the future, but they're just speaking by the inspiration of God, of praises, words of encouragement, whatever.

And they're just caught up in the inspiration of the Lord. And they said, you're going to see these prophets and the spirit of the Lord was going to come upon you. Saul, that's Samuel's prediction.

You know what I want you to see? Did you see in verse one where oil was poured over the head of Saul? Was that his real anointing? No, the real anointing is predicted in verse six, the spirit of the Lord coming upon him. You know, you could pour a fifty five gallon drum of oil on Saul's head. But if what was predicted in verse six never came to pass, what difference would it make? It's not the outward sign that does it, although outward signs can be wonderful gifts from God.

It's the inward reality and the inward reality would be the spirit of the Lord coming upon Saul. And he said, when that happens, you're going to prophesy with him. You're going to be caught up in their inspiration and you're going to be speaking forth divine words of encouragement and you're going to be speaking forth just praises and and spontaneous worship of God.

And and I love this as it's put there in verse six, and you will be turned into another man. Isn't that great? I mean, Saul was picked by God just as he was. Now, let me tell you something about Saul.

From everything we notice about Saul in the Bible before this, Saul does not seem to have been a particularly spiritual man. He wasn't a guy that you say, wow, what a spiritual giant. Saul was just like a regular guy.

If he lived in our world today, you'd think, well, it's just a normal guy. You would not think of him as being the kind of guy who would read his Bible or go to church. I mean, probably a nice guy, a good man, but not a spiritual man in any way.

And God picked Saul and used Saul, even though he was not a particularly spiritual man. Some of you probably think of yourself the same way. I mean, you probably come to church and you think, man, you know, these people are spiritual, but I'm not very spiritual.

First of all, if you only knew the people around you, you probably wouldn't be saying that so much. But secondly, when you think about somebody being spiritual, a lot of times you're thinking about an image, you're not thinking about reality. Now, what do you think? Somebody's spiritual if they say, praise the Lord,

brother.

You know, I was just reading in First John, chapter four, verse 15, et cetera, et cetera. That's not the measure of somebody being spiritual. Friends, I don't know if you consider yourself to be a spiritual person, but I'm not a very spiritual person.

The bottom line is it doesn't matter. God can use you and God can touch your life. And that's exactly what he did with Saul.

Saul was not a particularly spiritual person, but God took him and he changed him. You see, God picked Saul just as he was, even though he was not a particularly spiritual man. Yet God did not want to leave Saul just as he was.

God wanted to use Saul to the fullest, but he had to be turned into another man by the filling of the spirit of the Lord. That's how God says his work is done. Do we believe it? Do we believe it when it says not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord.

Friends, when we let the spirit of the Lord fill us and change us, then we can see the work of God really done. That's exactly what was going to happen in the life of Saul. The spirit of God was going to take him and change him into another man.

But first, he had to do something. Take a look at verse eight. You shall go down before me to Gilgal and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings.

Seven days you shall wait till I come to you and show you what I should do. Oh, I think this is an important command. What was the office that Saul had just been appointed to the office of king? Now, I don't know if you've ever noticed this about kings, but kings and presidents and leaders and the great men of our world, they don't wait for anybody.

You wait for them. You know, it's sort of a sign of a person's importance, right? If a person is important, they don't wait for other people. You wait for them.

What if some high person, a general or the president or something like that gave you a call and said, well, you know, let's get together. It's OK, Mr. President, I'll meet with you. Go to Camp David and wait a week there and then I'll show up.

You say, what are you kidding me? I'm the president of the United States. I don't wait for you. You wait for me.

And even though Saul had just been appointed as king, what does Samuel tell him to do? You go to Gilgal and you wait for me because Saul, even though you're king, you better realize that I'm the prophet Samuel was saying and you need to wait upon me and wait upon the Lord. So Saul did that or he's going to do it. Take a look here at verse nine.

And so it was when he had turned his back to go from Samuel that God gave him another heart. And all those signs came to pass that day. Isn't that precious? Isn't that great? Everything came to pass.

But I love it how it puts it there in verse nine. When he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart. You know, Samuel could not give Saul another heart.

Only the spirit of the Lord could do that. But you know, I think it's remarkable. God did not even choose to give Saul another heart in the presence of Samuel.

He could have right. God could have changed Saul's heart when Samuel was right there. But God wouldn't.

God wouldn't change Saul's heart until Samuel was distant from him. Why? Because God wanted Saul to know. And he wanted Samuel to know that it wasn't Samuel's work in it.

God demonstrated that only the spirit of the Lord could change Saul's heart. God did not grant this change of heart to Saul until he left the presence of Samuel, because God wanted Saul to honor and respect Samuel, but never to look at Samuel in the place of the Lord. Friends, did you see what it said there in verse nine? It says God gave him another heart.

Samuel did not give it to him. Saul did not even give himself a new heart. The new heart was a gift from God.

And, you know, you can have a new heart or another heart from God, but you've got to receive it from him. I can't give you a new heart. I'm glad you're here.

I'm glad you're listening. I'm glad you got your Bible open. I'm glad we're all here together sharing the word.

I cannot give you a new heart. Some other religious leader can't give you a new heart. And you know what? You can't give somebody else a new heart.

You have been trying to give your kids a new heart. You can't do it. You've been trying to give your spouse a new heart.

You can't do it. Friends, you know, the only people who can give you the only one who can give us a new heart, it's God himself in heaven. We can't receive a new heart from anyone else, from God, and we can never make a new heart in anyone else.

We sure put ourselves through a lot trying to get a new heart from somebody else or trying to give somebody else a new heart. No, only God can do it. Well, notice what continues to happen here at verse 10.

When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him. The spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied among them. And it happened when all who knew him formally saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, what is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? But then a man from there answered and said, but who is their father? Therefore, it became a proverb.

Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place. Do you see this here? Is Saul also among the prophets? You know, they came to be a proverb in Israel. I don't know if you've ever heard this saying.

It's kind of an archaic saying. We don't use it much in our generation, but it used to be said of somebody who wasn't very religious, who suddenly became religious. They would say, what, he got religion.

Well, that's kind of the idea of this phrase is Saul among the prophets. What's somebody as unspiritual, unspiritually minded as Saul? What is he now one of the prophets? And yes, he was. Why? Because God had changed his life.

God changed his heart. He was filled with the spirit of God. I think this is very interesting here in verse 14.

Look what happens next. Saul has just had these amazing spiritual experiences. His whole encounter with Samuel, his head dripping with oil from the anointing still.

And he has this amazing experience meeting up with the prophets and being filled with the spirit of God and he himself prophesying. And then what does he do? Well, he goes home. Verse 14.

Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, where did you go? He said, oh, to look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel. Saul's uncle said, tell me, please, what Samuel said to you? So Saul said to his uncle, he told us plainly that the donkeys had been found.

But about the matter of the kingdom, he'd not tell him what Samuel said. Oh, yeah, Lord, I guess just this part about me being anointed as king. I forgot to tell them that.

Well, it's just a little detail, don't you think? And we stand back and say, what's going on here? I mean, Saul's uncle comes to him. He says, boy, what's wrong with your head? Where'd all that oil come from? What's going on? What did Samuel say to you? Oh, nothing. Just about the donkeys.

Later on, I bet when Saul's uncle found out that he had been anointed king, why didn't you tell me? Oh, I just must have forgot. The part about being declared the first king over all Israel just slipped my mind. What's going on here? You know, it's a little hard to judge.

Perhaps Saul was being wise. Perhaps Saul knew well enough in himself that he shouldn't tell anybody that he had been declared the king over Israel until the Lord declared him to be king. You know, what's the point? Well, uncle, Samuel anointed me as king over Israel.

Yeah, right, sure, Saul. You know, you need to go lay down, son. You're a little foggy in the head here.

I mean, what's the point of saying anything until the Lord declares it to be true? You know, I think this is a principle for our life. God may have given you a calling or a promise or a sense that the Lord wants you to be something or do something and then think, wow, this is amazing. You know, God wants me to be a pastor or an evangelist or God wants to give me a ministry doing this or God wants me to call this, wants me to be a great businessman or this and that, oh God, all these things.

Wow, it's just too big. You know, maybe you should just keep your mouth shut about it. Maybe you just need to wait until the Lord demonstrates it.

Right? Let the Lord show it. If the word is really from God, then God will demonstrate it. And sometimes you just get yourself into trouble by talking about it until the Lord does it.

But I think there may have been another thing at work and not this matter at all. You see, Saul may have just been experiencing what many of us experience after a very powerful encounter from the Lord. As soon as we have something great in our life happen, the enemy of our souls is there to attack us and to make us fearful and cowardly to tell other people what God has done in our life.

You ever experience that? God just really touches your life. I mean, wow, I mean, you might come away from a meeting here at the church. I mean, God just, oh man, you were crying.

You were just, oh Lord, this is amazing. Oh, thank you, God. And you go home and maybe somebody at your house, he wasn't there.

Oh, what happened at church night? Nothing. You don't want to say, oh, the Lord touched my life in such a powerful way. Maybe you think it'll sound foolish.

Maybe you're embarrassed. Maybe Satan's just laying it on you. Maybe Saul was just experiencing what we experience so often in that kind of situation.

Well, God's not going to let Saul be the hidden king of Israel much longer. Take a look how it happens in the rest of the chapter, verse 17. Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah.

And he said to the children of Israel, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and those who oppressed you. But you have today rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversaries and out of all your tribulations. And you have said to him, No, but set a king over us.

Now, therefore, present yourself before the Lord by your tribes and your clans. I love this. Do you see how Samuel's just laying it on him and goes, Well, let's get together.

You guys wanted a king. Here's your king. I'll show you a king.

You shouldn't have asked for one. You were rebelling against the Lord, but let's get down to it. Let's give you a king.

Now, this is interesting, isn't it? Because God has already showed Samuel who the king is going to be, right? Why didn't he just bring Saul out and say, Here's your king. You know why? Because maybe the nation wouldn't have believed him. Oh, Samuel, this is just the guy you picked.

It's not the guy we picked. It's just the guy you picked. No, Samuel wanted the whole nation to know that this guy was from the Lord, and so God led him to display Saul as king in this way.

And what does he do? Well, he says, Well, bring the tribes before me. Look at verse 20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.

When he caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Metri was chosen. And Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. You see what happens here? What happens here is that they said, Well, okay, well, first of all, let's have all the tribes go, Lord, which tribe do you want to bring your king from? And God answered in some way, maybe through prayer, maybe through the Urim and Thummim.

We're not really sure how, but God made it clear from the tribe of Benjamin. Okay, Lord, which great family heading in Benjamin? Which division of the tribe of Benjamin? Well, from the family of Metri. Okay, great.

Lord, which one of the sub-families in Metri? Well, from the family of Kish. All right, Lord, what man in the family of Kish? And the Lord says, Saul. Well, great, we know it's Saul, the son of Kish of the family of Metri, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Great, we know this is the man. Yes, the Lord has displayed his man. It's Saul's shining moment.

And where is he? Well, look at verse 21. And when they sought him, he could not be found. Now, you know, I think this is interesting.

This was Saul's shining moment, wasn't it? And in a way, I think it shows something good in the heart of Saul. Saul was not a man who had the ambition to be king because he wanted to be in the limelight. Now, God may raise one up to be in the limelight, but if your heart loves it, you need to watch it.

Saul didn't love it. And this is something good about Saul. He was not king because he had the ambition to be in the limelight.

As a matter of fact, he was embarrassed if you look at verse 22. Therefore, they inquired of the Lord further, Has the man come here yet? Can you just imagine this? It's like, you know, you go to Dodger Stadium and they have the big raffle, you know, for the airline ticket, and they go, Well, you know, it's in the loads section, aisle 17, you know, row D, seat 5. And so everybody, loads section, everybody looks over aisle 17, everybody looks at the row and in the seat, and nobody's sitting in the seat. Well, where is it? You know, where is this guy? And, Lord, is he here? And God says, Yes, he's here.

Look at verse 22. And the Lord answered, There he is, hidden among the equipment. You can't hide from God, can you? Saul was trying to hide, and the Lord says, Here's an announcement.

He's hidden among the equipment. Saul was probably so embarrassed, and there he is, hidden among the equipment there. And so they were going to bring him out here, but, you know, I was preparing for the message this weekend, and Spurgeon has such a good sermon on this one text.

He titles it, Hidden Among the Stuff. And in it, he describes how believers and unbelievers can be hidden among the equipment, hiding from the crown that God has to give them. I mean, isn't it funny here? Here, God has a crown for Saul.

And here's your moment. And where's Saul? He's hiding among the equipment. This is what Spurgeon said.

He said, there may be some of you here present who may be doing precisely what Saul did, only you're doing it more foolishly than he did. He did but hide away from an earthly crown, but you hide from a heavenly crown. And God has a crown for you.

And where are you? Are you hiding among the equipment? You're hiding among the stuff? No, come out from under, receive the crown that God has for you. And God made it clear that, well, Saul was the one, and He called him out here. Notice here verse 23, so they ran and brought him from there.

And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. And Samuel said to all the people, Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there's no one like him among all the people? So all the people shouted and said, Long live the King! Oh, when I get to heaven, I'm getting the video of this occasion because I know what it looked like. I just have to check.

I know what it looked like. Which one is it? Oh, of the tribe of Ben-Durim, family of Metri, family of Kish, the man Saul. Where is he? We can't find him.

We can't find him. And the Lord says, Well, he's hidden among the equipment. We'll go find him.

And they bring him up and they pull Saul up and he stands up and he's so tall and strong and good looking. I know what the nation said at that moment. At that moment, the whole nation, they went, Ooh.

Oh, they all said, Oh, Lord, this is the King. This is the guy. Oh, he looks like it.

Oh, Lord, this is great. This is the one. Oh, yeah.

Oh, God, good choice. This is the one. Yes, this is the one we want.

Look, he just looks like a king. Oh, he's going to belong on the cover of royalty magazine. Oh, this is going to be great.

Then what happens? Samuel brings Saul out before the people. I know how Samuel said what he said in verse 24. Let me read that to you again.

Samuel said to all the people, Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen that there's no one like him among all the people? Friends, I would almost guarantee you that Samuel said this sarcastically. More than anybody else there, Samuel knew Saul. And he knew that Saul wasn't a bad man, but he knew that Saul was not a man of God.

He knew that Saul wasn't really the man that the Lord would have be king over his people. He knew that Saul was the king that God had chosen because God was going to give the people what their wicked hearts desired, not what the Lord really wanted to give them. He knew that Saul was man's king, not God's king after God's own heart.

So I bet Saul stood before the nation, and Samuel understood and said, well, look at him. There's no one like him among all the people. Here he is.

Here's your king who's all about image. Here's your king who's from central casting. He's not the man of God that the Lord would have really rule over you.

My friends, I'm sure Samuel said this sarcastically, but I bet the nation didn't pick up on it at all. Do you see how they responded? Look at the end of verse 24. So all the people shouted and said, Long live the king! Oh, this was their shining moment.

The people of Israel, their desire for the image and the pageantry of a human king, they had been longing to shout these words for a long time. I could see them moping around before this. You know, the Edomites get a king.

They get to say, long live the king. The Ammonites have a king. They get to say long... We don't get to say long live the king.

God's our king. What's the point of saying long live the king when God's your king? He lives all the time. We want a human king.

And you know what? Oh, now they have the pageantry. Now they can have the heralds. Now they can have the red carpet.

Now they can have the state dinners. Now they can have a king with all the pomp and the pageantry and the image. Saul didn't have the substance that God wanted.

Friends, I don't know if I can press this point home powerfully enough for us. Because you realize that we live in a culture that is so enthralled with image that it doesn't care about substance at all. There used to be a time if a guy went on the TV and read the news, if he was the news anchor, that he was a reporter.

He was a journalist. It didn't matter what he looked like. He was a journalist.

He wrote his own copy. He researched the stories. He was a journalist.

He was a reporter. There he was. You know what they pick now for the news readers? They just pick people who look nice.

Who have a good image. Are they the ones that, oh, work in the store? No. Somebody else does that.

Hands them copies. They sit down. And it's all about image.

Friends, if you multiply that by about a thousand times, that's how much our culture is in love with image and not substance. We are the people, as a culture, shouting out, Long live the king! Because we're so in love with celebrity and image and status that we've forgotten to ask the question, where's the substance? What kind of man is this man? What kind of woman are they? That's the real question. Well, verse 25 begins to end the chapter.

Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. I think that's remarkable.

There's Samuel. I bet his heart's breaking. He sees the people so excited to have their king.

Their king who's just an image. Oh, he looks like a king, but he doesn't have the heart of a king for the people of God. And there the people are so excited.

Long live the king! Long live the king! And Samuel's like, alright, you know what? Let's knock this stuff off. Let me explain something to you. Let me explain to you the behavior of royalty.

Now, what did that mean? I'm sure he talked to him from Deuteronomy chapter 17 where it talks about the kings in Israel and how they should behave and how the people should behave towards them. But friends, when it says that Samuel explained to them the behavior of royalty, he wasn't talking about how the king should hold his pinky when he's holding a teacup. The behavior of royalty, do you know what the behavior of royalty is all about? It's selfish.

Royalty sits around waiting to see what people are going to do for them. You think royalty opens their own doors, drives their own cars, makes their own meals? No, to be royalty means other people do things for you. And Samuel's saying, let me tell you something, this is how royalty acts.

And the people loved it. See, what Samuel was saying was the same thing Jesus said in Mark chapter 10. He said, you know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them.

That's what it means to be a ruler among the Gentiles. That's what it means to be royalty. But Jesus added this word of instruction right after that.

He said, yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all, for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Friends, according to the way the kings of this world lived, Jesus Christ did not have the behavior of royalty and He doesn't want you to have it either.

Some people live pretty royal lives though there's not a drop of royal blood in them. They live their lives wondering what other people are going to do for them. They live their lives with the behavior and the thinking of royalty exactly what Samuel was warning them about.

And I tell you, friends, there's no joy in that kind of life. You want joy? You want peace and love in your life? Then live the way that Jesus lived, not to be served, but to serve. Samuel warned them.

Verse 26-27, Saul also went home with Gibeah and valiant men went with him whose hearts God had touched. Isn't that great? Valiant men. Men whose hearts God had touched.

Saul needed those people around him, didn't he? But not everybody agreed with him, but some rebels said, in verse 27, how can this man save us? So they despised him and brought him no presents, but he held his peace. In other words, he had some people opposing him, but Saul was very wise. Saul didn't say, well, I'm not going to win over the whole nation in a day.

So he said, well, we'll let them. I'll hold my peace. As we come to the end of this chapter, I want you to understand something here, friends.

I want you to see that Saul started out with so much promise. There he was, chosen and anointed by God, tall and good-looking, filled with the Holy Spirit. He had the support of a man like Samuel.

He had been given gifts appropriate to royalty. He had the enthusiastic support and goodwill of most all the nation. He had valiant men surrounding him, men whose hearts God had touched to support him, and he had the wisdom to not regard every doubter or every critic as an enemy.

But despite every one of these advantages, there's no guarantee that Saul will go the right way. So what's he going to do? Is he going to continue in every one of these advantages that God has given him? Or is he going to choose to go his own way? That question is answered in the rest of the book of 1 Samuel. And we're going to take a look at it together, piece by piece, here on Sunday mornings.

But friends, I just want you to recognize something. God's given you a lot of advantages, hasn't He? God's filled your life with a lot of spiritual advantages, a ton of them. But none of those advantages in and of themselves guarantee that you are going to go the right way.

You can still choose your own way, but don't. Take this exhortation from the Lord to keep you on the right path and say, no, I'm going to keep walking after the Lord. I'm not going to walk after the behavior of royalty.

I'm going to receive that filling of the Holy Spirit, and I'm going to walk after the path that the Lord has for us. Father, we come before You now in the name of Jesus, just thankful for who You are. Thankful, Lord, for what You do in our lives.

And Lord, we don't want to live after the behavior of royalty. No, instead, Lord, we want to live after the glory and the honor of Jesus Christ. Father, we ask that You'd move in our hearts and our lives just to fill

us with Your Spirit and to give us that heart that would take the advantages and allow them to push us in the right direction instead of neglecting them and getting off track.

Lord, most of all, we as Your people before You this morning, we know that You've given us a Christian life to live that's bigger than what we can live in ourselves. We need to be empowered by the Spirit of God. And so I pray that each heart here this morning, right now as I pray, would just secretly before You, Lord, open up their heart to the fullness of the Spirit of God and ask that You'd touch us and change us.

In Jesus' precious name.

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