

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

DONKEYS (1 SAMUEL 9:1-14A) IMPRESSIVE

We are finally introduced to Saul, Israel's first earthly king. He comes from an influential family and stands a head taller than anyone else.

- **Israel had pleaded for a king, like every other nation. Saul had a decent bloodline and looked like the guy who would make them look strong.**

THE SEARCH

Knowing what we know, it's odd to see the future king chasing donkeys from town to town. But this was an agricultural community, and Kish had lost his tractor, car, and side-by-side.

- **Donkeys represented wealth and position in the community. What was lost was worth sending his son to find.**

STAY OR GO

When they get to the land of Zuph, Saul decides it's time to head home. Interestingly, this future leader is led by the servant. Saul doesn't even seem to know of Samuel.

- **They were headed in the right direction, but their quest was about to change. How many times have we begun a search only to find something more valuable?**

SEARCHING FOR A SEER

Samuel had led Israel for many years. Saul hadn't heard of him and thought his service must be purchased. As his servant guides, they find their next lead.

- **God had not abandoned Israel and directed Saul's path to the throne, even when Saul didn't know what was going on. He does the same for us today.**

FOUND (1 SAMUEL 9:14B-27) GOD SENDS

As God was directing the path of Saul, He told Samuel that He would send a man to anoint as ruler over His people, Israel.

- **Israel may have cried out for a king like other nations, but God would do the picking. Every change in direction and "chance meeting" led to this moment. This may no longer be about donkeys.**

SAUL APPROACHES SAMUEL

Saul shows us again his lack of spiritual knowledge when he doesn't recognize Samuel.

- **We may not always recognize God's plan or understand why we are where we are. It's God's plan. He will pursue it, and He will reveal it in His time. Are we moving toward Him, or have we quit?**

EVERYTHING IN YOUR HEART

Saul doesn't know God's plan or Samuel, but God knows everything about him. This was no longer about missing donkeys; it was about finding Saul.

- **We live in a lost world and may even feel lost ourselves. Our broken hearts look for and seek what we think is missing. Do we realize that God is seeking us?**

I'M NOBODY

Saul responded in humility. He knew his position in the community was not one of influence. He saw himself as unimportant.

- **When we first begin to realize God's plan for our lives, what is our response? Are we up to the challenge? Do we make excuses? Is God calling us to do something we can't do?**

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Saul may have felt unworthy, but he still obeyed Samuel. Saul would see that he had a seat at the table and a select meal had been set aside. It was a taste of his future.

- **When our response is obedience, God reveals His plan for us more. We must go through the door to get to the table. Are we satisfied with just looking in?**

STAY FOR A WHILE

After a night of conversation on the roof, Samuel asks Saul to stay for a while, and he reveals the word of God to him.

- **Saul's future was set, but his preparation was beginning. Our willingness to enter and stay in discipleship relationships will affect our effectiveness in the future.**

ANOINTED (1 SAMUEL 10:1-16) THE LORD ANOINTED

Samuel poured the oil on Saul's head, but the Lord anointed Saul.

- **Saul wasn't going to be king because Samuel had chosen him. It wasn't because he had oil on his head. It was because God had chosen him. God would do His work through Saul. Everything was about to change.**

CLEAR DIRECTIONS

Samuel gave Saul a path to follow. Saul would see three signs that would certify God's anointing. The donkeys were okay, offerings would be given, and knowledge would be shared.

- **As we follow Christ, we are given perspective, provision for growth, and knowledge to share. What next?**

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Samuel said these amazing things would happen, but only because the Spirit of the Lord would come fully on Saul.

- **God doesn't just call us, provide for us, protect us, and equip us; He is with us! This isn't like a fireworks show; it is His presence with us—always.**

WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE

Samuel had given Saul clear direction and then said he should do what circumstances required because God would be with Him. Saul had the opportunity to do something he had never done before.

- **God will call us to do things in His power that we wouldn't think possible. Do we believe that God will work through us?**

A CHANGED HEART

When Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed his heart.

- **Our first step of obedience will bring change to our lives. It begins with repentance—when we turn from our sin to follow Christ, He changes us. When we don't know which way to go, we look to Him and keep following Christ.**

EVERYONE WHO KNEW HIM

The change that God had made in Saul was not a secret. God had changed his heart; everyone who knew him before could see it.

- **What God does in us should be visible to those around us. When we surrender, God works in, through, and on us. Many questioned Saul's authenticity, and they may have been right to do so.**

WHERE DID YOU GO?

What God did to and through Saul was real. Sadly, Saul's beginning is much like his end. He doesn't tell about God's call, God's anointing, God's Spirit, or the opportunity to defeat the Philistines in God's power.

- **Saul would live a life of spiritual experiences but not a true and living faith that obeys the Lord.**

MISSION

- We are always on some mission.
- **The thing that drives us today may not be what drives us tomorrow.**
- **Because our culture lives day-to-day, we miss the joy of life-long purpose. Life shouldn't be about chasing donkeys. When we follow Christ first, we may find those other things along the way.**

REAL PURPOSE

- Our mission will reveal our purpose.
- **Living in obedience to the will of God is the best life.**
- **God has offered us a seat at the table. He has sacrificed His Lamb. When we open our eyes to His purpose for us, everything else becomes part of His plan for our lives. How will our lives glorify God?**

AUTHENTIC?

- Everything God does is for His glory and our good.
- **Some will concede to God's will, and others will seek to do God's will.**
- **Are we living lives where we constantly "give in" to God? How would our lives change if we truly followed Him instead of having to be pushed? Rejection or service?**