

Today's Message: "Lessons From the Life of King Saul"

Introduction:

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." (1 Samuel 8:4-5, NIV)

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us."²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king." Then Samuel said to the Israelites, "Everyone go back to your own town." (1 Samuel 8:19-22, NIV)

The people wanted a king, but to move from a theocracy to a monarchy was not God's best for the people of Israel.

From Saul's life we learn by example as well as failure the following:

- I. **Aspire** to know your calling.
 - A. Every day is an opportunity to hear the Lord calling you to a new assignment. 1 Samuel 9:15-21
 - B. In the **drudgery** there is often divine providence.
 - C. This makes our daily routine ... an **adventure**.

- II. **Acquire** the anointing for your calling.
 - A. The anointing is the power of God in the person of God's Spirit enabling you to fulfill God's purpose in your life.
 - B. We do well to know the profound importance of the anointing of God for our lives.
Some illustrations:
 - In Saul – 1 Samuel 9:26-10:1
 - King David – 1 Samuel 16:13
 - Jesus is the Christ: **the Anointed One**

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.... Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-21, NIV)

- The early church-Acts 1:8; 2:1-13
- The apostle Paul-Acts 9:1-22

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C. The anointing is what allows your giftedness and calling to flow naturally and easily. It is the power of God working through you.

"The anointing functioning at its best is being at home with our gift. At ease. No pressure. Having nothing to prove. Next to the gift of salvation and the sure knowledge that we will go to heaven when we die, the anointing is our most precious possession." R.T. Kendall

III. **Admire** those who finish strong.

A. Saul began well and led well in the early years of his calling. Over time he **squandered** the anointing and his heart moved away from God.

"I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." (God to Samuel about Saul in 1 Samuel 15:11)

B. We all have heroes, role models, mentors... find those who finish strong and learn from them.

C. We finish strong not just at the end of our lives, but at the end of every assignment, certain seasons, projects and commitments.

From Saul's life we learn that to ignore God will only lead to heartache and loss. 1 Samuel 13:13-14

Conclusion: While Saul was still king, the anointing left him and fell upon a young shepherd by the name of David. Though much of his life was blessed, he ended poorly and did not share in the rich blessing of a calling completed.

Small Group or Personal Reflection Questions:

1. We first find Saul simply fulfilling the request of his father to find his lost donkeys. Do you ever feel that most everything in your life is menial and not important to God? What does this passage teach you about the "every day things" of life and how they might be preparing you for God's calling?
2. What is your understanding of the anointing of God? Why is it so essential for every believer to understand how the anointing works in their lives on a regular basis?
3. Though Saul had many good qualities, his big mistake was drifting away from the heart of God to the point of disobedience. See 1 Samuel 13:7-11 which ends *"What have you done?" Asks Samuel*. Taking control means breaking trust.
4. All of this occurred because the Israelites refused to accept God as their king. Instead, they wanted a human king like other nations with whom they compared themselves. What is the danger of comparison in today's culture?

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