
Engage

Dear Lord, Jesus our King, we praise You for all that You have done for us. We thank You for taking upon Yourself the sins of the world and bringing salvation to the world. As we celebrate Your kingship, forgive us that we are so often reluctant to let You reign over us. Be our God and King forever, Amen.



1 SAMUEL



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

A Disciple After God’s Own Heart

1 Samuel #3: Choosing Your King

Pastor Kelvin Yong

1 Samuel 8:1-22 (Reading 1 Samuel 8:1-5)

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel’s leaders. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 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.”

Introduction

1 Samuel 8 marks a significant transition in the history of Israel from being a nation ruled by judges to becoming a monarchy. The transition process began with the demand: “Give us a king to lead us!” (v5-6).

In Scriptures, there are three reasons that prompted this demand.

1. The pretext reason **1 Samuel 8:1-5; 1 Chronicles 6:31-33**

A pretext reason is one that appears to be true but may not necessarily be so.

In the initial exchange, the Israelites came to Samuel and told him that his succession plan was not working. It was true that Samuel's sons, Joel and Abijah, did not follow in Samuel's ways - turning to dishonest gains, accepting bribes and perverting justice. But they were never appointed as Samuel's successors in the first place. According to many Biblical scholars, the judge's office was never passed down from one generation to the next. Furthermore, his two sons were assigned as interns with limited scope of ministry and authority and placed in the remote town of Beersheba. This was so should they fail in their assignment, the damage would be contained and limited.

The elders told Samuel that he was old and they demanded a king to succeed him. The people of Israel felt that Samuel had passed his prime, his time was up and his leadership was over but we know that is not true. Old Testament scholars estimated that Samuel at that time was in his mid-50s. The Bible also records that Samuel would continue to play a significant role in the life of the nation Israel many years after.

We may be led to think that perhaps Samuel did not do a good job as a father. We do not know what happened to Joel and Abijah but we do know that Joel's son, Heman, subsequently became the director of music in the house of the Lord and this was a position of great significance back then.

Nothing is impossible for our God for He is a God of second chances. He will never reject us. He can redeem, restore and revitalise when we place our hope in Him.

2. The faith reason *1 Samuel 12:12; 8:20; 7:10,12*

The second reason was due to their lack of faith in the Lord, their heavenly king. The people were concerned with national security. They were facing constant threats of attack from the Philistines to the South and the Ammonites to the East. Instead of placing their trust and faith in their warrior king, Yahweh, they decided to place all their hopes on an earthly king. God Himself had just fought for them one of the greatest battles against the Philistines (one chapter earlier in chapter 7). In remembrance of this, Samuel took a stone and placed it between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying "Thus far the Lord has helped us".

We may be facing "giants" in our lives today - a personal crisis or a situation that feels almost a dead-end. Whatever battles we are facing, God is saying to us, "I will fight for you when you put your trust and faith in Me." Our God who has helped us thus far will continue to do so because He is a faithful and reliable God. He is the same yesterday, today and for all the days to come.

3. The core reason *1 Samuel 8:6-8, 20; John 19:15; Deuteronomy 17:14*

It has to do with the foundational belief and allegiance of the people. Going to God in prayer when our heart is troubled is the right response. Here, Samuel not only prayed but he also listened to God. Frank C. Laubach quoted that "Prayer at its highest is a two-way conversation and for me the most important part is listening to God's replies."

God gave Samuel the assurance and revelation that at the core of it, the people were not rejecting Samuel but were rejecting God as their king. God is assuring Samuel that there is nothing wrong with his leadership or what he has done. They were rejecting God as their king and had continued to do so countless times in the past by forsaking Him and serving other gods.

The rejection of God as their king was also a prophetic situation. Jesus was a rejected king even though He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jesus is the king of the entire world and universe, of both the Jews and Gentiles. He is worthy of our praise and worship. Today God is saying to us, choose Jesus to be the king of your life.

BIG IDEA: Choose Jesus to be the King of our life

Jesus came to earth 2000 years ago to establish the kingdom of God. He has made those of us who have trusted in Him as kingdom citizens. We are called as His citizens to walk in His ways, obey His will and have a heart that aligns with God's heart. We need to live our lives in accordance with the principles of God's kingdom and not of this world. God had foreseen and has decided that the Israelites will eventually have a king in accordance with His terms and perfect timing. What displeases God was the manner, motive and timing in which the Israelites demanded for one. He wanted them to stand out and reflect God's glory to the nations but they wanted to be like other nations.

It is easy for us to read this Scriptural account and judge the Israelites. But let us also examine our own hearts as we sometimes do or could do the same if we are not careful. The Kingdom of God is counter-culture. Its values are distinctly different from the values of the world we live in - and we are called to live out those values which creates a tension between human desires and God's plan. John C Maxwell quoted that "Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make makes you." We are living in a world where greed and exploitation is rampant. Where greed and greatness is ranked higher than humility. Where wealth and successes are celebrated and glorified.

Conclusion

Jesus came to this earth to establish God's kingdom for God's glory. We as kingdom citizens, have been called to live out kingdom values that are counter-cultural and distinctly different from the values of this world. Our call is to bring God's kingdom to the world and to shepherd the people around us.



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

- Share your top 3 most used emoji in WhatsApp and why this is so. (Note: The most used appear on the top left vertical in the emoji gallery)
- Take a small piece of paper. The space on the paper represents the total waking time we have in a week. Start drawing boxes dividing it into key areas where we spend our time. A larger box represents more time spent. Share with others the categories you use and the top 2 areas you spend most time.



Photo by Kerigan on Pexels

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- “Make Jesus the King of your life”. Is it hard to do? Why or Why not?
- Why do you have so much faith in God? Share your testimony.

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Reflect and share: Which factor was behind your last personal prayer to God? Was it a case of pretext, faith or core?
- Share some practical ways on how to live and act in ways that honours God.
- Did you experience a time when God gave you a second chance after making a bad decision? Share what happened and how God intervened and turned things around for you.

Question Bank *(Extra questions that you can use to bring your discussion further as you see fit):*

- Share one area in your life where you have rejected Jesus' lordship and substituted it with worldly values.
 - Share a time that you felt rejection. How did that bother or make you feel? In what ways did you cope with it (or have not)?
 - Share an incident where someone prayed and prophesied into your life.
 - The Lord restored to Pr Kelvin what the locust had eaten in a wonderful way. How would the verses in Joel 2:25-26 encourage you today?
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SERMON REFLECTION



Photo by Xiaoyu Li on Unsplash

Parenting is a lifelong commitment that oftentimes feels like continuously holding water bottles out with outstretched arms. These bottles may not be very heavy in the beginning but over time, the "heaviness" starts to wear down parents physically, mentally and emotionally.

In our zeal to help our sons (especially the eldest) brush up academically, we signed him up for many virtual tuition and enrichment classes. There's Mandarin three times a week, Bahasa Malaysia and piano on Friday evenings and abacus on Sunday.

All these arrangements seemed to work out fine initially but we found ourselves running from post to post. Our sons spend most of their after-school hours getting through homework, revision and then tuition and enrichment classes. Everything came to a grinding halt when we attempted to fit in Children's Church, in-person Celebrations and most recently physical CG meet. It was no longer possible to "log off" from DUMC and log on to one of our kid's virtual classes. This has been one reason delaying us from fully returning to the original church arrangements.

I stepped back one day and realised that there was a tendency for our family to raise several decibels at the dinner table. This feeling of running on empty, of constantly chasing time was fueling my impatience towards the family and reason for misbehaviour on the kids' part.

Nothing seemed to fit right. As more time was poured into our children's education, it felt like more time was required. It was an endless cycle of take, take and take without a breather in sight.

We humbly came before God to seek Him in prayer and committed the seemingly impossible time demands that were now wearing us down. The Holy Spirit impressed upon my heart a heart question - "Do you honour Me more than these?" We have built our lives focused around education and in ensuring our kids are able to make something of themselves in the world. But we have failed to build all these upon Christ as our solid rock.

Looking back, Jesus has always been there to guide, bless and protect us. We are not out of the water yet as the Lord is still doing deep heart work in and through our lives. However, we put our hope in Him. Thus far, He has led us and therefore He will continue to do so. Unlike any other value or foundation of this world, He freely gives what we most need in season. He is our Ebenezer, our hope, our solid rock.

Contributed by Darren Lim



PRAYER

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

New State Governments

Pray:

- Thank God for the new state governments, that they will govern with fairness and justice for the betterment of the people.
- For harmonious Federal-State relations, and fair distribution of funds from the Federal Government to develop the states.
- For bold measures to counter corruption and to grow the economy in difficult times.
- A strong and responsible opposition that will hold the government accountable.

DUMC Youths Studying Overseas

Pray:

- That they will experience God's provision, care, and direction in this season of their lives.
- God will lead them into loving and wholesome Christian communities to fellowship and grow spiritually with.
- God will bring them into lifelong friendships and connections that will grow and prosper them.
- Wisdom and grace in handling difficult situations that may arise as they grow into their new environments.



MISSIONAL

Note to CGL: Inspire and encourage the Cell Group members to participate in the activity suggested below (from our CrossFields, Missions department) together to cultivate a culture of being a missional church.

Planning a CG activity? Why not try something different to cultivate a culture of being a missional church? Inspire your CG to engage with our local AGW beneficiary, Autrui Global (Autrui).



WHO is Autrui?	A non-profit organisation founded in 2019 with the vision of creating a future with better health for everyone, everywhere. Believes enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social status.
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HOW can your CG engage with Autrui?	Autrui Global is starting a health education programme focusing on topics such as nutrition and personal hygiene for underserved schools to build resilience and teach students simple, everyday tasks they can do to live and grow healthier: Dates: September 22, 29 and October 13, 20, 2023 Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm Location: Destiny C3 Education Centre, Subang Jaya (Refugee School by Destiny C3 Church) Demographic: Majority Pakistani and Indian Language: English Volunteer Role Descriptions: 1. Facilitators - assist the Programme Trainer in carrying out activities & teaching plans. 2. Photographer - capture teaching moments.
Interested to explore further with your CG?	Contact person: Ms J. Abigail Peter Telephone no: +60 16-333 0875 Email: abigail@autruiglobal.com Website: https://www.autruiglobal.com/

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