

Westwood Baptist Church



Grounded. Growing. Going.

Worship Guide for April 23, 2023

Sermon Notes

A King Like All the Nations – A Mirror of our Heart

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 & 1 Samuel 8

Israel thought they knew what they needed. They thought they needed a change – a change in leadership, a new direction politically. This paragraph from The Jesus Story Book Bible (p116) summarizes well for us the situation we come to in 1 Samuel 8: *“God’s people had a new land. Now they wanted a new king. “But God is your King”, Samuel said to them. “He is the one who looks after you best.” “We want a real king!” they said. “One we can see!” God knew that a king might not be kind to his people or look after them as well as he would. But God’s people didn’t care; they wanted a king and they wanted him now!”* (p116)

The next eight chapters record the rise (chs. 8-12) and fall (chs. 13-15) of Saul, the first king of Israel. Between Samuel’s age and his son’s corrupt lifestyle, the elders of Israel recognize their need for new leadership. This need also reveals the central issue, which is an issue of the heart. Israel has grown discontent with God’s kingship. Their demand uncovers their sin of rejecting God as their Sovereign. Even when solemnly warned of the consequences, the people choose to trust a human king rather than the God who has faithfully led them.

Asking for a king was not the problem. God made provision for a king and had given guidelines for a unique monarchy that served the people in a godly way (Deut. 17:14-20). The problem was this was not their model and pleasing God was not their motivation. God gives them the desire of their foolish crooked heart. But his immediate judgment is ultimately an act of mercy. “In granting their request for a king, the Lord is not approving an absolute monarchy for Israel but rather is inaugurating covenant kingship. He will overrule Israel’s disaffection and use kingship to point them toward the Messiah, who will prove to be the true King of his people.” (J MacKay)

Ultimately 1 Samuel 8 is a mirror into the heart of Israel – and our heart as well. Even in light of God’s faithfulness, we are quick to misplace our trust. We are afraid of being distinct and strive to fit in. We think we know what we want and need, and we are resistant to anything that contradicts that. Yes, 1 Samuel 8 is a mirror of our heart.

We have an inherent desire to be well-led, and God gives guidance for that.

We have a sinful aversion to holiness, but God has called us to be distinct.

We have a sinful desire for substitutes, even though God has demonstrated his sufficiency.

We have a stubborn aversion to wisdom, so God’s judgment sometimes lets us have our way.

We don’t usually have the perspective to see it, but God’s judgment is ultimately an act of mercy.

Life Group Preparation Guide

"Let the *Word* of Christ *dwell* in you(all) *richly*
teaching and *admonishing* one another in all *wisdom*..."
- Colossians 3:16a

Focus #1: GOD

1. What does this passage reveal about the character or nature of God?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's eternal plans and purposes?
3. What does this passage reveal about how God interacts with his creation?

Focus #2: ME

4. How does this passage reveal sin in my own mind, heart, or life?
5. In what ways does this passage help us to see how we need to be aligned with God's will?
6. What is one tangible and measurable way that the Spirit is leading me to respond to his Word?

Focus #3: OTHERS

7. What is one truth that I can share meaningfully with someone, and with whom?
8. How can I specifically encourage someone or everyone in my Life Group from this passage?

Three contributions (reflections, questions, observations, etc.) I plan to include in our next Life Group discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor
Jonathan Taylor: Associate Pastor
Jason Engle: Pastor of Students
& Discipleship
Deborah Rudd: Children's Ministry
Coordinator
Yvonne Hager: Executive Assistant

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APRIL

26 Evangelism Class-Session 4 @ 6:30 p.m.
26 ODWG Volunteer Applications DUE

MAY

5 Membership Class @ 6:00 p.m.
6 Student Yard Sale - 6:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
8 ODWG Online Zoom Training @ 6:30 p.m.
10 Evangelism Class-Session 5 @ 6:30 p.m.
11 ODWG In-Person Training @ 6:30 p.m.
13 One Day with God - 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
21 Graduate Recognition Sunday
25 Blood Drive - 10:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.