

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 24 - 'Not What You Would Expect' 1 Samuel 16:1 - 7



Samuel was continuing to mourn over the rejection of King Saul. Yet, the rejection of Saul was not by man, but most importantly by God. Saul had disobeyed the Lord's clear commands, and then proceeded to lie about things to attempt to cover his tracks. His sin had forfeited his throne, and God had rejected him. Samuel mourns over the whole situation. Such is the extent of his grief that the word translated 'mourn' means literally to 'mourn for the dead'. This reveals the depths and extent of Samuel's sorrow. We can see the following:

An Unexpected Question (v1) - In the midst of Samuel's grief, the Lord comes to him, and asks him a question that we might think is harsh, but it is necessary. How long will you mourn Samuel? In spite of how he felt about himself, the Lord had work for Samuel to do, and in fact it was a wonderful work, as Samuel was about to be lead to anoint the new king, David, the son of Jesse. There was a legitimate place for Samuel's grief. He sorrowed over the situation, his contribution, fear for the future, all these things caused him to weep tears such was his concern in the midst of adversity. . Despite the legitimacy of Samuel's grief, there is great hope as the Lord questions Samuel. Know this, the dark moments of our life, the valley experiences, will last only so long as it is necessary for God to accomplish His purpose in us. It is often in our darkest moments that the Lord is preparing the brightest outpourings of His power and glory. However, that said, there is another vital principle we need to see here, and it comes through the question that the Lord asks Samuel. As we have said, adversity and disappointments are a fact of life, but discouragement is a choice. Samuel had become so consumed with his grief, or mourning over a situation, that God asks him the question to shake him up, and move him on. He had chosen to dwell on the situation and to become introspective, it was all he could think of and speak of. He lost sight of the reality that God was in control, and that He would bring His purposes to pass. There is a time to grieve over our adversity and sadness when it comes, but there comes a time when we have to move on in the Lord's strength. Trusting and living in the light of the sovereignty of God, even in our adversity grants us hope.

An Unexpected Visit (v2-4) - Samuel is told to go to Bethlehem, and even though it was a small town in Judah, it was well known. As a prophet, Samuel had a right to go wherever, as the Lord lead, but as we know, this was not so straightforward at this time. Saul was a man who knew that his time was limited, and as such, he would be suspicious of all of Samuel's movements. Saul would surely want to know the details of Samuel's journey and destination. The Lord provided for Samuel all that he needed, and instructed him to take a heifer to make a fellowship offering at Bethlehem for a specific group of people, that would include Jesse and his sons. These instructions were unexpected by Samuel, and now he would have to make an unexpected visit. In all of these things we see the hand of providence, ever working, ever leading, and bringing the Lord's own purposes to pass. In our lives, if we follow after the Lord, we can have confidence that our footsteps are ordered by Him according to His sovereign purposes. The elders of Bethlehem were incredibly anxious as they were notified of Samuel's approach. Samuel alleviates fears with the pointing to the offering, and he instructs them to sanctify themselves. The invitation as it was extended to Jesse and his sons would have been surprising, and for them a high honour. Nobody except the Lord and Samuel knew why they had been invited.

An Unexpected Rejection (v5-7) - Samuel was under the impression that all of the family was present, the problem here was, that for a moment, Samuel made the mistake of walking by sight, not by faith. Samuel had in his mind the impression of what he thought he would be looking for in a king. The men that Samuel saw were fine men, and in fact, he thought he would have to look no further than the first son Eliab. The oil was at the ready, Samuel was ready to anoint, but the Lord directly intervenes to prevent Samuel's hand. God instructs Samuel not to look on what he can see, for what man can see is insignificant, but God looks on the heart. Samuel was looking at the external, but God looked and continues to look on the heart. It is God alone who can search the human heart. The kingdom was only safe in the hands of the Lord, and He had made His choice, and the Lord has to correct Samuel. All too often we think we know what is best, we make choices we think are right, however, often we can get into difficulty. God has the best for us, and so we should be those who submit to His leading, His directing, His will, His path, for in pursuing these things we find our greatest fulfilment and joy.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs