

A Man After God's Own Heart – 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 11:1-12:25

"The Renewal of a Kingdom" – July 2, 2017



Introduction

In asking for a king like all the nations (1 Samuel 8:5, 20), Israel was also rejecting God as their King – in effect, declaring their independence from Him. We tend to think independence is always better, but not when it comes to our relationship to God. There, maturity is measured by how much we rely on Him rather than saying, "I've got this covered on my own!" Israel had been sinful in asking for a king like the nations and when they persisted in their demands, God gave them what they asked for so they would taste the bitter fruits of what they demanded (1 Samuel 8:10-18). Yet even in His judgement, God showed mercy. He gave them what they wanted in appointing Saul (quite the impressive fellow – 1 Samuel 9:1-2) as king. The problem was, he had no experience and didn't act very kingly. After his coronation, Saul goes back to farming, and his critics' doubts about him seem to spread. Chapters 11 & 12 aren't about trusting Saul, but teach us about trusting an all-powerful, all-wise God who promised to deliver Israel through weak vessels, just like Saul.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response.

Sermon Outline

- I. God is faithful to save (11:1-15)
- II. Trust God instead of useless idols (12:1-25)
 - a. 3 Trials: Samuel, God, Israel (12:1-19)
 - b. Israel's guilt and God's mercy (12:20-25)
 - i. For the Christian, your sin does *not* define you (12:20)
 - ii. God is trustworthy, but idols are useless (12:21)
 - iii. God's mercy is bound to His glory (12:22-23)
 - iv. Motivation to trust God comes in *remembering* the great things God has done for us (12:24-25)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [1 Samuel 11:1-15](#)

Jabesh-gilead was east of the Jordan River, exposed to the Ammonites who sat to Israel's east. Israel was surrounded by enemies (*See map on pg. 3). They felt vulnerable and in their fear, struggled to trust God's promise that He would use Saul to deliver them ([9:16](#)). He'd already shown his fear, had no kingly experience and still worked in the field as a farmer! No wonder Saul's skeptics asked in 10:27, "How can this man save us?" And yet, despite their skepticism, the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul, equipped him for the job, and Saul leads Israel to a decisive victory. God is faithful to save!

Saul no doubt felt the pressure to prove himself amidst all the doubts, but when he has the chance to get rid of his critics after the victory, rather than being threatened by them, he shows mercy. Apart from the gospel, there is in each of us a desire to prove our worth and significance to the world around us. What does this restlessness look like in your life? How are you driven to prove your worth, that you've got what it takes? What difference does the gospel make in setting us free from the drive to prove ourselves and find our worth in the approval of the world? What does the gospel say about God's love for us and our identity?

Additional reading: Lamentations 3:22-24, Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 2:9-11

2) Read [1 Samuel 12:1-25](#)

Trusting God can be difficult! So to prove that God is reliable, Samuel sets up 3 mock trials: for Samuel (12:1-5), God (12:6-11), and Israel (12:12-19). Why do we (*like Israel*) need such frequent reminders of who God is and the great things He has done for us? What are ways we can encourage and remind each other as a church family? Even more specific, who can you reach out to this week to pray for and encourage with God's word?

This text shows how God graciously refuses to give up on His children, even when we blow it. Samuel's instruction for them in the end is helpful for us to reconsider. Are their ways you're tempted to believe your sin defines you? That you're stuck in your sin? Read [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#). What difference does Paul's word in v11 make in how you think about your identity as a Christian, "...such were some of you"? In 1 Samuel 12:22, we learn that God's mercy is bound not to our performance but His glory. What difference does that make? Why is it good news that God's actions are driven by His passion for His glory?

Additional reading: Hebrews 3:12-13, Ephesians 1:6, Proverbs 24:16, Zephaniah 3:17

*An excellent resource to think more about the goodness of God's actions being driven by His passion for His glory is John Piper's book, [Desiring God](#). You can pick it up at the bookstall if interested!

Prayer of Response

Spend time praying together in response to God's word for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistum.com/media.php?pageID=6>

*Map of Jabesh-gilead

