

# 1 SAMUEL 9:10-16 - LOOKING FOR A LEADER

## Study 10

### THE FRUSTRATIONS OF LIFE

The previous Church I served at was Tenthill Baptist Church. It was a church in a farming community, and hence, was full of farmers.

I would often hear about the frustrations of farm life; how the weeds were in fact a curse, which pumps had broken, how much water remained in the bore, how low the market price was for broccoli!

Just another day on the farm. The passage before us opens in a similar manner of farming frustration, the donkeys had run away. Why would the Bible concern itself with lost donkeys? Well, the passage unfolds in an incredible way, to display the contours of God's providence. There's a fruitless search, a servant's suggestion, and meeting with a prophet.

How was Saul to know all this? Life's like that for all of us, most days seem just so ordinary. But Samuel had another perspective, "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man" (9:16).

But first, introductions! We meet Saul and his family. Saul is tall and handsome, born into a family of good heritage and wealth. He would have been picked for the Basketball team, and the girl's would have swooned over him. So far, he checks all the right boxes for someone who would be king. But would he be a godly king? Or would he be a king like the other nations had (8:5)?

### READ 1 Samuel 9:1-2

### QUESTIONS

1. What features of this passage stand out to you?

### PROVIDENCE (9:3-21)

"Providence" is God's way of providing for the needs of his people. Namely, God's mysterious, unguessable way of ruling the world, and sustaining his people, and doing so in the most ordinary of ways.

Saul begins his day engaging in the ordinary affairs of everyday life. Searching for donkey, ended up learning that he would be king. All this was the mysterious hand of God. We know this because of the explanation given in 9:15-17, ‘God will send Samuel a man!’ Saul’s story is to be understood from God’s perspective. These ordinary and coincidental events were being directed by God.

If we only search for God in miraculous events, we will miss a deal of what He is doing!

### **READ 1 Samuel 9:3-21**

#### **QUESTIONS**

2. What features of this passage stand out to you?
3. Does God’s providence only operate in the lives of Biblical figures? Or does it operate in our lives as well? (cf. Prov. 16:9; 20:24).
4. Have there been times in your own life when you have seen God’s providence in the way quite ordinary things have come together into a wonderful providential pattern?
5. Why is it irreverent to expect God always to explain his ways to us when we do not understand them? What should we be doing instead?
6. Does Israel’s rejection of God stifle God’s merciful providence for them?

### **ASSURANCE (9:22-10:9)**

From verse 22 onward, the story changes scenes a number of times. The overriding theme is the honour displayed to Saul, the incoming king. As well instructions and signs provided to Saul to provide assurance of his kingly call (10:1-9).

The First sign that Saul would encounter would be encountering two men who would inform him that the donkeys had been found.

The second sign would force Saul to acknowledge his anointed status, as three men going ‘up to God’ to worship would give some of the gifts designated for God, to Saul.

The third sign would be most unusual and would occur near Saul’s hometown (10:5-7). Saul would join a band of prophets as they prophesy.

Samuel’s predictions were precise, not a bland generalisation from a fortune cookie. Here was a true prophet! The signs would signify to Samuel that he has God’s authorisation to be king.

However, we should note the balance of this assurance, Saul was to receive the power of the Holy Spirit (10:6-7), and to obey the direction of God’s Word through Samuel (10:8). The Holy Spirit empowers and equips, but that power to be exercised in obedience to the Word of God. The Word and Spirit can never contradict each other.

This is a message to Christian who would crave dramatic experiences of the Holy Spirit, but have little enthusiasm for God’s Word or holy living.

### **READ - 1 SAMUEL 9:22-10:9**

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What features of this passage stand out to you?
2. ‘The Spirit and the Word must never be separated.’ When are some of the dangers when the pursuit of spiritual experiences are separated from the word of God?

#### **EQUIPMENT (10:10–13)**

Verse 9 assures us that these three signs did occur. In 10:10-13 we receive a detailed account of the third sign. Perhaps to show us that Saul relay had been equipped by the Holy Spirit to be king.

Saul’s prophesying was certainly out of character, and causes to onlookers to ask “...Is Saul also among the prophets?” (10:11). We might say, “what are the chances?” One man says “And who is their father?” (12). Meaning, consider the source. This statement was most likely referring to the prophets, and therefore the man was suggesting that if God is the one who inspires the

prophets then surely he is able to grip Saul as well. God was equipping Saul for the role of King. We see another example of the Holy Spirit's equipping for a specific task in Exodus 21:2-5. Bezalel is filled with the Holy Spirit in preparation to build the tabernacle.

But should we conclude that God has sent a true deliverer? Was the heart and spirit given to Saul one of salvation, or simply a heart and empowerment for his role as King?

Biblical wisdom would tell us that the way to evaluate genuine salvation is to observe the lifestyle that follows. In the pages ahead, Saul had great military victories, but was constantly disobedient to God's word (1 Sam. 13, 15)! In chapter 16 we read "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him."

This side of the cross, we have the promise that as we call upon the name of the Lord, he will give us a new heart of salvation, and that the Holy Spirit will reside in us permanently and will equip for service in his kingdom.

Saul certainly had a religious experience, he was equipped to be a military king, but in the end he was certainly a king 'like the other nations.' Show no regard to obedience to the word of God

### **READ - 1 SAMUEL 10:10-13**

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What features of this passage stand out to you?

### **CONCEALMENT(10:14-16)**

The story closes with a conversation between Saul and his uncle.

Saul's uncle says... "Where did you go?"

Saul replies "Well I was looking for the donkeys... we couldn't find them... so instead we went to Samuel..."

Saul's uncle says 'What did Samuel tell you?

Saul says... 'just that the donkey's had been found.'

End of conversation. Saul doesn't divulge the information about his kingship. It's interesting that the only people who know what's going on are Samuel and Saul.

This reminds us that the work of God is often concealed. The Christian life often reflects that pattern, usually being quite ordinary.

But nonetheless the kingdom of God progresses. It causes God's people to remain faithful not requiring them to live from one spectacular miracle to the next, but certainly trusting in the hidden hand of God's providence, that directs the path of the faithful.

**READ - 1 SAMUEL 10:14-16**

**QUESTIONS**

1. What features of this passage stand out to you?
2. How does God's Word enable us to see more deeply into things, and do we prayerfully seek such discernment as far as the events of our own lives are concerned?