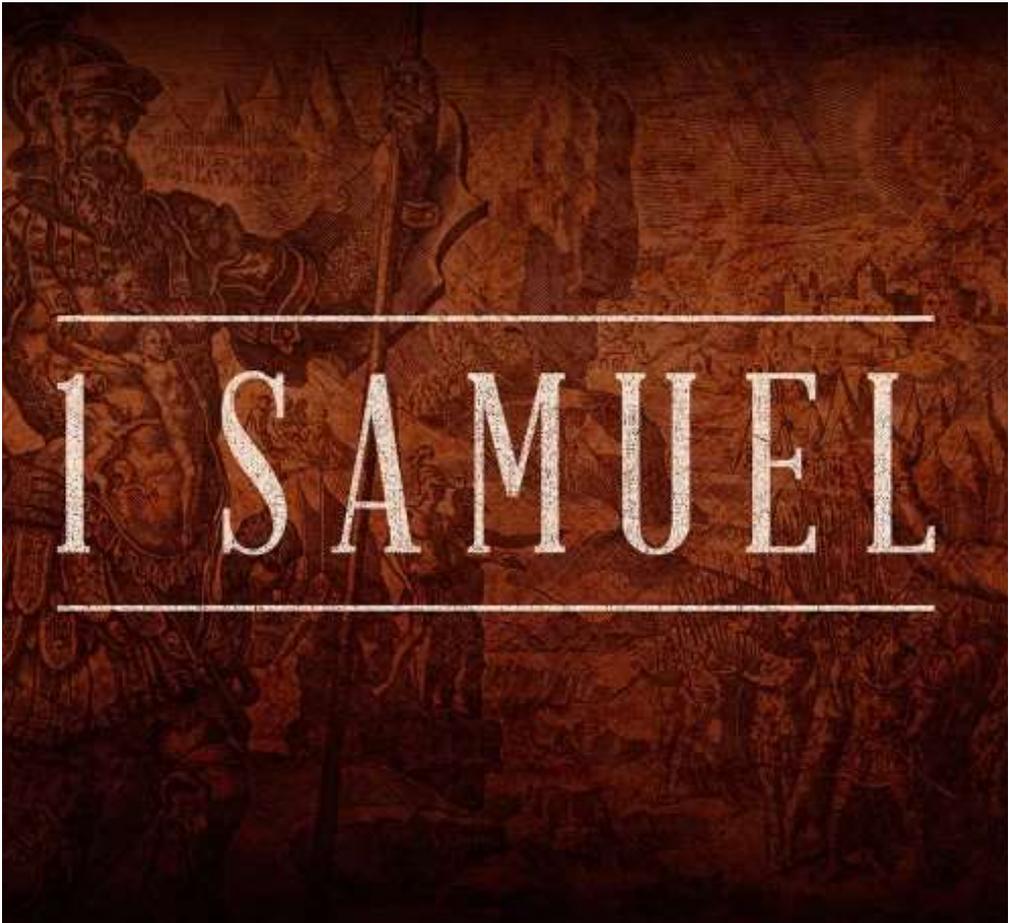


Let's Worship God

28th Sept. - 3rd Oct. 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 23 - The Point of the Story

Before we delve into this chapter we need to take a step back and see the frame in which it sits. I'm sure many of you have read, or were forced to read, George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' - his story about animals who take control of the farm from the abusive farmer, before the leaders become just like those they overthrew. It's an allegory of communist Russia. Perhaps you, like me, enjoyed the story about pigs, sheep, and windmills until your English teacher started drawing out the lessons about the failures and hypocrisy of Communism. It seemed to spoil a perfectly good story, but the lessons were the whole point of the story.

1 Samuel is a bit like 'Animal Farm'. It is a story about kings, successions, battles, and fugitives, full of examples to follow and avoid. But to see it only like this is to miss the point of the story. It's not that 1 Samuel is an allegory like 'Animal Farm', a fable told to illustrate a point; it is history. But its point is not to inform us, entertain us, nor merely even to exemplify to us how to live as Christians. The point of this history is to point us to something else. This story of a king rising from obscurity to glory points us to a greater reality, a greater king, rising from obscurity to glory - Jesus.

Jesus himself taught this. In John 5:39 he declares that, "the Scriptures bear witness about me". See Luke 24:25-27 and 44 as well. Yes, 1 Samuel does give us lessons to learn and examples to follow, but you do not just slide into David's shoes in this story. David is more than you and me; he is the anointed king, the messiah, the christ. The point of the story is to point us to THE Christ. This week let's look at 1 Samuel 23 with these Christ-centred glasses on. They will help us see Christ more clearly.

Questions

1. Having read this chapter, what are your first impressions of how it points us to Jesus?
2. Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18 to see what happens when we "behold" Christ in his Word?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for "transformation" (2 Corinthians 3:18) as we behold the glory of the Lord this week.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 72:1-3, 14-16 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 23:1-6 - The Messiah we Need

It is harvest time. Hard work has brought in the crops, with the grain being stored at the threshing floors outside the towns. However, these precious food supplies are being raided by the Philistines (verse 1). God's people are under attack. David does three things that show us he is the messiah-king God's people need in their time of crisis. As he does these three things, he points to the better Messiah who we need to save us.

First, David seeks God's will (verses 2 and 4). There's an irony here - Saul's name means 'ask'. Repeatedly Saul failed to 'saul' God, that is, ask for direction; instead, he did his own will. David however, 'saules' God - he asks God for direction. It is emphasised that Abiathar brought the Ephod to David from Nob (verse 6). It's not clear what exactly Abiathar brought; the word 'ephod' can refer to different things. Whatever it is - perhaps the Urim and Thummim stones from the priestly robe - it is clear that David wants to, is able to, and does seek God's will through it.

Secondly, David obeys God's will. David is commanded to go and save Keilah (verse 4), a town in Israel, so David goes and saves Keilah (verse 5). God's people were under attack and needed a hero. David obeys God, putting himself and his men at risk, despite their fear (verse 3). Thirdly, David saves God's people from attack by their enemies (verse 5).

In these three ways David, as God's messiah, is pointing to a greater Messiah, who would seek God's will, obey God, and save God's people. This is tremendous good news! Our greatest need is obedience to God's will. Every sin is disobedience to God's will, and without obedience we cannot please God. Jesus Christ is able to supply the obedience we lack, and he's able to save us from the curse of disobedience. God's Messiah sought God's will and obeyed God's will - he is the Saviour we need!

Questions

1. What qualifies Jesus to be the Messiah-Saviour we need?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for Christ's hard-fought, obedience-won righteousness.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 40:7-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 23:6-24 - The Messiah Betrayed

Geography is important in this chapter. In the first 13 verses Keilah is mentioned 14 times. In verses 14-28 there are 13 references to places. If we were to look at these places on a map we would see that Keilah, Ziph, Maon are all in Judah's tribal territory. David is from the tribe of Judah - this is his territory, and these are his people. The closing chapters of Judges show us that tribal loyalties were strong in those days. These are David's kith and kin, his flesh and family.

How is the Messiah treated by his own people - he is betrayed! We can maybe understand this. Saul has just destroyed Nob because of his paranoia that they were harbouring David. Yet it sickens us too - they willingly betray one of their own. And it happens again in verse 19, this time the Ziphites from the tribe of Judah. In my primary school we would have called them "tell tale tits" and cast slurs on the knitting ability of their granny. This is hard to fathom - not once, but twice, David is betrayed by his own people, Judah. In Keilah especially - he'd come down to save them! Yet they betrayed him to serve their own ends and protect themselves. God's messiah betrayed by the very people he'd come to save.

The actions of Jonathan in verse 16 and 17 are stark in contrast. He was next-in-line for the throne. If anyone had a reason to betray David, he did. Yet, he comes to strengthen and encourage David. There's a lesson in Jonathan's actions. How do you encourage people in a crisis - you remind them of God's promises.

But how galling for David. Some of you know this pain: being betrayed by those close to you. Think of it: David came to his own and his own would not receive him; those whom he had come to save seek to hand him over to his enemy. They should have received him as their king. Instead they cry out, "We have no King but Saul." Think on it.

Questions

1. Read John 1:11; Luke 11:34 and Luke 19:42 in preparation for tomorrow.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for eyes of faith to behold the Messiah in the messiah.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 54:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 23:6-24 - THE Messiah Betrayed

It's shocking that David, as God's king, could be betrayed by the people he came to save, his own people. Yet it's not as shocking as the betrayal that David points forward to - Jesus' betrayal.

Jesus came to his own - the Jews, his own kith and kin - and his own would not receive him (John 1:11). The very people he came to save and deliver. The ones he longed to gather as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but who would not come to him (Luke 11:34). The ones of whom he said, with tears in his eyes, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42). He came to save them, yet they called out, "We have no king but Caesar. Crucify him!" (John 19:15). He was tied up and handed over by his own people. Think of the symbolism of his betrayer - Judas is the Greek form of Judah. He was responsible as an individual yet he also stands as a figurehead for them all, all the people of Judah. Jesus was betrayed by those he came to save, his own kith and kin.

David gives us an insight into the pain our Messiah had to endure to save us - a heart breaking-betrayal by the ones he loved, cared for, healed, and prayed for. He left the glory of Heaven for them, and should have been welcomed with joy. They should have worshipped and served him. Instead they rejected him.

While we are not Jews from first century Judea, this is a betrayal we are complicit in. He was our flesh and blood, one of our race. We should have welcomed him and rejoiced over him. Instead our hearts cry, "Away with this man" (John 19:15). If you are not a Christian today, do not think that things are ok between you and Jesus. Your rejection of his rule over you is a hate-filled, bitter betrayal. Don't think of Judas as the most wicked person ever - think of him as you. Friends, every sin we commit as believers is a betrayal of our Messiah, our older brother, our kith and kin. Our sin is as wretched as the Ziphites and people of Keilah.

Questions

1. In what way is our sin a betrayal of Jesus?
2. Are those who betrayed Jesus without hope? See Acts 2:23 and 37-38.

Prayer Points

1. Ask God for a clear sight of how our sin is a bitter betrayal of our Lord.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 41:7-12 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 23:15-29 - The Messiah Delivered by God's Intervention

We might think it would be impossible for David to recover from these betrayals by his own kinsmen. Saul thought he had him cornered at Keilah (verse 7) and is closing in on him at Horesh (verse 26). It looks like the game is up and all is lost for David, but God intervenes and delivers.

Look at how God delivers. First he delivers by his Word - he tells David to go (verses 11-12). Then he delivers by his providence. In his sovereign control of all things, just as the trap is shutting, a messenger comes to Saul to warn him of a Philistine attack that needs repelled immediately. God has summoned his enemy's forces and directed them to deliver his servant. God intervenes to deliver his servant.

This is another pointer towards God's deliverance of David's greater descendant, Jesus. God delivered him when all seemed lost. He hung dead and lifeless on the Cross, shamed, mocked, and under a curse. Satan seems to have won the war of all wars. But God intervenes and delivers - he raises his King to life on the third day.

In times of bitter pain and despair, when you've been let down by those close to you, where do you look? Look to the God who intervenes and delivers. He has already intervened to deliver you from the bitterest enemy - sin. He will intervene by his Word of promise and hope, and by his sovereign control of all things. We may see no way out, but you do not see all the options. You are not Lord of the universe, history and all hosts (forces or armies). He has ways and means of delivering that you can never imagine. Read church history and Christian biography and you will see some of the unimaginable ways God intervenes to deliver his people. Crucifixion couldn't stop him, and neither can your circumstances.

Questions

1. Can you look back in church history, or, better, in your life, and see any ways that God has intervened to deliver you?
2. Why does his deliverance of his Messiah, Jesus, give us confidence for our own deliverance?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for faith to believe God's Word which promises deliverance and for faith to act on the instruction and guidance given in it.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 89:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 23:15-29 - The Rock of Deliverance

Let's finish this week thinking about the rock in verse 28. David's men were about to be caught, as Saul's forces came round the other side of the mountain, closing in before a last minute intervention delivered them. This mountain became a monument - it was known thereafter as 'the Rock of Escape'. Probably 'the Rock of Divisions' or 'the Rock of Separations' gets more of the sense of meaning. It was the rock that separated or divided David from his enemy - the rock that protected him from his enemy like a screen divides and protects the cashier from the Covid-carrying customer. David and his men, and indeed the whole district, learned an important lesson that day - God delivers.

That's the lesson God would have us remember from this chapter - God divides his people from their enemies like a protective shield; he delivers them. As you face significant challenges in your life, the troubles of today, remember that God delivers. God is a God who saves. Sometimes he removes the problem, sometimes he removes us from the problem, sometimes he sustains us in the problem. Whichever method he uses, he is working to deliver you.

David seemed to mentally return to the wilderness of Maon and this Rock many times in life - his Psalms are full of references to God as a rock (Psalms 18:2, 31, 47; 27:5; 61:2; 62:2, 6-7, among others). In times of trouble we too would do well to return to the memories of God's past deliverances. The Lord's Table is a natural time to do this. There we regularly remember that God delivers.

David wrote Psalm 54 at this time and its words sum up the lessons of Ziph, Keilah, and Maon: "Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life...With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good. For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies." (Psalm 54:4, 6-7).

Questions

1. Think of times in your life when God has: removed the problem from you; removed you from the problem; or sustained you in the problem.

Prayer Points

1. Praise your helper and the upholder of your life (Psalm 54:4).
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Praise: Psalm 63 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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