

Outwardly Impressive, Inwardly Deficient

1 Samuel 9-10

I. INTRO:

- A. In the previous chapter, the nation of Israel begged Samuel to give them a king
- B. They had four reasons:
 - 1. Samuel was getting old
 - 2. Samuel's sons were a disgrace
 - 3. They wanted to be like every other nation
 - 4. Their enemies, the Philistines, were encroaching on their nation
- C. Their request for a king, according to Samuel, was "evil"
 - 1. It meant that they were rejecting God as their king
 - 2. It meant they didn't want to trust God to provide for and protect them
 - 3. It meant that they didn't want to be holy / set apart; they wanted to blend in with all the other nations
- D. What kind of leader are the people asking for? Let's find out.
- E. I am going to be skipping over some verses here and there for the sake of time

II. *1 Samuel 9 [1] There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish... a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. [2] And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.*

- A. Saul's name means "asked for"
 - 1. If we were reading this in Hebrew, it would bring your mind back to 1 Samuel 8:10, "So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him."
 - 2. Essentially, it's as if the narrator is telling you, "Here's what you asked for"
- B. What do we see about Saul?
 - 1. Benjaminite → Smallest tribe w/ a gnarly history
 - 2. He's tall. He's handsome. He's rich. → Just what you asked for
 - a) More specifically, this could be translated as "better" → "Nobody is better" than Saul... Like Gaston from Beauty and the Beast

III. *[3] Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." [4] And ... [they looked around for days], but they did not find them*

- A. **Alas**, there's a problem, and I don't mean to be **crass**, but Saul can't find his donkey. One day he was sitting on it working out in the field and now it's gone
- B. Tall, rich, handsome Saul and his servant go out looking for the donkeys and they are nowhere to be found! This is a big problem... huge...
 - 1. Philistine invasion is nothing compared to this geopolitical nightmare
- C. What's the point? Saul's just a country boy far removed from the politics of it all

IV. *[5] When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." [6] But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and*

he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.” [7] Then Saul said to his servant, “But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?” [8] The servant answered Saul again, “Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.” [9] (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer,” for today’s “prophet” was formerly called a seer.) [10] And Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.

- A. Now Zuph was the great great grandpa of Samuel, who this book is named after
 - 1. 1 Samuel 1:1 → the area is named after him; This is Samuel’s hometown
- B. 1 Samuel 3:20 said that, *“Everyone in Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that SAMUEL was established as the prophet.”*
 - 1. Well, everyone but Saul... and his servant... they have no idea
 - 2. Almost a dozen times in this chapter they refer to Samuel as “him” or “the man” or “the prophet” or “the seer”
 - 3. How does Saul NOT know who Samuel is? He doesn’t even know his name? How is this guy going to lead anything? He’s in the dark!
- V. *[11] As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?” [12] They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. [13] As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.” [14] So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw **Samuel** coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.*
 - A. This seer guy is important. I mean, they won’t even go ahead and worship without him. They won’t eat without him. Everyone is waiting for him.
- VI. *[15] Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: [16] “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” [17] When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.” [18] Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?” [19] Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. [20] As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father’s house?” [21] Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”*
 - A. We peek behind the curtain: God had revealed to Samuel yesterday:
 - 1. A man from Benjamin will come

2. You will anoint him to be prince over my people
3. He will save them from the Philistines
- B. Saul shows up & God nudges Samuel: "This is the guy"
- C. Saul: "Do you know who the Prophet is?"
 1. Samuel: "...<crickets>...Yea. It's me. Join me for a meal. Also, you can stop looking for your donkeys."
 - a) Samuel tells him about the donkeys right away b/c he knows that's all Saul is thinking about → distracted by it incessantly
- D. And then Samuel says this funny, kind of sarcastic thing: *"And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you?"*
- E. In modern vernacular: "You're the one all Israel is waiting for... the cream of the crop... you check all the boxes to be king...you're what they asked for."
- F. Meanwhile, Saul has no idea what's going on.

VII. *[22] Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. [23] And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'" [24] So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul... [26] Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Up, that I may send you on your way." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. [27] As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God."*

- A. Our chapter began with the ordinary journey of a guy looking for his donkeys and ended with him finding a WORD from GOD. What's it going to be?!

VIII. *1 Samuel 10 [1] Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. [2] When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' [3] Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. [4] And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. [5] After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. [6] Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. [7] Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. [8] Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice*

peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

- A. Samuel anoints him → a sign saying "You're the guy God is choosing"
 - B. Kisses him → a sign of respect from the most respected man in Israel
 - C. Speaks over him (the word from God):
 - 1. You shall reign as prince (God is king... you are prince)
 - 2. You shall save your people from their enemies (Saul: "What enemies?")
 - D. Three signs are going to confirm this. (Why the signs? B/C Saul is not going to want to believe it... and he is not going to want to follow through on it... so God is giving him three signs so that he has no excuse...)
 - 1. Encounter at Rachel's tomb (reminding him of his ancestry & promise)
 - 2. Encounter at Bethel (meat / wine / bread = staples of provision; reminding you that God is giving you all you need)
 - 3. Encounter at Gibeah...Saul's hometown... where there is a garrison of Philistines
 - a) <screech> Hold up. There's a Philistine garrison, a fort, in Saul's hometown and he was oblivious to the threat?
 - E. Once these signs occur, Saul, two things will occur:
 - 1. The Spirit of the Lord will RUSH upon you, and you will prophesy
 - 2. Spirit rushing → Used three times prior to this in Judges. Every time Samson absolutely ANNIHILATED somebody (lion, philistines). So... what happens when the Spirit of the Lord rushes on a leader in the OT?
 - F. So two things will occur:
 - 1. You will annihilate the Philistine garrison (thereby fulfilling the Word spoken over you to save your people from their oppressors)
 - a) Look at v7: "do what your hand finds to do"
 - 2. You will prophesy w/ the prophets
 - 3. If this follows a normal pattern of things, then they will make Saul leader
 - G. Maybe this guy can be king. Sounds pretty baller
- IX. [9] When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart.*
- A. New heart → I love it. We all need it. Is the old one still in there somewhere?
- X. And all these signs came to pass that day. [10] When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him...*
- A. Alright, here we go, baby
- XI. ...and he prophesied among them. [11] And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" [12] And a man of the place answered, "And who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" [13] When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.*
- A. Okay. The prophecy thing happened, but what about the Rambo scene?
 - B. We have been led to expect Saul, like Samson before him, to launch some kind of attack on the enemy and to defeat them by God's power.
 - 1. But the Philistines aren't even mentioned... it's like Saul doesn't care

- C. As one commentary pointed out: “Notice that from the beginning of this chapter we have not heard a word from Saul. We have no indication of what he thought of the things Samuel told him, nor of his reaction to the things that happened to him. Now we see no action at the very point where action had been called for. Saul did nothing.”
- D. The people are shocked by Saul’s prophesying and don’t know what to make of it
- E. If it had been accompanied by some butt-kicking, they would react a little more enthusiastically. Instead, he becomes a proverb. Am I being too harsh on Saul?
- XII. *[14] Saul’s uncle said to him and to his servant, “Where did you go?”*
- A. More accurately, “Where have YOU been? We didn’t know if you were dead, missing, run away, and now you come back prophesying and your hair is slicked back like you’re Ponyboy from the Outsiders.”
- XIII. *And he said, “To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.” [15] And Saul’s uncle said, “Please tell me what Samuel said to you.” [16] And Saul said to his uncle, “He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found.” But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.*
- A. Saul’s first words are about the donkeys, guys. The donkeys.
- B. The uncle ain’t buying it, “What did Samuel tell you?” // Saul: “About the donkeys”
- XIV. *[17] Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah. [18] And he said to the people of Israel, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.’ [19] But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, ‘Set a king over us.’ Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.”*
- [20] Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. [21] He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. [22] So they inquired again of the LORD, “Is there a man still to come?” and the LORD said, **“Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.”** [23] Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. [24] And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!”*
- [25] Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. [26] Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. [27] But some worthless fellows said, “How can this man save us?” And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace.*
- XV. SUMMARY

- A. Saul is outwardly impressive when we first meet him (tall, rich, handsome)
- B. But he's also inwardly deficient. He's ignorant... and a coward:
 - 1. Doesn't realize his nation is at war
 - 2. Doesn't know who Samuel is
 - 3. Can't find his donkeys
 - 4. Needs to get advice and provision from his servant
 - 5. Doesn't trounce the Philistines
 - 6. Hides in the baggage

C. Saul is outwardly impressive, but inwardly deficient.

- 1. Saul is what they asked for... a king like all the nations around them →
 - a) By the way, being tall, rich and handsome is how most nations choose their rulers, and it's a terrible way to do it
 - b) It's also a terrible way to choose a spouse, partner, etc
- D. Despite Saul's internal deficiencies, God is willing to give him everything he needs to succeed.
 - 1. Anointing... signs... a new heart... instructions... two hands to rip apart some Philistines...
 - 2. The context is clear (scholars agree), Saul is supposed to attack and, therefore, establish himself as God's new leader
 - 3. But Saul fails to execute the Word from God
 - 4. Saul might be anointed, but his heart really isn't in the right place...
 - 5. Israel is going to need a different kind of king...
 - 6. **Saul is outwardly impressive, but inwardly deficient**

XVI. What about us?

- A. It would be easy to end this sermon saying, "Don't be like Saul," and there's something there for sure, but the reality is that we are exactly like Saul in our own frail humanity
 - 1. Some outwardly more impressive than others, but without Christ lacking tremendously
- B. But the Bible says that when we turn to Jesus and trust, he cuts out that old nature of sin and gives us a new nature
- C. The Bible says if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, behold the new has come!
- D. The Bible says that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion
- E. 1 John 2:12-14 says that if you are in Christ
 - 1. Your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.
 - 2. You know Him who is from the beginning.
 - 3. You have overcome the evil one.
 - 4. You know the Father.
 - 5. You are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
- F. You might not always feel it, but although **you are outwardly unimpressive, you are inwardly sufficient in Christ (This is the GOSPEL)**
- G. **We are outwardly unimpressive, but inwardly sufficient in Christ**

- H. Outwardly unimpressive: Taken out by a pebble; Diets start on Monday; “Never do it again...”
- I. On the inside? A weight of glory that we cannot comprehend, shining through the cracks, slowly transforming us from one stage of glory to the next
 - 1. What that means is that in Christ you actually CAN obey God
 - a) It’s actually one of the fruits of transformation
- J. The danger for us, I think, is not keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith
 - 1. The danger is distraction
 - a) We are distracted by donkeys while the world falls apart
 - b) We have the very power that raised Christ from the dead, but we hide in the baggage.
- K. Do you want to be like Saul, a distracted coward?
 - 1. It’s easy. Care more about your toys, hobbies, job, social media.
 - 2. It’s easy. Turn away from the hard stuff. Don’t take risks. Let other people struggle when you know you can help them.
- L. Being like Saul is easy. But here’s the rub: *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self discipline.”* →
 - 1. In other words: God has given YOU all that you need in Christ Jesus, but he won’t force you to obey.
 - 2. You are inwardly victorious in Christ. He has given you all that you need to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- M. So, inwardly sufficient Child of God: What’s the last thing God clearly told you to do that you have yet to obey? Do it this week.