1 SAMUEL: IN SEARCH OF A KING
(TALK 8/9: THE KING WHO TRUSTS GOD)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CONNECT: What is one aspect of self-importance that you can hand over to Jesus?

WARM-UP

1. Can you give a summary of everything that has happened up to this point in 1 Samuel so far?
2. Have you ever felt frustrated by the speed at which God seems to be (apparently) working? Is our frustration misplaced? What do you think is really behind how we feel in this situation?

READ 1 Samuel 24:1-12 & 26:1-13

3. How are these two scenarios really similar? How are they different?
4. In worldly terms, how does it seem that Saul has the advantage? How does the Lord turn this around?
5. If David knows that he is God’s new anointed king, why doesn’t he take Saul’s life?
6. Have you ever been tempted to ‘rush ahead’ of God? How so?
7. What helped David patiently wait for God’s timing? How might that help us as we also await God’s purposes and promises to be fully realised?
8. If you had to name one main difference between Saul and David, what would you say? With regards to this ‘one thing’, do you identify more with Saul or with David?

READ 1 Samuel 26:17-24

9. How difficult had the life been for David in recent years? Why do you think he can’t understand why Saul wants him dead?
10. How might God have used David’s suffering to prepare him for his future as king? Do you think God can ever use our suffering for his purposes? Can you think of an example?
11. As Christians, should we expect to suffer for Jesus? How should we act amidst suffering?
12. How is David strengthened to continue trusting the Lord amidst suffering? How can we be strengthened to keep on following Jesus amidst suffering?
13. What is David’s ultimate source of hope? How do we have even more reason to hope?
14. Does it make any difference to you that you can be certain of future glory? Under what conditions?
15. Why wouldn’t Saul bow his knee to David? What prevents us from bowing our knee to Jesus?

APPLY: As you trust in the Lord, how can you grow this week in either patience, endurance, or hope?

PRAY: Gracious God we thank you that we can confidently put our trust in you. Please help us to grow in patience, endurance, and hope - that we might never rush ahead of you, trust in your justice even amidst suffering, and be secure in our hope. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

For sermons and additional resources, visit STBARTS.COM.AU
GOING DEEPER RESOURCES

1 SAMUEL: IN SEARCH OF A KING
(TALK 8/9: THE KING WHO TRUSTS GOD)

On Your Front Line this Week

• How does following Jesus transform how you care and engage with others on your front line?
  What might be the next step you can take?

For Families

• Watch “David and Saul” (1 Samuel 24):
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41vnmcocZ1A

Audio and Video

• AUDIO: “David’s Mercy” by Tim Keller:
  https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/david-s-mercy-8866/
• AUDIO “How to Love a Fool” by David Bisgrove:
• AUDIO: “1 Samuel 22,24,27” by Mark Watts:
• AUDIO: “The King Who Trusts God” by Charlie Skrine:
  https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/54423/
• AUDIO: “Generous Treatment” by Richard Bewes:
  https://www.allsouls.org/Media/Player.aspx?
  show_popout=true&show_media=137481&show_file=227110

Key Resource

“1 Samuel For You” by Tim Chester is an excellent introduction to 1 Samuel that will be suitable for people reading at a range of levels. The guide includes helpful discussion of the content of 1 Samuel, along with plenty of practical and devotional application. Watch an introduction to the book by Tim Chester.

https://youtu.be/8FIBKzhn0dw

Other Helpful Resources

• “1 and 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless” by Andrew Reid (“Reading the Bible Today Series”)
• “1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart” by Dale Ralph Davis (“Focus on the Bible Series”)

For sermons and additional resources, visit STBARTS.COM.AU
TALK 8/9 (ACTS SERIES): 16/06/19
“The King who Trusts God”
by the Rev’d Adam Lowe

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 24-26 (Focus on 1 Samuel 26)

David is God’s king-in-waiting, but he’s also a king on the run!

- In fact, today as we arrive at chapters 24-26, you might be wondering, what on earth is taking so long?!
- We know where this story is headed, we know the outcome, why can’t we just get there already?
- Chapter 8, the people had asked for a king,
  Chapter 10, God gave them Saul - precisely the king whom they wanted,
  only for God to reject Saul in Chapter 15,
  anoint a new king - David - in Chapter 16,
  who wins an amazing victory against Goliath in Chapter 17.
- The old king has been rejected;
  The new king has been anointed;
  David has been victorious.
- When you turn over the page to chapter 18,
  it’s easy to assume, I’m a bit of a narrative genius, I can see where this is going!
  I know exactly what will happen next! David will be enthroned!
- But that’s of course not what occurs.
  In fact, we’ll have to wait all the way until 2 Samuel 5 for that!
• Instead, as we saw last week, what ensues, is a cat and mouse chase, between Saul and David, as Saul tries everything to kill David, David escapes, only for the situation to keep on repeating.

• And it’s easy to ask, what is God doing?

• Maybe you’ve had times in your life when you’ve wondered that very question! Asking, when will God decisively act, when will he bring about his purposes? Projecting a bit of ourselves on David, we can wonder, isn’t he frustrated? Why isn’t he throwing his arms up in despair, and taking things into his own hands?

• And the answer is clear: because unlike Saul, David trusts in the Lord… desiring not to serve himself, but to serve God.

• even when it doesn’t make sense,
  even when it could be hurried along,
  even when it hurts. //

• David trusts in the Lord.
• Focusing on chapter 26, but touching on the two previous chapters as well, we’ll see that David’s trust in God is characterised by three things. Patience, Endurance, and Hope.

#1 PATIENCE: TRUSTING IN GOD’S TIMING \ 26:6-16

First, David’s trust in the Lord is characterised by PATIENCE.

• David knows that he is God’s chosen king,
  even Saul knows that David is God’s chosen king.

• But still not wanting to submit to God’s plans,
  Saul is going down kicking and screaming, clutching the crown, doing everything in his power to try and be rid of David.

• And so we read…1 Samuel 26, verse 1...

The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?” So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand select Israelite troops, to search there for David. (26:1-2)

• This is exactly the same move that Saul made back in chapter 24 when he was informed that David was up in the Desert of En Gedi.

• In both instances David has been scattered into exile, with his men, away from Saul, only for Saul to receive intel concerning David’s whereabouts, and then dispatch 3000 of his select, elite troops, to go and ‘search’ for David.
But when he arrives, both in chapters 24 and 26, something surprising happens.

- That despite Saul looking absolutely invincible, **3000 men strong**, it’s actually David who ends up having the upper-hand, and its Saul’s life that is precariously hanging within the grasp of David’s reach.
- Yet in both instances, **with the opportunity to take Saul’s life**, David spares him.
- **So along the road in Chapter 24...** as Saul goes with his 3000 men to find David, he stops in a cave to relieve himself, even kings with a mighty army need a toilet break, only to enter into the very cave in which David and his men are hiding.
- **In Chapter 26...** Saul, having received intel once again concerning David’s whereabouts, stops to encamp for the night, even kings with a mighty army need to sleep, only for David and Abishai to sneak up to Saul, whilst the entire army is encamped around him.
- Relieving oneself in a dark cave, and sound asleep feeling protected! Can you imagine a more vulnerable position to be in?
- Saul is right within David’s grasp! Finally, this succession of monarchs can be accelerated and made complete, Finally, David can take up the very throne which God has anointed him for.
- **That’s why the men in the cave, in chapter 24, who probably can hardly believe their eyes, say:**

> “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’” (24:4)

- Abishai expresses something similar to David when they find Saul asleep, saying:

> “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won’t strike him twice.” (26:8)

- **This all could be sorted!** Everyone is thinking, hoorah! Today is the day! Look, David - the promise you have from God to be king, surely that day has arrived, surely today is the day of the Lord!
  **Can you imagine how tempting that would be for David! One thrust of the spear!**
- But David will have none of it. In both cases he tells them to not destroy Saul, not only because Saul was anointed by God, not only because from evildoers come evil deeds, **but because David knows that it is all in the Lord’s timing, and that if the Lord wants Saul dead, then that was up to God, not David. David knows that WHEN the Lord wants him to be king, the Lord will do it.**
- In fact, as David cuts off the corner of the robe of Saul in chapter 24, instead of feeling smug, he’s conscience-stricken because he’s over stepped the mark.
Saul constantly rushed ahead of God, doing whatever he wanted, but David wants none of that, unwilling to do anything apart from God, even when he could quite easily have tried to explain it as God’s will, even when everyone around him would have spurred him on to do it! Even though David knows that he will be king, he is absolutely unwilling to take a shortcut, to rush ahead, because if it is not the Lord’s doing, then he wants no part of it.

I wonder if you can think of something in your life right now that you’re waiting on the Lord for. It can be something good, something we know that is within God’s good plans for us, but that doesn’t give us any right to rush ahead of God’s timing. To try and force it, or accelerate it, being willing to be compromised to achieve it.

I remember when I was studying Psychology, I was so keen to go off to Bible College and start training to be a minister. But everywhere I turned, it was clear that God was saying ‘not yet’. That seemed a bit ridiculous to me, why not? I was confident that God was leading me to be a minister, surely this is a good pursuit, surely I could just hurry things along a bit! What would be wrong with that? But of course, God would have none of that, and I needed to learn to trust in his plans, not mine, and I can only begin to imagine what God saved me from as he prepared me in his good timing.

Trusting in God, means patiently trusting in his timing.

#2 ENDURANCE: TRUSTING IN GOD’S JUSTICE \ 26:17-20

Second, David’s trust in the Lord is characterised by ENDURANCE, David endured suffering, because he trusted in God’s justice. The situation for David would have been incredibly difficult.

- Over many years, in the wilderness, Saul is constantly trying to hunt him down, David knows that Saul is out to kill him no matter what.
- We see that in chapter 24, we see it in chapter 26, we see it throughout 1 Samuel.
- Can you imagine how exhausting that would be? As someone is making their life’s mission to literally destroy you!
- And it isn’t just that this would have caused physical danger for David, but it would have also caused him a phenomenal amount of psychological and emotional anguish.
- Time-and-time again, David’s question, is WHY? Why Saul do you want to kill me? Why are you persisting with this?

“It why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? (26:18)

- Earlier, when David confronts Saul in the cave, he says to him...
...I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life (24:11)

- David is completely bamboozled, he doesn’t get it.
- But even in the face of suffering, he is willing to let Saul go, because he trusts that the Lord will set things right.

May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. (24:12)

- David wasn’t oblivious to the evil of Saul!
  He knew first hand just how evil Saul could be!
- But he was willing to bear the brunt of that, face the cost of that, because he understood two things: that there would be justice, and that God would be the one to carry it out.
- See how liberating that is!
  David kept paying to the cost for Saul’s wrongdoing, willing to patiently suffer because he trusted in the Lord.

A few weeks ago when Bishop Daniel was readying to travel home from South Sudan that he was involved in an accident. Everyone was physically safe, but later on, Daniel discovered that one of the ‘good samaritans’ had stolen his bag that contained his passport and all of his official documents that allow him to move around as a bishop. And as I spoke to Daniel, as he was stranded, trying to arrange for emergency documents so that he could see his family, it amazed me that he never expressed anger towards the people who had robbed him. Daniel wasn’t seeking revenge, he didn’t seek to put justice into his own hands. No. He graciously accepted that suffering is part of following the Lord, and that trusting in God’s justice is the path we tread... Last week, Daniel received a call from the man, who had returned his documents and Daniel promised that we would pray for forgiveness.

Sometimes in Christianity, we can unhealthily adopt a false view that suggests: that God exists to give me a really comfy life!

- But that’s simply not a biblical idea.
- It wasn’t true for David - the great, albeit imperfect, King;
  It wasn’t true for Jesus - who taught that he must suffer and then to enter his glory;
  It wasn’t true for the early church - many of whom died in Jesus’ footsteps; and
  It still isn’t true for many Christians today in various places around the globe.
- Whilst, as Christians in Australia, we have been shielded from suffering in so many ways, that doesn’t mean that it will always be the case.
• But if when we do, we trust that the Lord is just, we’re empowered:
  not to fear those who harm us,
  or to flee from society and withdraw,
  or to fight back and take justice into our own hands,
  but to keep on following in the knowledge of future glory.

#3 HOPE: TRUSTING IN GOD’S GOODNESS \ Verses 21:24

Finally, David’s trust in the Lord is characterised by HOPE.

Both here in chapter 26, and also in chapter 24,
in response to David sparing Saul, Saul responds with repentance, confession, and a promise.

Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have been terribly wrong.” (26:21)

• Humanly speaking, as David heard this (time-and-time again),
  he must have thought at some level what an absolute joke!
• Seriously Saul, I’ve heard this before! Your track record is terrible!
• Saul at some level seems to understand that David means him no harm,
because he even asks David to take care of his family in the future.
• There’s a pragmatic aspect here, as Saul acknowledges that David is the incoming king, he knows that his family are in danger, because it was a precarious business keeping your predecessors around.
• Yet at some level, Saul thinks that he can trust David!
Why? Perhaps because despite Saul’s repeated attacks, despite Saul’s constant rebellion against God’s new king, that he had found in David one who had done right. That even though David could have killed Saul, he spared him, which, momentarily caused him to put his trust in him.

But David is no fool! David knows that Saul will be out to attack him again, so David confesses before Saul that there is actually only one in whom he puts his hope.

As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble.” (26:24)

In the face of extraordinary trial, even when by worldly standards it didn’t seem God’s promise would come true, David hoped not just because it made sense with his head,

- Lord, I’ve reviewed your track record, I’ve done the sums, I think I can trust you.

- But also because he loved the LORD with his heart.

- We hear that woven all throughout David’s psalms...

1 I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High. (Psalm 9:1-2)

David sings out with his heart, David recalls all that the Lord had done.

David hoped with both his head and his heart, trusting in the GOODNESS of his Lord.

And despite being God’s anointed king, David bows his knee, ultimately, only to the one true God.

And what is asked of us, is to do the same. That we would bow our knee to the king who is even greater David, in whom we have every reason to trust with both heads and hearts.

Jesus who was also anointed as king, but patiently waited for the Lord’s timing. Who resisting the temptation to take things into his own hands, and rejecting the push of his impetuous friends to hurry things along, patiently followed in the knowledge that glory would come.

Jesus who was anointed as king, but endured whatever pain came his way, because he humbly submitted to the father, sooner suffering according to his Father’s will, rather than avoiding pain and taking what was rightfully his, in order that through his endurance he could make his inheritance rightfully yours.
• Jesus who is the King of Kings, exalted in glory, interceding on your behalf, ready to forgive all who bow their knee before him, ready to welcome all who put their trust in him, ready to give his Spirit to all who call him their own.

• And all he’s asking us, is not to believe something impossible or unreal, but to simply acknowledge him for who is, and receive the hope that only he provides.