

1 Samuel 16:1-5

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Date: 12 April 2023

[0 : 00] 1 Samuel 16, very instrumental passage in the nation of Israel. It's a very instrumental passage really in the Messianic lineage because, as you probably know, this is the anointing of David that we find in 1 Samuel 16.

We won't get to that. We won't get to that tonight because we're only going to focus on the first five verses. Our text will be verses 1 through 5. We haven't made it our practice really to break down these passages in the Old Testament into smaller chunks, but I wanted to, this one, and hopefully you'll see why, partly for sake of time understanding it's business meeting night and partly for sake of I didn't want to skim over some things that I think are really important.

So we put ourselves in context. Saul is the king of Israel, and as king of Israel, he is the man the people have chosen.

The people have asked for a king. They wanted a king just like all the other nations who would go before them in war and lead them to victory. Samuel has been judging and ruling. He has served as the judge and the prophet.

Samuel is the last of the judges in the first of the school of prophets. Samuel has been used not as a local judge, but he's been used of the Lord to be the national judge.

[1 : 32] The word of God has returned back to the people of God, and it seems like they're on the right course until Samuel gets older, and as he gets older and his sons are not doing what he is doing, they're not living according to the same light.

So the people of Israel come and they request a king. Samuel is upset because they're requesting a king. God says, they're not rejecting you, they're rejecting me from being their king, so we're going to give them a king.

The people ask for a king, they're going to get a king. They get what they ask for. Saul is chosen of the Lord. He's adored by the people. He is the man who looks the part, fits the part, has the right pedigree.

Remember all that, right? His head and shoulders literally taller than everyone else. His grandfather was a man of valor. He comes from good stock. He didn't seek it, but God sought him out.

Samuel anoints Saul. A little bit later, there's a public ceremony. There's the coronation of it. So the people have their king. We notice from the very beginning, Saul really didn't seem to be very concerned for the things of the Lord because there seems to be just a lack of commitment to that.

[2 : 45] As we move on, Saul fails God in that he fails to wait on Samuel the full seven days and gets a little antsy because the people were seeking to rebel against him.

They need to go fight a battle. Saul offers the sacrifice, which he should not have done because now there's a division between the priesthood and the kingship.

So there's a division. He stepped across the line. He assumed a spiritual role when he should have been confined to a political one. So with that action, Saul forfeits his dynasty.

God says, I would have established a rule of your family, but since you have disobeyed me, you won't have a dynasty. We move forward.

There's another battle raging. God has a plan and a purpose in regards to the Philistines, and he wants to use Saul, or not the Philistines, the Amalekites, and he wants to use Saul to defeat the Amalekites who had resisted the people of God, to completely set them apart, completely destroy them.

[3 : 56] If you remember, Saul went into the battle and came out saying, I did what God told me to do, but he spared the king and he took the good stuff. He gave up that which was useless and filthy and worthless, but he took the good stuff, and he kept the king.

And then he used an excuse that he was going to offer it as a sacrifice to God, and that's in the 15th chapter. So with his first failure, Saul forfeited his dynasty.

With his second failure, he gave up his right to rule. Now, he's still king, but God says, now the kingdom's going to be taken out of your hand. So we've looked at Saul, but in the midst of that, sometimes we fail to see, here's Samuel.

Samuel, who had been leading the people of God, who was giving not only spiritual counsel, but also political counsel, or civil counsel, because he was judging them, and had been kind of neglected, not neglected, but rejected by the people because they want someone better.

Samuel, you're getting old. Your sons aren't doing what you're doing. Give us someone else. So he's used of God to anoint Saul. And Saul fails.

[5 : 09] We read in the 15th chapter that when God told Samuel about Saul's failure, that Samuel mourned that night. That word mourning is the grief and the mourning over someone who has died.

So in his eyes, Saul is as good as dead. And he's despondent about it. And that's where we pick up. Now, we could rush forward to the 16th chapter and get to the next man who would be David.

But I want us to kind of pause for a moment and put ourselves in the place of Samuel and see what it looks like to move forward after a time and a season of disappointment.

Moving forward after seasons of disappointment. It is not that Samuel has failed, but those whom he has led have failed.

His greatest concern is the spiritual, and they have failed on the spiritual level. And we cannot help but think that I'm sure there are some great moments of disappointment.

[6 : 17] He's near the end of his life. Following this event, he's all but silent until his death. He's too old to be making the circuit rides anymore.

His sons aren't what they should be, and the one whom he has anointed to be king has fallen. It's a season of disappointment, but yet he will move forward. And we see it in the first five verses of the 16th chapter.

Now the Lord said to Samuel, How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go.

I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for myself among his sons. But Samuel said, How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me.

The Lord said, Take a heifer with you and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me the one whom I designate to you.

[7 : 18] So Samuel did what the Lord said and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, Do you come in peace?

And he said, In peace. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice. And he also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

1 Samuel 16, verses 1 through 5. Brother, could you do me a favor and just turn that mic down just a little bit in the house? We see what it looks like to move forward after seasons of disappointment. I'm sure that by this time in the life of Samuel, he has figured that his time of usefulness is nearing an end. God has used him to be the bridge builder.

He has bridged the gap from the period of the judges to the period of the kings. He has served as judge and he has anointed the first king. We know historically and we know biblically that he will be used of God to anoint the first two kings.

[8 : 22] The first one would be the king which man chose. The second one is the king which God chose. Saul is man's king. David is God's king. And we see this. Now we know from the scripture that Saul was not going to have an everlasting dynasty.

Saul was not going to have an everlasting position because he was from the wrong tribe. He was from the tribe of Benjamin. David is from the tribe of Judah. And we know the blessings that we find in the end of Genesis.

But the bridge builder, the gap filler there is Samuel. Samuel had a divine purpose from the beginning of his life. He was a divinely appointed individual following the prayers of his mother. He was brought and placed in the temple probably about three years old. And he was before the Lord. He was the first to hear a word from God in a long time. He delivered the word from God to the people of God.

And it tells us, so the word of God came back to the nation of Israel. He has been mildly used. And yet now we understand that he's probably in one of the greatest seasons of disappointments that he's ever been in.

[9 : 32] Because the last thing he was used to do was to anoint the king who has failed. And then Samuel the prophet had to finish the business. Remember, he hewed King Agag to death.

What a season of disappointment it's been. Now, humanly speaking, it would be easy just to sit down and mope around and give up.

We understand that. Because everything we've put our heart and soul and mind into, when it disappoints us or it fails us, especially on the spiritual level, it is easy to throw the hands up and say, why do I even care?

Why would I even bother? I mean, think about it. Samuel has instructed them, has led them, has given them the word of God, and they have failed.

And it would be easy just to stop. Each of us in our own lives face seasons like that, be it individuals we pour into, people that we give our energy to, people that we invest into spiritual matters.

[10 : 44] I cannot tell you the number of people that I've spent countless hours with, and to see them fail. And it's disappointing.

And you're the same way. You invest in, you pour into, you spend time with, you speak about things on the spiritual level, you speak about things on the personal level, and one consistency I have found is that man will always disappoint.

They do. But God has not called us just to stop. Because if it was easy, you know this, and everyone would do it.

But the sad reality is, is that so many people of God, it's the first sign of disappointment, want to go home and cry about it, and stop doing it altogether. I've said it before, and I will continue to say it.

We are called to make disciples. I didn't say I was called, I said we are called. Last time I checked, the Great Commission is for all believers. And it is my responsibility as a pastor, Ephesians 4.12, is to equip the believers to do the work of the ministry, which is to make disciples.

[11 : 59] And discipleship is hard. It's spending your life with people and talking to them about spiritual things and investing in them. And discipleship is hard.

Jesus spent three and a half years discipling the one who betrayed him. And they all denied him. Every one of them disappointed him.

Discipleship is hard because it involves people. People. The question is, how do we move forward? And we see that in the character of God and the people that he uses, namely in this place, Samuel. The first thing we need to understand, even after a disappointment, number one, there is a work to do. There is a work to do.

It says, And the Lord said to Samuel, How long will you grieve over Saul whom I have given up on as king?

[13 : 03] He says, How long will you grieve over Saul whom I have rejected from being king over Israel? He comes to him with a pointed question. What I have found about when God confronts his people, God has a way of speaking to his people that reveals the heart of the issue.

Just like when Jesus asked a woman at the well for a drink of water. He wasn't even talking about water. Because then he says, Why don't you go back to your house and get your husband?

She said, I have no husband. Now we get into the heart of the issue, right? When Nicodemus comes to him by night and asks him a question and Jesus responds, Truly, truly, I say, unless a man be born again, he cannot see God.

Nicodemus didn't ask that question, but that's the heart of the issue. See, God, when he speaks to his people, gets right to the point. And I love it. And he looks at Samuel and says, Samuel, you've grieved long enough.

There's a season for grieving. There's a season for rejoicing. There's a season for mourning and weeping. There's a season for rejoicing. The word of God tells us that. But in this matter, as far as the usefulness of Samuel, Samuel's grieving over the disappointment was keeping him from usefulness.

[14 : 23] And God confronts him about it and says, How long? We don't know how long transpired. We just don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us. You say, well, it's just the very next verse after this. Right. But it could have been days.

It could have been weeks. It could have been months. We just don't know. But what we do know is that God finally calls it to an end. And he calls it to an end with this. He says, Samuel, you're grieving over something as if this is the end.

And he reminds him that the disappointment he is experiencing does not, just because man fails, does not mean God has failed. He says, just because Saul has failed and I have rejected him, that doesn't mean the work is over.

And he tells him, get up. He says, fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for myself from his sons.

And he gives him a work. Samuel, just as you anointed Saul, you will anoint the next king. He doesn't tell him who he is right here. We'll get to that later on.

[15:40] But he gives him a work. And he reminds him that just because somebody failed you doesn't mean the work is over. Friend, listen. Listen, when we invest in spiritual matters, we are working with man, but we're not working for man.

We are working alongside man who may fail us, who may not fail us, but we are not working for man. We are laboring for the kingdom of heaven.

And the kingdom of heaven has a king who's on the throne who never fails and never forsakes his purposes. And we push forward. And we move on.

Because seasons of disappointment in church life and personal life, as far as spiritual matters go, are always going to be present. There will be things we invest in that just fail miserably.

There will be things that we invest in that we don't understand why. But what we understand is that what God is doing continues on because the plans and purposes of God will not fail, though man will.

[16:46] This is why when we read in the New Testament, it says that when we deny him, he does not deny himself. Man's denial does not imply God's failure.

When Saul messed up, God can redeem that mess up and use it for his purposes. And that is with a work to do.

Samuel is given a work. The greatest way to move forward after seasons of disappointment is to realize there's still work to be done. It's as easy to preach.

It's hard to apply. It just is. There's work to be done. Now, a work to do is united with a word of assurance.

There's not only a work to do, there's a word of assurance because Samuel is here being commissioned by God to fill his horn with oil and to go anoint another king.

[17:49] The problem is to get from where Samuel lives to Bethlehem, you have to go right past Gebeah. Gebeah is where Saul lives.

Now, if you don't know anything about Saul, you need to understand this about Saul. Saul ends up becoming a very jealous person. He gets real kind of picky about what's going on in his kingdom. He has this nagging fear that he's going to lose control. And rightly so. Samuel, the last word he heard from Samuel was, God's ripping the kingdom out of your hand and giving it to someone after his own heart.

So it's going to look a little suspicious when the prophet takes a horn of oil and walks past the home of Saul to go somewhere else. So Samuel has a legitimate question.

God, this work you've given me to do is going to put me in danger. Now, this is the first thing you need to assume. This is the first thing, not assume. This is the first thing you need to settle. When we come to these passages, we need to understand what does it tell us about God?

[18:53] What does it tell us about man? What does it tell us we should avoid? What is it we should do? And what can we expect? That's the five questions I ask myself. I'm beginning to ask myself this new discipline I'm putting in and reading scripture, right?

You need to just go ahead and settle this in your mind. It is absolutely possible, and I would even say probable, that God would ask you to do something that's going to not only make you uncomfortable, but also may make you endangered.

That is, sometimes he's going to ask you to walk past a king to go anoint another king. You say, well, you mean God's going to ask me to do something that may put me in danger?

Yes, he could. Well, I don't know if I could do that. Well, you need to settle that. You need to settle that.

I mean, I'm not saying we want to be as wise as serpents and gentle as doves, and we don't want to undo things, but if God calls us to do a work, the number one question should not be how safe is it?

[19:58] The number one question is, is he really calling me? And this is where we get closer and lean in, because Samuel asked the question, said, well, God, that's fine, but as soon as I go, I'm

putting myself at risk.

And this is where the word of God becomes a comfort to those who are doing the work of God. God has an answer in his word for every problem we will confront. Now, God's not trying to connive or trick or deceive.

God says, well, then just go offer a sacrifice. Nobody's going to say anything to a prophet bringing a heifer for a sacrifice, because that's absolutely expected.

There's a way that you can do my work and still live out your life. There's a way you can do what I'm asking you to do. And walk in obedience.

And still, he doesn't say be unnoticed, because if you notice that when he goes into Bethlehem, the people are afraid. Everybody knows there's this little something between Samuel and Saul, right? [21 : 13] We think that was a private event. It wasn't. The whole military was there. Remember that? The whole military was there. Saul's cry was, please go back with me in front of the people while I do this sacrifice so that nobody sees it.

Everybody saw. Everybody knew what was going on. But God has a way. His word of assurance is, well, if you do it this way, no harm will come upon you. Friend, listen to me. Sometimes the work God calls us to do puts us in positions that we're not very certain about.

But what we have found is the word always brings the assurance to complete the work. The word confirms the calling so that we may accomplish the work.

And that is why we have to be very careful that if God is calling us as a church corporately or as individuals individually to do something for him, to do a work, to move forward and do what he's calling us to do, we need to consider all things.

The Bible says you need to calculate. You need to weigh the cost. You need to see if you have enough money to complete the tower. See if you can defeat with 10,000 he who comes to you against 20,000. You need to be wise.

[22 : 31] We need to do that. But we also need to be certain. And the first thing we consult should be the word of God, not necessarily the opinion of man. And we need to know that.

Because when assurance comes through the word, then we can move forward into work. And we see this. So there's a work to do. There's a word of assurance. And third and finally from our passage, we see here there's a way to follow.

There's a way it has to be done. If the life of Saul teaches us anything, it teaches us this reality. We are not free to do the work of God however we see fit. We are not free to claim to be living in obedience, all the while doing it how we deem best.

We are free to claim to be walking in obedience when we are doing it the way God has declared. Okay?

Saul claimed to have obeyed God. But he didn't. But he didn't. He fought the battle. He won the battle. He captured the king.

[23 : 49] But he took the good spoils. Saul did what God wanted him to do in his own way. God has a way for every work.

So one caution we have, the work God calls us to do must be done the way he has ordained it to be done.

And we see that throughout all things. When we read the scripture, we see exactly what he calls us as individuals to do. We see exactly what he calls his church to do.

We see the work he's commissioned us to do. And he's very gracious and clear in the way in which we should accomplish it. I'm so thankful we have a God who has given us the fullness of the word of God, which very clearly shows us the ways of God so that we can live in obedience to our God.

We do not serve a God who just said, figure out a way to get here and try to do it the best you can. We have a God who says, this is what I've done. I've called you to myself. I have redeemed you.

[25 : 00] I have purchased you. I have saved you. I'm bestowing you with my grace and my mercy. And this is what I'm commissioning you to do. And this is how I want you to do it. And if you do it this way, my spirit will go with you and it will empower you.

And you will be sure according to the word of God that we can expect. Jesus says in John 15, he who abides in me bears much fruit.

He says, abide in me and I will abide in you. And he who abides in me will bear much fruit. So what he's saying there is if you walk in my word and you live by my side, the work that you do will be fruitful as long as you do it.

