

**“Farewells and Salutations”**  
**- Samuel**  
**1 Samuel 12:1 – 25**

Okay, so this morning we come to a third ‘farewell’ found in Scripture.

Two weeks ago we looked at Joshua who spoke to the people before he died and warned the people the against the danger and threat of idolatry.

Last week it was Paul in prison waiting for his execution. He’s able to write to Timothy to encourage him to be steadfast, to be resolute, unwavering in his faith. And Paul says the source of this resolute faith is found in Scripture.

This morning it is Samuel’s farewell address.

Samuel’s public ministry has come to an end.  
His season has public service has come to a close.  
And that happens. There are seasons in life that do come to a close.  
Sometimes by our own choosing, sometimes by other factors and other people.

The season the judges has also come to an end.  
Samuel was Israel’s last judge and was prophet.

When we hear the title “judges” we are probably think of a courtroom scene presided over by a judge who passes sentence.  
That is not what it means here.  
People were given the title of ‘judges’ in the sense that they exercised authority given by God.  
These ‘judges’ were political, regional leaders first and foremost, and governed like a tribal chieftain.  
God raised up judges in times when Israel needed deliverance from their enemies.

Now Israel asks for a King and that is for two reasons.  
As we read here Samuel is “old and gray” and we’re also told earlier that he, rather than God, appointed his two sons as Israel’s judges.  
However we’re told in 1 Samuel chapter 8 that the sons were not like their father, they were greedy for money, they accepted bribes and they perverted justice.  
So the people were worried.  
But there was also pride involved; they wanted be like the other nations.  
They wanted to be like the ‘big boys’.

And we're told this demand was what?  
We're told that Israel asking for a king was an evil thing.

Clearly leadership isn't wrong.  
Samuel has been leading Israel.  
Others like Moses and Joshua had led Israel.

At the heart of what they asking for is a rejection, not of Samuel, but of God.

So Samuel reminds them of all that Yahweh, the Lord had done for them.  
The Lord is totally reliable, totally faithful, totally able to save them... and yet they reject Him as their King.

God does not abandon Israel; Israel abandons Yahweh , the Lord, as their King.

And it will have terrible ramifications in the years to come.  
As good as some Kings in thee end Israel and Judah's monarchy was a disaster.

On the one hand God concedes to Israel's demands and yet promises that one day a king will come who reign with absolute goodness and justice.

“Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this.”<sup>1</sup>

The things is, what Israel's history and world history tells us, is the rejection of God as King will *always* give ultimate power and authority and say-so to someone or something else.

SO a question: ***what happens when people give ultimate say-so to something or someone else other than God?***

And again it's not surprising that many people look around the world at the moment say that Western society is a society in decline.  
You say that and people say you are alarmist.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 9:7.

- Euthanasia are seen by many, many people as morally good, to be affirmed and embrace.
- We continue to have staggeringly high child abuse rates and elderly abuse and neglect is climbing.
- We have shockingly terrible suicide rates among young people, especially young men.
- We have a confused sexual ethic that lurches between deifying sex and treating it as no big deal.
- We're seeing the re-emergence and embrace of ideologies that killed millions in the last century.

And you know, a society the abandons God eventually finds itself in decline.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was a war hero and a captain in the Soviet army during World War II. He wrote a letter to a friend and in that letter he criticised Stalin and the communist regime. He arrested and tried and imprisoned for 8 years where he spent time in a sparse, bitterly cold, wet cell and endured hard labour. After this he was internally exiled to the far reaches of Russia where he began to write in secret about the horrors, the torture and murders committed in the name of communism in the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn was finally exiled to the West and published the stories the horrors that people endured.

At one point he wrote these words:

“Over a half century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of old people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."

Since then I have spent well-nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval.

But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."

But you know, we should remind ourselves, there is no such thing as a Christian nation.

We are to remind ourselves of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians:

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?  
Are you not to judge those inside?  
God will judge those outside.”<sup>2</sup>

We are to remind ourselves that we are a part of a different kingdom.

I mean, Jesus came proclaiming the good news of God.

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the good news!

And then for the forty days between his resurrection and ascension spoke about...?

The Kingdom of God.

When Jesus is talking about the kingdom of God as good news what is He talking about?

So as a reminder, Jesus talked about the kingdom of God, He's talking about Himself.

The kingdom has a king, and Jesus is saying he is the king in the kingdom.

He was king in the line of David.

Where even good kings failed Jesus would not.

The King spoken about in Isaiah and the prophets.

In other words Jesus was saying the world desperately needs a new ruler and I am it.

Jesus is talking about himself as the world's true King who invites people to come under His good rule.

And Jesus established this rule in his birth, in his miracles, in his teaching and in his life.

When you read the story, it's all about Jesus who, innocent as He was, died at the hands of cruel oppressors for our sins.

Yet Jesus overcame all this and rose from the dead in the power of the Spirit as a sign of God's absolute approval.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13a.

So in Jesus we have Israel's true King who is also the world's true King and one day that kingdom will come in its fullness.

But for us, here and now, we are live under the rule of King.

So my point this morning for us who self-identify as Christ followers, is that even for us, the rejection of Jesus as King will *always* give ultimate power and authority and say-so to someone or something else.

So here's a question: ***what does it look like in real world terms to live under Jesus the King?***

It's to be governed by obedience to Christ in every aspect of our lives.

That means there are some things that all Christians are called to do in all times, in all places.

We are called to forgive, to pursue holiness and purity, to give of our time, our talents and treasure to the King, to give ourselves to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Then there are other areas that are at all times, in all places, with all people prohibited.

We prohibited from worshipping idols and joining in with the other religious rituals, from harbouring bitterness or grudges, from fornication (it's an old word but it captures this idea of illicit sex), from living a life for self....

Then are other areas where he will put you to the test.

When I first became a follower of Jesus it was the drink.

I would go to parties with my friends and they would drink and I would and sometimes I would drink too much...

But when I gave my life over to King Jesus as a late teen, I had a sense that I was to not just be a moderate drinker but to stop drinking altogether.

I had a dry season.

So I went to parties with my bottle of coke(a-cola – sometime you need to clarify 😊) and would a get real ribbing, little jokes about Reece and his bottle of coke-a-cola. Some light-hearted and some mean spirited.

This season went on for at least a decade.

I was happy though to be obedient to King Jesus because I know that of all the people in the world he has the best intentions for me. He has deep love and concern and affection for me and he has that for you too.

So when we think about living under to King Jesus we can often think it's about the Big Stuff in our lives.

But come with me to Luke 13 verse 18:

“Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? [What’s it like to live under the rule of King Jesus].

What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed...”

A mustard seed is very small and very ordinary.

In other words living under King Jesus will repeatedly mean the obedience in the small and ordinary areas of our lives.

It could be around drink but it could be a grudge your holding.

It could when someone cuts you off in traffic.

I had this the other day! In Katikati.

I came to an intersection and I had right-of-way and it was truck. The truck driver looked at me in the eyes and he just went.

I was outraged! I was going to get the license plate and call the company and so on.

(If you're here this morning or listening to this, I forgive you brother).

It could at the supermarket.

It could be when you first get up in the morning (especially if you're not a morning person...)

It could be how you treat your employer; it could be how you treat your fellow employees or co-workers.

So to close, it there some area this morning, that's very small and very ordinary, that King Jesus is inviting you to surrender to him?