



Trust and Trustability - Jumping the Guidance Gun 1Sam 13:5-14 Sunday 14th October 2018

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Good Morning, what a privilege to be here to share God's word. As always it's 'hot of the press', I wish His download would come to my more quickly but I guess it's God's way of teaching me to trust him!

Recap of the journey so far...

Tom introduced this sermon series by asking us 'Who do we trust?' He shared that we are living in barren times, however, as during the time of Eli, our lamp has not gone out. We are on the winning team.

Andy made us laugh by getting us to imagine him dressed as Captain Underpants. Seriously, he challenged us all to think about how we look for we may look for a saviour yet push God out. Just as the Israelites did so long ago. However, hope is not lost because we have Jesus, our Man-God who did not have to wear a disguise and cover up His fully God and fully human nature.

Jacqui reminded us that we are all God's masterpieces, and that he will use all of our mistakes. She challenged us to find our calling, to find 'what floats our boat' and in doing so, serve others.

Week 4 and Shane Dean joined us to warn us that what happened to Saul can happen to us. That his downfall can happen to anyone. He reminded us that our minds are incredibly powerful and we need to work on a daily basis to renew our minds; avoiding the negative thoughts that can lead to bad choices and worse habits.

Finally Tom brought us up to speed with the events in Samuel. He again likened the difficult political landscape that Samuel and the Israelites faced with our own. A time of uncertainty in the face of changing leadership and government. However, Tom again reminded us that this is His-story. That such challenging times have happened before, have always been happening yet God can bring all things together for His good. He reminded us that trust is the prime currency of our time and that we can trust Jesus, even until the end of time.

Which brings us to this week.

The Israelites have had their way, a king has been chosen, a king that in all degrees fits the bill. He is handsome, tall, he has demonstrated that he is obedient to his father, he is respectful of traditions, he is polite and modest. Furthermore, He has been chosen, prepared and anointed by God. He seems to have it all. If he was a contender on Strictly, he'd have a '10 from Len'! In Craig word's he would be Fab-u-Lus!

The Israelites must have been excited. But not is all as it seems.

I wonder how Samuel was feeling. He had warned the people of what a change in government would do. That such a hierarchical system would end up with their sons and daughters being taken, the best of their land, their crops and animals to be taken, their very selves would become slaves.

Saul is chosen to do a job that God doesn't want doing. God chose the Israelites to be His people. To be a chosen people different to the rest of their neighbours. To be ruled by Him through chosen and appointed judges, not human kings. However after witnessing the sons of Samuel turning away from God and Samuels increasing frailty, they now want to be the same as the neighbouring nations, to be led by a

human king. Samuel concedes with God's advice and tells them to remain faithful to God because even though they may go ahead on their own path, God will not turn from them. To further remind them of God's power and displeasure at them seeking a human king; he asks God to send a powerful storm just at the time of harvest. Which God does.

But they want their king. And at first all is good. Saul wins a major battle and is crowned. It all looks rosy in the kingdom. But that glow is short lived. Shortly after being crowned, Saul is again facing another battle. A battle that leads to his rapid downfall. On first reading of this passage I felt sorry for Saul. On the face of it Saul seems to make the best of a bad job and then I started to dive into the text, to see exactly what went wrong.

⁵ The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand^[a] chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikdash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶ When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. ⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. ⁸ He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. ⁹ So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering. ¹⁰ Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. ¹¹ "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikdash, ¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."¹³ "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

1 Samuel 13:5-14 New International Version (NIV)

So this is what we are going to do:

1. To dive deeper into the text and see what happened to Saul.
2. To then see how it applies to us.
3. Before looking at how we move forward with that knowledge.

Point 1 - At this point Saul has been appointed King of the Israelites. This is not God's choice, to have a human king, his people have been given plenty of warning by Samuel as to the consequences, yet they insisted. God who is, who was and is to come, knows what is to come. God already knows the consequences of this choice.

As I walked along the beach with Daisy Dog yesterday, I felt myself thinking about wrong choices I have made. There have been tons. I wondered of God, being all knowing and seeing, is wringing his hands at me. Cringing at my stupid choices. Cringing at the mistakes that I have yet to make.

I wondered how He felt about choosing Saul. God must have known he would muck up. His downfall would lead to the choosing of David and the path to the birth of Christ. God had already orchestrated his choice amongst the peoples. God who is and was and who will be, knows what will happen and the choices we will make before we are born. He can use that knowledge to bring his God-incidents about. As he did

with the signs that He gave Samuel to tell Saul. In giving us free will, He gave us freedom to choose to turn away from Him. To make our own choices.

Samuel gave Saul explicit instructions about the battle to come:

Samuel 10: 8

Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait 7 days until I come to you and tell you what to do.

Saul is a Benjamite, from the Tribe of Benjamin, named after Jacob's youngest son. Jacob gave each son a prophetic blessing - Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, devouring the prey in the morning and dividing the spoil at night. Benjamin and his people would grow to become fierce warriors, skilled archers and slingers. They even developed ambidextrous skills to catch their enemy off guard. So we have Saul, an experienced and skilled warrior waiting for Samuel to arrive to bless the battle. Maybe he has geared up the men. We read there opponents outnumber the grains of sand on the beach.

Maybe he used an Israelite equivalent of a pre-match Hakka! - Video

The altar is waiting, the sheep are bleating. It is the 7th day and Samuel hasn't turned up. We read that the numbers of the enemy vastly outnumber the Israelites in number and weaponry. The men are 'quaking' with fear, and many have already deserted. Their courage is failing. What is Saul to do?

Plan A - stay put and risk more men deserting

Plan B - go ahead with the men he has left.

Saul chooses Plan B

Benjamite warriors were known for their zeal and ferociousness in battle. Saul goes with what he knows and prepares for battle by going ahead without Samuel making the required religious sacrifice himself. We read that 'just as he finished making the offering' Samuel arrives. And he is angry.

'What have you done?' Samuel asks.

And Saul makes excuses...

He blames the soldiers scattering

He blames Samuel being late

He blames the growing number of Phillistines

He claims he meant well - I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.

Samuel is blunt and to the point ... You have done a foolish thing ... you have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Furthermore, Samuel continues to reprimand Saul and tells him he has lost his kingdom, that it will not pass to his son Jonathan but to another man, who God has sought out because he is after his own heart.

Point 2 - What went wrong? - On the face of it Saul was caught between a rock and a hard place. Haven't we all been there? Difficult choices? Saul made the wrong choice. He jumped the gun. He didn't wait for Samuel as commanded and followed his own reasoning.

He gave into the fear of his own men.

He stopped trusting God.

He proved at the first post as king that he wasn't a man after God's own heart.

Samuel had given him explicit instructions and he had disobeyed. Obedience would have saved him and his son's inheritance. Now Jonathan would not succeed to the throne and the way had been made clear for the line of David.

How does this apply to us? How often do we 'jump the gun'? When we have decisions to make and choices to choose from, who do we look to for guidance? God or ourselves? When we follow our own desires, our own decisions, we turn away from God. And as Shane pointed out, this can become a habit. A way of living. A life of turning away from God. The total opposite of what we should be doing. But it's easily done.

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Being wholehearted as Tom spoke of 2 weeks ago.

Trust - is when we live out our full acceptance of God's promises day by day.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'

Point 3 Moving Forward- How do we put our trust in him?

1. Don't be a Saul! Don't rely on yourself.
2. Don't jump the gun and rely on your own understanding.
3. Wait on the Lord.
4. God's timing is not ours.

1. Don't rely on yourself - 2 Peter 3:8

'But you must not forget this one thing dear friends, a day is like a 1000 years to the Lord, a 1000 years is like a day.'

He who began a good work in you...

Psalms 37:7-8

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him, do not fret... it will only lead to worry.

God's rhythm is for us to abide in Him. To spend time with Him.

John 17:7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

2. Cry out to the Lord! Talk to God, listen to Him. Pray, pray, pray.

Proverbs 3:6

In all your ways acknowledge Him and he will make your paths straight.

Find a way of prayer that is suitable for you. And if still in doubt, get people to pray for you and with you. Ask God to show His way. Learn to recognise His voice.

3. Read his Word - 2 Tim 1:14

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you - guard it with the Holy Spirit that lives in you.

Hidden your word in your heart...

4. Seek His Holy Spirit

But the advocate the Holy Spirit whom my father will send will teach...

Conclusion

Matthew 22:37-39

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

How to trust wholeheartedly?

Make Jesus your BFF.

Listen, Pray, Act. Following His will, not yours.