

1 Samuel Chapter 8

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Date: 08 May 2016

Preacher: Peter Robinson

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[2:16] Thank you.

Thank you.

During the week, the Larpol Home Service will be Tuesday, 1 o'clock, and the Peregrine House Service, Wednesday, 2 o'clock. And then Wednesday is our midweek meeting, Bible study and prayer meeting, continuing in Jeremiah, and it's Jeremiah chapter 6 this Wednesday.

Then Thursday is our occasional missionary committee meeting, 7.30 meeting at Gene Brumbies for those on the committee. And just an advance notice, I think we should mention the Gospel Music Convention, Paul.

That's looming up later in the month, so let's make sure that's in our diaries, the 20th to the 22nd of May. And then following that, of course, we have our Bible Week, very much looking forward to Brian Edwards coming to us again for the Bible Week.

[4:03] Coming back to this week, next Sunday, services as usual, 10.45 in the morning, 6 in the evening. Last Sunday, we put out a box for those of us who wish to make a love gift to Ben and Liz Griffin.

They're now together in the UK, having moved from Burkina Faso, and we thought we'd like to, in this period of change for them, so much going on before they settle down into a pastorate for the next few months.

So we'd like to send them a special gift, and the box will be here, I think, for the next week and this next week. So do, if you want to, it's there on the table, at the back there on this foyer.

We continue now with this morning's offering and sing in the purple book, number 120. Well, we're going to read together in our Bibles now, and if you'd like to turn back to 1 Samuel and Chapter 8.

1 Samuel and Chapter 8. And a little break while myself and the family were away last weekend.

[5:32] We're back in 1 Samuel and the life of Samuel. And we're going to pick up from Chapter 8 of 1 Samuel and read the whole chapter. It's page 277.

If you've got one of the red church Bibles, page 277. When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders.

The name of his firstborn was Joel, the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, But when they said this, So he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord told him, Listen to all that the people are saying to you.

It's not you they have rejected, but they've rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they're doing to you.

[6:58] Now listen to them, but warn them solemnly. Let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights. Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king.

He said, This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights. He will take your sons and make them serve him, serve with his chariots and horses. They will run in front of his chariots.

Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and others to plow his ground and to reap his harvest. Still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants.

Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks. You yourselves will become his slaves.

[8 : 03] When that day comes you'll cry out for relief from the king you have chosen. But the Lord will not answer you in that day. But the people refused to listen to Samuel.

No, they said, we want a king over us. Then we shall be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and go out before us and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all that the people said.

He repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, listen to them and give them a king. Then Samuel said to the Israelites, everyone go back to your own town.

We're going to come to the Lord in prayer together, bringing the needs of our own fellowship and of our nation, of our world to God.

This is one of the great privileges we have, that we can speak to him about all things. So let's come to God in prayer together. O Lord our God, we have been thinking throughout our time so far the relevance of the truth that your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our king.

[9 : 13] That he is the king of our lives, the one who we have gladly bowed the knee to as the Lord, the master, the one that we recognize as having authority and rule over our lives in all things.

And yet, Lord, we know and confess that even this morning there are many areas of our lives and aspects of our lives that we have failed to yield to you, failed to give over to you, that we've held on to.

Some of them are sinful. Some of them are our own pleasures and desires, habits and attitudes and ways of doing things which we don't want to give up, even though we know that they are not pleasing to you.

And so, Lord, we ask that even today you would work in our hearts and that you would show us just how foolish we are to continue to call you our king but to live differently to your word and your truth. Help us, O Lord, where we struggle in those areas to give them over to you, to gladly bow the knee in all things, to trust you in all things. Because, Lord, again, not only do we live our lives in ways which we know displease you, but there are times when we hold on to things and we'll not trust you with them, or at least we worry about them so much that really it shows that we don't trust you.

[10 : 38] We become anxious and fearful and fretful. We hold on to concerns and cares or problems and we think that really we alone have the solution. It's up to us to sort this out and to make it better and to make it right.

Yet, Lord, though we have a responsibility, firstly and foremostly, you call us to trust you, to commit into your hands and care all things that we might be anxious for nothing, but that your peace may rule our hearts and minds.

So once more we want to give into your hands those things that we've held on to, those things we've been worried about and fearful about, those things that we have tried in vain to sort out ourselves, give us that faith to lean and trust in you.

We thank you, O Lord, that you are not only the Lord and King of our lives, those who have put our faith in Christ as our Saviour and acknowledged Him as our Lord and King, but you are the King over the universe, you're the King over this world that you have created and the people that you've made to inhabit it.

And yet, Lord, we know that so vast a majority of people in this world have no knowledge of you and no desire to follow you or to honour and respect you.

[11 : 55] And so, Lord, we cry out to you for our world again. We pray, Lord, for those nations that are in turmoil and conflict because they have sought after other gods or no God at all.

We pray, Lord, that there may be a turning of many hearts to yourself in these days. There may be a movement by your Spirit to bring people to see that, Lord, without you they are lost.

Without you this world is a mess. We think, Lord, of the ongoing conflicts of Syria, Ukraine, of Iraq. Lord, those terrible atrocities carried out in the name of a God who is not the true God but is a false God.

We pray, Lord, again, that where there is that worship of man, exalting men and their authority and their power, places like North Korea, again, which trample over and abuse your word and abuse your people, we pray, O Lord, in mercy and grace that you would come, that you would lift up your people and strengthen them in their times of great sorrow and heartache and persecution.

We pray, Lord, for those who take your gospel and work with your word to make it known to those who are ignorant of it. Lord, again, that you'd give them fruit for their labors, that they would see results in hearts and lives changed.

[13:17] We thank you for those who've served so faithfully on the mission field returning home and we ask, O Lord, again, that you would be with them. We pray, Lord, for Ben and Liz and the family, that you would help them in their readjustment to the UK.

After being in Africa all these years, we pray that you would give to them great grace and strength, that you go before them in providing for them a home and all that they need, that, Lord, you would, again, richly bless.

We pray that there is a hole left in Burkina Faso, that you would fill that hole and raise up others to serve and minister there. We thank you again for those, O Lord, of our people, here that are struggling and going through times of ill health.

Lift them up and heal them too. And again, for our nation, as it struggles with itself over where it belongs and where it doesn't belong and who it is, our national identity, Lord, again, we see that all these things are symptoms of our sinful state, of our wandering from you.

And as a nation, we cry, Lord, that you would have mercy upon us and bring us back to the God who so blessed us in ages past. Bring us back to the God of our salvation. Bring us back to the Saviour whose truth and whose word we once lived by.

[14:33] O Lord, we ask that in these coming months of beach mission, coming months of evangelism and camps, Lord, in these summertime, as many people will be exposed to your gospel again, we pray, O Lord, please make your word to have powerful effect that many may be saved and that many may be brought out of darkness into light.

Speak to us, Lord, in your word now as we come to it. Make us to hear what you'd say to us and prepare us, O Lord, to be those houses, those houses set upon a hill that shine brightly and show that we belong to Christ.

For we ask it in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. If you'd like to find a Bible or get one to hand, then turn to 1 Samuel 8 and to the chapter that we read just a little while ago.

We've been looking at the life of Samuel and a lot has happened, a lot of time has passed when we get to chapter 8. I don't know if you still get the Whitby Gazette, I know that some people still do, occasionally I bought one yesterday, but in the Whitby Gazette, usually that wasn't in yesterday, I searched for it, there's a section where a local trader or businessman or woman or somebody of some importance in the town or area is asked 20 questions about themselves and who they are, what they do and so on about their favourite things, who they'd like to invite to a dinner and this sort of stuff like that.

[17:18] But also in those questions there are things about what they'd like to change, is there a law they'd like to introduce and particularly what would they like to change about their own lives? And of course some people say nothing, but a lot of people talk about their own appearance or about winning the lottery or about something else that they would want to change if they could.

And I wonder what you would answer to that question. If there was something you actually could change, the trouble is of course there's so little we can change, even though we feel that we've got control of everything.

In reality there's so little that we can change, especially the big things. What one thing, if you could change about your life, would that be? What would be different to the way that life is now?

Of course that's something that we all feel, I think that's a general sense within society, within each one of us, there's a deep-seated longing for change that can show itself, manifest itself in things like revolutions of course and marches and other public events, but it can show itself as well just within a disquiet, a discontentment within people's lives, a searching, a seeking after something that will either help them cope with the fact they cannot change the situation or will bring about that change.

There's an unquenchable thirst within the human soul for an alternative to life as we know it now. When we come to Samuel 1, Samuel 8, we find that the people, the Israelites, the people of God wanted change.

[19 : 01] They longed for change. They'd known a great time of peace and tranquility, but now they wanted change. So they go to Samuel, we're told, and they say, appoint a king to lead us.

And even when Samuel comes back to them and after speaking with the Lord and tells them, look, this is going to create all sorts of hassles for you, it's not going to be all bed of roses, the grass isn't always green on the other side, having a king.

They still say, verse 19, no, we want a king over us. They're determined to have this change.

Samuel, as I said, has been leading the nation a long time, decades in fact, and during that time there'd been great peace and prosperity and blessing, cessation of war.

Just at the end of the previous chapter, particularly verses 13 and following, the Philistines, who were their main enemies and had given them a lot of grief, again, for centuries, were subdued.

They stopped invading Israel's territory. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. Towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured were restored.

[20 : 10] Israel delivered neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. There was peace. So they'd known this great time of peace for many decades, but now they wanted a change.

They were restless. They'd had enough of that. They wanted a different type of leadership. They wanted somebody else to rule things and to take things on. Now, throughout the history of God's people, God had changed his leadership styles.

He'd had different leaders at different occasions. Of course, when they first came out of Egypt, there was Moses, the lawgiver, who led them for those 40 years or so. Then when they entered the Promised Land at last, God gave them Joshua, that great warrior general, that military man who brought them into a time of conquest and settlement.

And then for a long time after Joshua, there's the time we call the Judges or the Book of the Judges, where they kept going up and down. They kept sinning as a people and God would raise them up at a good leader who would get them out of trouble and then things would be fine for a while and then they'd descend and they'd get another leader.

And so it went on for many, many years. Then when we got to the beginning of Samuel, we had Eli, the high priest, who was very old.

[21 : 27] His sons were wicked men, if you remember. And then eventually Samuel, this incredible young man, this man who was a prophet from when he was just a boy, God raised up and gave them, gave the people of God.

And so for a long time, they had Samuel always there, that rock, that steadfast one, the one they came to with their problems and concerns, the one who judged and led them.

But now, they've got itchy feet. Now they're discontented. Now, after all these years, they want to get rid of faithful Samuel. They want to replace him with a king.

And what I want us to do this morning is just look at the motivation behind their reasons for change. As I've said, within the human heart, there is that desire for change. And there can be good reasons for change, and there can be bad reasons for change, and good motivations for change, and bad motivations for change.

I want us to look at the motivations behind the change that these people sought, and look at our own hearts as well. The things that I'm dissatisfied with, the things that I long to change, what's the motivation behind those things?

[22 : 35] Why do I really hanker after, long for, crave for those things? Why is it I'm not satisfied? Why is it that people in general, in our world today, are not satisfied for very long with what they have?

They seek for one thing, and they attain it. It gives them a pleasure, or contentment for just a brief period, and then they move to something else. Nothing seems to last long.

And what's the answer for that? What's the answer for motivation for good change? And what's the place of peace that we can know in the midst of difficulties as well?

And I want to look at how God viewed that, how God views our motivation, and how God viewed their motivation as well. This is something, again, as we know, when we come to God's word, that God is wanting to say to us, if we are willing to hear and listen.

Excuse me. Thank you. You don't listen. So let's look. There's three reasons that they wanted change.

[23 : 44] The first one was the imperfection of their situation. The imperfection of their present situation. Samuel, we're told, was old. In fact, they told him he's old.

It's not very nice, is he? You go to Samuel, you're old. That's the sort of thing a young child would do, wouldn't they, when they go and see their grandmother of 80 for the first time? You're old. But they know, they come, you are old, and his sons are dishonest.

Now, clearly, Samuel, as he's getting older, like all of us, can't do all the things he used to do. We're told that he would travel all the way around the country every year or so. He was a really very busy, very hardworking judge and leader and prophet.

But the time came when he thought, well, I need to hand over some of these responsibilities to my sons. And sadly, they were not like their father, where they were called upon to sit in judgment on the situation.

They'd take a backhander in favor of somebody who clearly was in the wrong. And people got fed up with that. Now, Samuel had been a great judge in his prime.

[24 : 50] But now, of course, what's happening isn't good enough. Now, what's happening isn't right. It sounds reasonable, doesn't it? It sounds a reasonable motivation for them to come and bring to Samuel their concerns and say, we want a king.

Things aren't like they used to be when you were younger, Samuel. Things aren't as good as they once were. And it sounds reasonable. It sounds a right motivation.

But in fact, we're told that when they bring that concern to Samuel, we're told he was displeased. Instead of him saying, yes, that's a good motivation, a good reason for you to want change, he's displeased.

Why is he displeased? Well, we can reveal that because when he prays to God, God tells him, well, the Lord tells him what the problem is. Listen to all the people are saying to you, it's not you they're rejecting, it's not your fault, Samuel, it's not you who failed, they're rejecting me as their king.

They're rejecting me as their king. In one sense, when they come to Samuel, it's not Samuel they're complaining about, they're complaining against God. That's a whole different ball game, isn't it?

[26 : 03] Saying things aren't right, saying things aren't as they should have been or were is okay, but actually if we go under the surface of that, is there, as there is here, this case of actually we're not happy with you, God.

We're not content with what you have done. Why have you allowed this situation to come about in our lives? Why haven't you done something? Why haven't you taken it in hand? There can be a sense of that.

A discontentment, a seeking for change because ultimately we are not happy with God. That's what is behind this. The motivation.

See, it's not the desire for change that's wrong per se, it's the desire for change which comes from an unbelieving heart. But of course, they were willingly forgetting something.

They were forgetting some certain truths about God, some certain truths about life that actually we can forget as well. And the first thing is this, that everything in our lives is tainted with sin.

[27 : 07] There is no perfect life. There is no perfect situation. There is no perfect place. There's no utopia in this world. Nothing is ever without difficulty.

Nothing is ever without imperfection. There's no perfect job. So going and looking for another one isn't necessarily going to make things better. There's no perfect marriage. So ending one and looking for another isn't going to make things better.

No perfect family, neighbourhood, street, no perfect church. I know we come close here. But we have a long way to go from perfection.

We live in a sinful world, a fallen world. We are sinful people. We've got to expect that things will be difficult and hard. We've got to expect that even in places where all has been good for a while, that that isn't going to last.

And sometimes we become those who are discontent. God has given us a time of blessing and peace and things are troublesome. Oh, then suddenly we're thrown off kilter.

[28 : 10] Where are you, God? Why have you let me down? The other thing that they've forgotten and that we need to keep reminding ourselves is not only that we live in a sinful world and we are sinful people and therefore horrible and difficult, painful things happen, but ultimately we need to remember that God has all things still under his hand.

He has not changed in his sovereign care and control. This problem isn't unknown to him. He knows about some. And his sons just as he knew about Eli and his sons if you go back to the beginning of 1 Samuel and see what God did then.

God knows about the problem. He isn't slow to sort things out. He hasn't lost control. He isn't too busy or disconcerted. He has some purpose in this. Some purpose which he has yet to reveal. Some purpose in this trouble which will ultimately be for their good and for his glory. And so it is with you and I. The very difficulty that we're under at this time is known to our God.

It's not something that he is unaware of or ignorant of. He hasn't suddenly given up his care and concern for us. Rather, he has a purpose in it.

[29 : 23] And our great concern should be, Lord, what are you doing here? Not what are you doing here? In other words, you're getting it wrong. But Lord, what are you teaching me?

What is it that you want me to learn? Where are you leading? What is it that I need to perhaps put right in my own life and circumstances? And ultimately, of course, they seem to forget that they need to follow the example of Samuel.

That we're to bring everything to God in prayer. Here's Samuel. They come to Samuel. What's he doing? He goes straight to God. That was the characteristic of this man. That's the characteristic and must be the characteristic of us as believers.

We need to take everything to the Lord in prayer. Notice they don't come to Samuel and say to him, Samuel, you're old. Your sons are corrupt. But please ask God to do something.

Please ask God on our behalf. Please pray for us. No, that's not what they did. If they'd have done that, that would have been a right response. Rather, they come to complain. Rather, they come to demand what they think is the answer.

[30 : 25] Instead of saying, God, what do you want to do here? They say, this is what we want to do here. Now, God had given provision. God, back in the law, as he gave it in Deuteronomy in chapter 17, said when you get into the promised land, there'll come a time for you to have a king.

God knew that there was a right time for that. But what they were doing was that they were seeking to push God to do something ahead of time. They were becoming impatient with God. They wanted to take things into their own hands.

This is the problem that they'd had before. As God says, verse 8, as they've done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they're doing to you.

They kept turning away from the Lord. Instead of looking to God, providing, instead of trusting God to meet their needs, instead of seeking His will, they kept on looking, well, let's ask Baal to do something for us, this false god, or Ashtoreth, this other god.

God isn't doing what we want. Perhaps we can twist some other god's arm. Here they were seeking to do just the same thing in one sense. In their attitude, they were saying, God, we want it done now, our way, our time.

[31 : 38] They wanted to bypass God, and so they go to Samuel instead. I wonder if there's some reflection in our own hearts there, in their attitude.

We're impatient for God to do something now. Not when you think it's right, God, now. Now. We see as well a second motivation, which is equally reflective of our own hearts, and yet is wrong.

We see that they were moved by the importance of fitting in with everyone else. The importance of fitting in with everybody else. They said, give us a king to lead us as the other nations have.

There in verse 5. We want to be like the others. We want to keep up with the other, the Jonesites. Yeah? Keep up with the Jonesites.

They wanted to be like the other nations around about them. They didn't want to have a judge, or prophets, or priests to guide them. They've all got kings, all these other nations. We want a king as well.

[32 : 44] We want to be like the gang. We want to join in with the rest of the crowd. Is that how you feel? Is that perhaps why you want change? Want to keep up with the Joneses?

Want to keep up with those around about us? Want to fit in? Want things to be different so that we can just blend, so that we can be accepted maybe? We want to be, everybody else seems to have a new car.

I want to have a new car. Everybody else seems to have new clothes. I want new clothes.

Everybody else seems to be having a raise. I want a raise. We become discontent because we look at other people and we see what they have and we say, well, I haven't got it, so I want it.

We manage so far without it. Why do we suddenly need it now? But you see, there's a reason why the Israelites were different. There's a reason why the Israelites did not have a king like the others.

It's because they were a different nation. They were a holy nation. They were God's special people. They were people who belonged to the Lord. Again, God had said to them back in Deuteronomy 7, the Lord your God has chosen you and of all the peoples of the face of the earth to be his people. [33 : 52] There was a reason they didn't have a king. There was a reason they felt different. It's because they were different. They were special. They were unique. They had one king and their king was God.

Notice what the Lord says to Samuel in verse 7. They've rejected me as their king. Why do I want change in my life?

Why do I want these things that others have? Why do I not want to stand out as a Christian? Why do I not want to be like everyone else?

But dear friend, as a Christian, you are different. You're odd. You're a peculiar people. You're God's special people. We've been looking at that in 1 Peter.

You're a new creation. You're a citizen of heaven. You're a child of God. And if all of those things doesn't make your life different, if all of those things about you doesn't mean that you live differently, speak differently, act differently, then what's the point?

[34 : 56] If the whole point of your life is that you can just blend in with everybody else and there's nothing strange about you or different about you, then what's the point? Now, we're not to deliberately act odd, as some Christians seem to.

We're not to deliberately dress bizarrely or to speak in Shakespearean English wherever we go to show that we're Christians. That doesn't mark us out as Christians. We live with different goals. That's what makes us different. We live not for money, but we live for love. We don't live for self, but for Christ. We live not to get, but to give. That's what marks us out.

That's what makes us different. If we live like the world, if we seek to be like everyone else, if we seek to take on those same standards, came out in what Mrs. Bromby had to say in the children's talk from Romans chapter 12, do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed that you might know the will of God, his good, pleasing will.

If we are seeking above all else and wanting to be like everyone else, then we are showing that we do not have Christ as our king. We have the same kings, the same lords, the same gods that the world has, but we are different.

[36 : 12] We are different. We are completely different. We are chalk and cheese. That's what God has done for us. That's what is so special.

That's what's so marvelous. So they were those who wanted to be different.

That's their second motivation, the importance of fitting in with everyone else. Before that, the imperfection of their situation. And thirdly, the impulse they had to look after their own interests. What was behind all of this? Notice what they say in verse 20. We want a king over us. Then we should be like all the other nations, yes, with a king to lead us and go out before us and fight our battles.

They had this impulse to look after their own interests. It was themselves they were concerned for. They wanted a king to go and fight the battles for them, to defend them from their enemies, to keep them safe.

[37 : 11] Their sort of mentality was this. If we had a king, no one would kick sand in our faces anymore. They would steer clear of us if we had a king. They would know that we meant business, that we couldn't be pushed around and bullied.

In fact, the matter that they hadn't had a battle for 40 years didn't seem to have crossed their minds. But think about it. Who had fought for them all the years before?

Who had defended them? Who had kept them safe from their enemies? Was it a king? No, it was the Lord. It was the Lord who had defended them, the Lord who fought for them. Even in their last battle all those decades earlier, when they fought against the Philistines, it was the Lord.

Chapter 7 and verse 10, That day the Lord thundered with a loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

What they were saying was this. We want a king because we've lost faith in God. We've lost faith in God to protect us. We've lost faith in God to care for us.

[38 : 12] We've lost faith in God to fight for us, to defend us. It's very natural for each of us to feel that need of safety and security.

It's a very natural thing. Sadly, it's something that often is played upon, isn't it, in the media or played upon by consumer, people who want them to buy something.

They'll play upon your fear and say, you need to have a CCTV camera because there's been these burglaries here and so on and so forth. We need to feel, we want to feel secure and safe.

But, dear friends, as believers, our safety and security is found in who we are in Christ and in who he is. And if we begin to feel insecure, if we begin to doubt him, then ultimately we are wandering into a sinful attitude, an act of unbelief towards God.

God. Why should they doubt him? Why should we doubt him? When has God ever given us reason to doubt him? When has he ever ceased to show care and love and provision for us?

[39 : 19] When has he never brought us, when has he never shown his love in bringing us through difficulties and circumstances and heartaches? That's how we act.

We act like we doubt him when we want something more, when we seek higher wages for a better lifestyle at the cost of perhaps our family time, our commitment to the local church, our walk with the Lord, compromises in the way we do things.

Didn't Jesus tell us not to worry about those things? Didn't he say, look at the birds of the air, look at the fields, look at how God feeds them and clothes them. Who of you by worrying can add a single inch to your height or a single day to your life?

Those are the things that the pagans, the unbelievers, those without faith run after. That's what they hope will make them happy. But your happiness, your contentment is found in seeking the Lord.

Seek him and his righteousness and all these things he'll give to you. And haven't we proven that?

Haven't we known that? Haven't we experienced that? Samuel brings their concerns, brings their desire to the Lord in prayer.

[40 : 31] And what does the Lord say? He doesn't say no, interestingly. He doesn't say, or you know, he does say they're wrong and they're wicked, but he doesn't say no, stand against them, they mustn't do this.

Rather, he gives them the freedom of choice and makes known to them the problems they're walking into. He warns them about what will happen. If they refuse God as their king, if they seek to go their own way and do their own thing, God will let us do that sometimes.

In fact, one of the worst things that God can ever do for a person is to let them have their own way.

Just look around about you, dear friends. Just look at the lives of people who've lived for themselves and gone their own way.

Look at the messes that they're in. And as Christians, if we constantly, consistently say, I want my way rather than your way, God, there will come a time when God will allow us to have our way and go our way and will not hold us back and that will bring upon us great sorrow and grief.

And again, sadly, how many times we've seen that. Dear Christians, yet God warns them as he warns us. He warns them that if they have this human king, he will be a taker.

[41 : 44] They won't get anything out of it. They'll only be losers. He's going to take your sons. He's going to take your daughters. He's going to take your fields and your vineyards. He's going to take a tenth of your grain.

He's going to take your servants and your animals. He's just going to take and take so that the eventual outcome, God says to them through Samuel, is this, you yourselves will become his slaves.

Is that really what you want? You think that wanting this thing, wanting this king, wanting this change in your life, is going to make you happier. It's going to bring freedom or liberty or joy or pleasure and actually what it's going to bring to you is slavery, sadness, loss, heartache.

they're going to deeply regret. God knew that. They're going to deeply regret their choices and they're going to cry out to God for change at that time.

But verse 18, the Lord will not answer you in that day. You really don't have to go very far, just a couple of chapters over to see what happened when they chose a king.

[42 : 50] In 1 Samuel chapter 12 and verse 19, the people all said to Samuel, pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die. We've added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.

But that is always the end result. The end result of demanding our way, of going our way, is always that we will be losers, not gainers.

discontent with the way things are, which really, at the bottom of it, is often a lack of faith in God, forgetting his fatherly care and rule over us will never bring us lasting peace, will never bring us contentment, but always will bring us slavery.

So we see again and again in the examples of Scripture, so we see again and again in the examples of history, so we see again and again in the newspapers and TV programs around about us.

Men and women who seek to live for self, who seek to insist upon their own will, are those who are utterly ruined. As Christians, dear friends, it's something that we need to avoid.

[44 : 01] And the reason we need to avoid it is simply this. We have a king. We have been given a king who is so unlike this king and unlike any human king.

The king that we have is not a taker but a giver. The king we have is one who is loving, faithful, who we shall have no regrets following and obeying for he is our king, Jesus Christ, God's own son. We started our very service this morning with that verse from Hebrews 1, verse 8 about the son he says, your throne, oh God, will last forever and ever.

Christ is our king. The very reason he came into this world and humbled himself to become that babe in the stable was that he might be a king to bring, not to take, to save, not to ruin.

He came that he should give to us generously and lavishly of himself on all the treasures of heaven. It's Jesus who stood and said in John 10, 10, I have come that they, that's my sheep, those who follow me and trust me, may have life and have it to the full.

[45 : 05] We see the comparison between what Christ gives and what sinful pleasure brings.

Romans 6, 23, the wages, the consequences, the end result of sin is death, loss, heartache, brokenness, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What a different king we have to serve. What a different king we have to obey. What a different king we have to follow. What a different king we have to trust. What a different king we have who will never, ever disappoint.

And so we're brought back to that basic question again, aren't we? In our own lives, who is my king? Who is the king who rules over the throne of my heart?

Who is the one who's in control? Who's the one I trust? Who's the one whose will I want to do and obey? Who's the one that I know will protect me and keep me safe? Is it me?

No. It can never be me. Look at the mess that I've made again and again in my own life. Whenever I've taken back the reins of my life. Whenever I've sought to be the king of my life.

[46 : 14] Whenever I've said I know better than you, God. What an absolute mess. There's only one rightful king.

It's not me. It's not work. It's not family. It's not finance. It's not pleasure. There's only one rightful king and that's Christ.

When Christ is king, when he is number one, when he is the one again that we say, Lord, be my king and rule over my life in every part. He's the one that brings liberty, not slavery. That's the misconception of the world around about us.

They think that we are enslaved in our religion. They think that we are fools because we have sought to put Christ as the king of our lives.

But in fact, it's quite the opposite. We are the ones who are free and they are the ones who are enslaved. We're the ones who have been delivered and rescued. They are the ones who are still in bondage.

[47 : 17] Galatians chapter 5, it is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Dear friends, let me urge you that if there are areas of your life where Christ is not king, where you have not given over to him full rule, reign and trust, do so.

And if in your life you're still living thinking you know better than him and you know the right thing to do and you're going to be okay, then please, before you end up, if you aren't already there, in a huge mess of trouble, now's the time for you to say, Jesus, come and be the king of my life.

Take my sins. Take my foolishness. Take my wrong motives. Rule over me. Lead me in your ways. Let's sing our final hymn together.

It's a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. We began with rejoicing. We're going to end with rejoicing. 314. Rejoice, the Lord is king, your Lord and king at all.

Lift up your voice, lift up your hearts. Rejoice again, I say rejoice. 314. Let's stand and sing and rejoice in Christ our King, renewing our faith in him.

[48 : 39] Amen. . . .

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. . . thy Savior rejoice. He saved, said, God's right hand till all his woes submit and bow to his power and fall beneath his feet.

[50 : 49] Lift up your blood, lift up your voice rejoice, again I say rejoice.

Rejoice, Lord, is born Jesus, the judge, shall come and take his servant's hand to their eternal home.

We soon shall hear when our angels rise, the trump of God shall sound rejoice.

I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time.

God, the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see, to him be honour and might forever.

[52 : 04] Amen.