

1 Samuel Chapter 9 v 1 - Chapter 10 v 1

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] We're going to read now from our Bibles, and if you have a Bible to hand, can I encourage you to turn with me to 1 Samuel and chapter 9.

1 Samuel and chapter 9, and if you have one of the red church Bibles like this, you'll find that reading on page 278.

Page 278 in the Church Bible, 1 Samuel and chapter 9. And we're going to read from verse 1 down to verse 6, and we're going to jump over a little bit because it's quite a long reading, to verse 15 and then to the end of the chapter.

So 1 Samuel 9, reading first of all the first six verses, and then we'll move over to verse 15 and read on from there. There was a Benjaminite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish, son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechareth, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.

Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel. And he was a head taller than anyone else.

[1 : 22] Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father, Kish, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.

So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, through the area around Cilicia, and they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shalim, but the donkeys were not there.

Then he passed through territory of Benjamin, and they did not find them. When they reached the district of Zuf, Saul said to the servant who was with him, come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.

But the servant replied, look, in this town there is a man of God. He's highly respected. Everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.

So we go to verse 15. They have gone into the town after they had a bit of a discussion. Verse 15. Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel.

[2 : 27] About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel. He will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I've looked on my people, for their cry has reached me.

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, this is the man I spoke to you about. He will govern my people. Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, would you please tell me where the seer's house is?

I am the seer, Samuel replied. Go up ahead of me to the high place. For today you are to eat with me. And in the morning I will send you on your way.

And will tell you all that is in your heart. As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them. They've been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned?

If not to you and your whole family line. Saul answered, but am I not a Benjaminite from the smallest tribe of Israel?

[3 : 29] And is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me? Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited.

About thirty in number. Samuel said to the cook, bring the piece of meat I gave you. The one I told you to put aside. So the cook took up the thigh with what was on it and set it in front of Saul.

Samuel said, here is what has been kept for you. Eat because it was set aside for you. For this occasion, from the time I said, I've invited guests.

And Saul dined with Samuel that day. After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house. Then rose about daybreak.

And Samuel called to Saul on the roof. Get ready. And I will send you on your way. When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together. As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, tell the servant to go on ahead of us.

[4 : 31] And the servant did so. But you stay here for a while, so that I may give you a message from God. And Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?

We'll stop there. And we trust that God will give us help to understand what he's saying to us in his word today. Well, we're going to come to a time of prayer together, intercessory prayer.

That's praying for the needs of others. When Roger was here, Roger Carswell was here last Sunday, asked us particularly to pray for three things. And I'm thinking of what they are at the moment.

One was for him, because he has been in Hyde Park Speaker's Corner this weekend. And he particularly asked for prayer for that. And for the work of UBM and the mission that's going on this week.

Then he also asked for prayer for Carl, who is one of the members of the singing group live issue. He didn't explain what the difficulty was, but particularly asked for prayer for that. And the third thing is the one I'm struggling with.

[5 : 40] Thank you. Well done. I just tested you to make sure you were listening. So Yorkshire Camps and the work of Yorkshire Camps. So we pray for them too. And let's continue to pray for Brian Edwards.

We really did appreciate his ministry. And I know, as many of you know, he's very, very busy writing another book at this time, particularly on the matter of creation. And very busy in preaching ministry too.

There are other needs as well in our fellowship. Many of you will know that Betty Lund fell and broke her wrist. In the week. So we do need to pray for her. And other needs as well. So let's come to our God in prayer.

Let's bring these needs on our own before him. He is a God who hears and answers prayer. We thank you, O Lord our God, that you are intimately involved in the lives of your people.

In fact, you're intimately involved in the life of every single person because every single one you have given life to. Every single one you provide and supply and care for in a most wonderful way, even though we are often ignorant of that and forgetful of that.

[6 : 46] But we thank you that because you are involved in every life, then we know that we can ask for your help. We can ask for you to bless. We can ask for you to work. And we thank you that each one of us who is a Christian here knows that you have answered our prayers again and again and again.

You love, Lord, to help us. You love to bless us. You love to do us good. And so often we fail, Lord, to receive your blessing and your help because we just do not ask how foolish we are.

We pray that you would help us to be more prayerful, help us to be more willing to ask, more humble to ask instead of trusting in our own pride, our own self-confidence. We thank you so much, Lord, again for those who have blessed us and been a blessing to us.

And, Lord, those you've raised up to serve you and your people at this time. We thank you for Roger and his ministry here at the Whitby Gospel Music Convention and, again, for his preaching here last Sunday.

We pray for him in London at this time and we pray, as he is at Speaker's Corner and has been, that you would greatly use him and speak through him. We pray you continue to help him in his desire and longing to tell others the good news of Jesus.

[7 : 58] We pray, Lord, that he might be sustained and strengthened by you. And as he speaks, that you would speak through him to the hearts and lives of many. We pray, O Lord, for the work of Yorkshire camps and we thank you again for your blessing and provision for another side hall.

And we thank you again for our own young people who've been on the camp there. We pray that you would raise up the workers that are needed for that camp to continue through the year. And we pray again that many young people, boys and girls, may not only hear the good news of Jesus while they're there, but come to trust in him for themselves.

We pray for our own young people who've gone down into Sunday school and to crash. And, Lord, we pray for them. Please, Lord, even while they're young, please, Lord, open their hearts to the wonder of your love and to faith in you.

May they be able to, when asked, who do you say Jesus is, be able to say he's my saviour, he's my Lord, he's my God. We pray again, O Lord, for your help for Carl, this member of Live Issue.

And, Lord, though we do not know his needs or circumstances, you do. We pray you would be very close to him and his family at this time and that you would bring them through whatever trouble, trial or difficulty they are going through.

[9 : 09] Give them that sense of your help and your grace and that reality, O Lord, that you are the God who loves them. We just, in the quietness of our own hearts, even now, bring to you those concerns and troubles that we have, those things that lay heavy on our hearts.

We cast our cares on you in prayer for a moment now. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Ooh. Nothing. Amen.

Amen. you in preaching and in writing as well. Continue to be with Rosie as she supports him and helps him there. Bless them, we ask. We pray, Lord, for Betty, that you'd help her with the frustration more than anything else of having broken her wrist, and pray that all may heal well and strongly.

We pray for June, who has had an operation, Lord, this week, and again pray that that may have gone well and that she may recover quickly, especially, O Lord, that you would open her heart to your wonderful love and grace. We thank you again, O Lord, for those that were here over the week, Lord, not just on Sunday, but through the week, we think of the man who openly spoke of himself as an atheist, for others as well who, Lord, are not truly yours, but, Lord, heard your wonderful truth. We pray that you would continue to speak to their hearts, continue to help them, Lord, to hear your voice and to put their faith and trust in you. Let the things that they heard not sort of wither away and be snatched away, but, Lord, may you be pleased to draw them, draw them with your irresistible grace and love to yourself. We pray for ourselves as we come to your word now. Speak to us, give us understanding, help us to hear what you're saying to us personally and individually and as a church as well. And, O Lord, we pray that we may receive your word with faith and, O Lord, with joy, for we know that where you speak, you always speak for our good, for our blessing. And we ask for your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to come upon us and to make your voice to be heard. For we ask these things in the name and for the praise of Jesus. Amen.

[11 : 52] Wonderful hymn, but the musicians tell me it's absolutely a pig to try and play. So, so thank you for them for persevering with us. But it's a wonderful, encouraging hymn. We're going to turn then back to 1 Samuel and 9. And again, please, if you have a Bible to hand, it will be very helpful for you to have it open to that chapter where we read about Saul and Samuel in particular.

I'm sure you've all been aware that on the news, the Rio Olympics have been very much in the headlines, not only because they're very close, but because of concerns. There was even advice to cancel them or postpone them or something like that, but almost certainly they'll be going ahead. And when they do, the whole world really will turn its attention to Brazil, to the thousands of athletes from all across the world competing in dozens of differing sports and disciplines. For years, these athletes have been training and at last they'll be able to put those skills and their training to test against the very best the world has to offer with regard to speed, endurance, strength, skill. And the British team, of course, will be going out and they will be hoping to improve, even upon that, a very impressive tally of medals that they won in the 2012 Olympics here in London. One team particularly that will be hoping to put behind them what went wrong in 2012 will be the four times 100 metres men's relay.

I don't know if you remember, but four years ago they were disqualified from entering the final. And the reason they were disqualified was that they took too long in handing over the baton from the third to the fourth runner. There's a regulation distance, a regulation time, and they just took a little too long. They finished in second place, but they were disqualified because of that failure to complete that successful handover. It cost them any chance for a medal. It disqualified them.

The problem wasn't that the runners weren't quick enough. As I said, they came in second, but it was their lack of ability to handle a changeover that failed to bring them success.

Now, how we cope with change is a very crucial matter, not just to an athlete, but to each, every one of us. How do we deal with change? How do we handle a changeover in our lives?

[14 : 20] Now, we've been studying the life of Samuel here, and previously, a couple of weeks ago, we looked at how Samuel was confronted with the call by God's people, the Israelites, that there should be a change. And the people were calling for a change, and we looked at how their motivation for change was wrong. We looked at right and wrong motives for change in our lives.

Now, they wanted a king. They wanted to change. Samuel was the last of the judges who had been judging, leading the people for hundreds of years. They said, no, we want to change. And their reasons, their motivations were wrong. It was because they didn't have true faith in God. It's because they wanted to keep up with the other nations around about them. They wanted to keep up with the Joneses.

It was because they wanted to fulfill a selfish desire. This king will lead us, and he'll provide for us, and he'll do all these wonderful things for us. They were thinking only of themselves. We saw that how that can reflect upon our own hearts. We want to engineer change. We want to bring about change. The big question is why? But then when we actually get to chapter 9, and particularly because we're looking at the life of Samuel, we realize that there is also the problem, what do we do when change is forced upon us? What about change that we don't want, change that comes crashing and careering into our lives, change that throws our plans, our dreams, our hopes into the air? Well, 1 Samuel 9, I think, has some very practical help for us concerning unwelcome change in our lives, how we cope with it, how we handle it, what is it that is God's will for us, how we face it. Now, Samuel, as I said, was the last of the judges, and he was a man now getting well on in his years, and he had guided and led God's people all of his life.

Even right as a young boy, God set him apart as a prophet, and spoke to him and met with him, and through his judging, through his leadership, the whole country had enjoyed a great time of peace and blessing and stability. If you remember, we looked at that back in chapter 7, where it says in verses 13 and following, throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. They were the great enemy who'd often come and attack the people. Towns were returned to the nation of Israel. Israel was delivered from its neighbouring, from the hands of the Philistines.

There was peace between Israel and the Amorites. It went on all through their life, a wonderful time of peace. But now it's all about to change. Now Israel wants a king, just like the other nations around about them. And Samuel's reaction to this, we read there in verse 6 of chapter 8, when they said, give us a king to lead us, this displeased, saddened, grieved Samuel. Now, no doubt there was some sense of personal rejection. They were rejecting him and his sons as leaders, in the country. But more than that, he was grieved because the way that they were seeking after this king was evidence that they had rejected, not just Samuel, but rejected the Lord.

[17 : 35] That's exactly what God said. Listen to all what the people say, the Lord says. It's not you they've rejected, they're rejecting me as their king. So it's understandable that Samuel felt grieved, disturbed, upset by what was going on. A tremendous change was about to take place in his life. But of course, that change was also going to affect somebody else. It's going to affect Saul, who was going to become the king. When you read about him here in chapter 9, you see he's just an ordinary fellow. He's sent out by his dad to go and find the donkeys that have gone lost. He's just an ordinary man. In his, in a short time, his life is going to be radically transformed from being just a private individual to being a public figure. His life was going to be altered. Well, we know that life transforming changes break into our lives as well. It may be the great change that comes about because we're made redundant. That's certainly been the experience jumped up the coast for many men working at Redcar Steelworks and other places around the country. You often get a news bulletin, 3,000 jobs lost at this factory or this production. We can't begin unless we've been through it ourselves to imagine what that must be like. To suddenly become redundant, to leave the industry you've been in, perhaps even to have to move house and move an area to find work in another part of the country, another part of the world. Other changes, of course, come more expected, but they can still be unsettling. It may be the move from primary school to secondary school. It'd be a big change. It may be that you've come to retirement or perhaps you've come to the end of a university course and you're now a graduate having to seek work. Those changes are expected, but again, they can be quite disturbing.

Still others come very gradually, almost unnoticeably upon us, but again are upsetting. There's a deterioration in our health as we get older that may be especially troubling. There may be that we have an increased responsibility to care for an elderly relative or family member and suddenly we find ourselves being caught up with looking after them. These and other changes affect us all.

Whoever we are, they are always breaking out into our lives. But like Saul, sorry, like Samuel, these things that happen to us don't happen by chance.

These changes that come into our lives are not a matter of fate. They're not just a matter of luck. They're not even things that, as we've seen, we want or desire. Rather, they are come about because of God's will. You see, we are children of the living God, if we are believers. We have a heavenly Father. And the fact that he is involved in our lives in everything is a matter of great comfort, encouragement, and comfort to us. So let's learn a little bit how God dealt with Samuel here, how he helped him to understand what was going on and how he helped him to deal with and face this change in a way which was quite different to perhaps to how I or we face and deal with changes in our lives.

First of all, we see that God prepared Samuel for what was to happen. If you go back there to chapter 9 and verse 15, this is after, you remember, Saul and his servant had gone three days wandering around looking for donkeys, decided they'd go to this town because Samuel was there. He was a seer, a prophet, someone maybe to tell them where the donkeys were. But verse 15 says, the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel. About this time tomorrow, I'll send you a man from the land of Benjamin, anoint him ruler over my people Israel. So the day before everything changed, God told Samuel what to look out for and who to expect. Samuel wasn't going to be taken unawares with no idea of what to do. God was priming him for the change that he had to face and to deal with. And the reason, of course, is this, is because God knew all about this long before. God knew long before the people asked for a king that they were going to ask for a king. In fact, if you go all the way back to Deuteronomy, which is several hundred years, if not a thousand years earlier, then you find this. Deuteronomy 17, 14, God speaking through Moses to the people. When you enter the land, that's the land they're living in now, Israel, the Lord your

[22 : 21] God is giving you and take possession of it and are settled in it. And you say, let us set a king over us like all the nations around us. Exactly what they did say. Be sure to appoint over you the king, the Lord your God chooses. See, God wasn't caught off guard by their change of heart and their rejection of him. God wasn't caught off guard by their request for a new leader. And so because God wasn't caught off guard, so he made sure Samuel wasn't caught off guard as well. He's preparing him, getting him ready, showing him his plan. Now, as we've said, when we thought about the changes that take place in our lives, some of them just come out the blue. They just come out of nowhere. We aren't expecting them. And we sometimes think, I'm just completely unprepared for this. But in fact, we're not. As Christians, God has been preparing us for this change, been preparing us for what's about to happen. We may have been completely unaware of that. We may not have recognized that God was actually doing this. But God has not been idle in our lives. He is the God who knows the end from the beginning. He sees what's going to come our way, and he prepares us and makes us ready for it.

In Anthony Horowitz's popular novels about Alex Ryder, he's a junior teenage spy. Some of you may have read about him or seen the film. But Alex, this young boy, has a secret agent who's his uncle as well. He didn't know he's a secret agent, but all through his life, his uncle has been training him in the art of being a spy. For years and years, since he was a young boy, Alex and his uncle engaged in learning martial arts, extreme sports, survival skills, the perfect preparation for being a spy.

But as far as Alex was concerned, all the way through his life, he was just enjoying adventure sports with his uncle. It was harmless fun, enjoyable pursuits. When Jesus took those 12 disciples, a dozen ordinary men by anybody's stretch of imagination, fishermen, tax collectors, all sorts of odd people. When he called them to himself and they began to follow him, they had no concept of what he had planned for them at the end of three years of training and teaching. But Jesus was preparing them for the day of Pentecost. He was preparing them for what would happen and what would happen to them, that they might be the instruments that turn the world upside down, that change the whole course of history. They didn't know that. Jesus knew what he was doing. Dear friends, your whole life up until this very day has been God's preparation for what you will face tomorrow.

Everything that you've been through, everything that you've enjoyed, everything that you've enjoyed, everything that you've learned has been part of God's preparation for what he has for you tomorrow and the next day and the next week and the next month and the next year.

And more than that, God has been working in your life and been using and working through particularly those difficulties in your life to strengthen you in your faith, in your character, in your trust for what is to come around the corner. This is what James writes in his letter, chapter 1.

[25 : 45] Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds. A trial is something that tests us hard, difficulty, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. All that's been going on in your life, God has been using to strengthen you in the faith, to meet and deal with you, to make you the person, the man or woman of God that you are today. And you may still feel completely unprepared, you may still feel completely inadequate for what you have to face, but God has been at work in you to change, to mould, to shape, to prepare, to prime.

And you may not know what's around the corner, in fact you don't know what's around the corner, even if you plan what's around the corner you don't know what God will do. But he knows, and he's been working in your heart and life through the things that you've experienced, through the person you are, through your parenthood, through your children, through your parents, through your grandparents, through your church family, through the people you've met with, he's been working to prepare you to be the person who faces this coming change.

And that leads us to a second thing which is so important here. Not only did God prepare Samuel and prime him, but he reveals to him that God's good purpose is going to be worked out through this change. God has a purpose in this change and it's for good. Look at what he said in verse 16 to Samuel concerning Saul. About this time tomorrow I'll send you a man from the land of Benjamin, anointing ruler over the people, my people Israel. He doesn't stop there, he prepares him, but he says he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I've looked on my people for their cry has reached me. This change that is about to take place is going to be the means by which God's people are going to be delivered from their greatest enemy, by which God is going to bring grace and mercy and blessing to his people. Now we've seen already that their request for a king had come out of wrong motivation, a wrong heart, a wrong desire, wanting to keep up with everybody else and be like everybody else and so on. But even though they had come from a sinful heart,

God was bigger than that. God was able to overcome that and to bring about his good purpose and to turn even their sinful desire into a blessing. That's the amazing God we're talking about.

Sin can never stop God's gracious plan from being accomplished for those that he loves. And that's why we read Romans 5 20 where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

[28 : 34] In other words, however bad the situation is, no matter how wrong the situation is, no matter what's going on in that situation, no matter how terrible, how huge it is to us, to God, God's grace is so much bigger, so much wider, so much greater, so much more powerful, so much more awesome.

They were doing it from wrong motives. God would bring out of those wrong motives even a blessing for his people. Isn't that amazing, grace? You and I have made so many mistakes. You and I have got so many things wrong. We've sinned again and against the God who loves us and it hasn't turned him away from us one little bit. It hasn't stopped him from seeking to work out his purpose and plan for us not one little bit. He's bigger than you and I. He's bigger than our foolishness. He's bigger than our sin. He's bigger than our mistakes. See, the Philistines here, as I said, they were the real thorn in the flesh, the thorn in the side, as it were, of all of the God's people. They kept on harassing them and kept on attacking them hundreds and hundreds of years. They were like the, this isn't a phrase I like, so I won't use it, but they're the really bad neighbours. There's a programme I'm telling you about really bad neighbours. They're the sort of neighbours who live next door to you, just play their music really, really loud, but they were worse than that because they also came and stole all their sheep and they cattled and killed people and so on.

Even after defeated by Samuel and subdued for many, many years, as we read there, they didn't really go away. They were just waiting in the wings, looking for an opportunity to come back and inflict suffering upon God's people, and we'll come to that in a few chapters' time.

But God says, this king that they want and I'm going to appoint is going to deliver them from these Philistines. And notice how God closes those words to Samuel. He says, I've looked on my people, for their cry has reached me.

Where does that sound familiar? I'm not testing you. Our own folks should know a little bit of that, where that sounds familiar. It goes back to Exodus. Remember in Exodus where God meets with, or God chooses to send Moses to the people. The people are slaves, they are oppressed for 400 years.

[30 : 52] And we read this, the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help went up to God, so God was concerned about them. Here it is again.

God hearing the cry of his people, hearing the very groaning of their hearts. Let me assure you of this again, dear friends, that whatever you're going through, whatever changes take place, that as your heart groans and cries out to God, he hears, and he sees, and he acts.

And though it took many years for God to act in the case of Moses, yet God acted to deliver his people. And so here again, for their cry has reached me, says the Lord, and so I'm going to deliver them from the Philistines.

Of course, the question that comes up again and again in our minds, when these unwanted changes, when these sort of U-turns in our lives take place, when these situations occur, we ask the simple question, why, Lord?

Why? Why has this happened to me? Why are you doing this? Why has this come about? Now, as believers, as Christians, we know in our heads that nothing happens without a reason.

[32 : 04] We know in our heads that God is sovereign. We know in our heads that whatever happens to us is part of his will. And that's what the problem is. That's why we say, why?

What is your will? What are you doing here? That's the time, of course, dear friends, where we need to remember God will bring good out of it. God will bring good out of it.

We may not see it now. We may not see it immediately. We may not see it in a few months. We may not even see it in a few years. We may not even see it at all in our lives. Remember that people like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, they had the promise that God would give them the land, but they never actually saw it in their lifetime, but God still did it.

Here's David as he talks about his own struggles and problems in Psalm 27. He says, I'm still confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

And how many times have we as Christians seen the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living? When we've been up against it, when things have happened, when things that seem to us to be so bad really happened, how many times have we seen that God has been turning and using them for good?

[33 : 26] So God showed to Samuel that he prepared Samuel and he showed Samuel there was a purpose. Well, how did that affect Samuel? What was the outcome? How did Samuel actually deal with this change in his life?

this imposed change, really, because that's what it is. Well, what's amazing is this, that Samuel deals with the whole situation positively.

He greets the change positively, not negatively. Here's Saul. He's going to be Samuel's replacement. He's going to usurp his position.

He's going to remove him from being needed or wanted or serving the Lord as leader. Saul's going to push him out, going to make him redundant. It would be no surprise, would it, if Samuel was a little cold towards Saul.

It would be no surprise if he was a bit like, well, okay, they want the king and God said I've got to do it, so I'll just do it, I suppose. It's just one of those things and I'll put up with it and I'll be just formal, as it were, cold, as it were.

[34 : 25] But he's none of those things, isn't he? Look how he deals with Saul. Look how he cares for him. Look how he is positive and gracious towards him. If you go through the story, when they go to the meal, we're told, Samuel, verse 23, said to the cook, bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside.

So the cook took up the thigh, the best bit of meat, you know, the turkey drumstick or whatever you want to call it. I don't think it was a turkey they've eaten, maybe a lamb or something like that. But anyway, the best bit of meat, he's put it aside for Saul.

He wants to show him that he's on his side, that he cares for him. And then he spends all evening with him, verse 25, talked with him on the roof of the house. He's no doubt talking to him about the duties, the privileges, the responsibilities of being a king.

He's trying to help him and prepare him for what he has to do. And then later on the next day, when he's about to anoint Saul, he sends the servant on ahead. He knows that Saul, as we'll find out later, in chapter 10, he's quite a shy guy.

He's not somebody who likes to make a great fanfare of things. And so he takes him in secret and anoints him as king, preparing him for what is yet to be revealed.

[35 : 36] Not making a big public display of it yet. It's all come as a shock to Saul. And so Samuel deals with him positively, gently, carefully. Do you see that?

What a difference to me and you. What a difference to us when a change comes or when something happens to us. Then our first response is to be angry. Our first response is to be negative to those around about us because of what's happened.

And here, because he knew that God had been preparing him, because he knew that God had a purpose for good, he was able to be positive. He has amazing peace, doesn't he, Samuel? Peace not only to bear with the change, as I say, with gritted teeth, but to view it as being part of God's loving wisdom and care for him personally.

So here's the baton. Here's the baton coming towards us. The changeover. Whatever it may be in the coming weeks or months ahead. Can we receive it without fumbling it?

Without it falling to the ground? Without us falling to the ground? Well, with the help of the Lord, we can. With the help of the Lord, we can handle change.

[36 : 51] We can deal with the circumstances that are coming because we know that God has been preparing us for it and he's not been caught out and neither are we if we trust in him.

And we can handle it and take hold of the change that's being passed to us because we know that God has a purpose for good in it. We can't see it yet, maybe. When those Olympic runners are running, they have their hand behind them.

They can't see. They can't see the baton as it's placed into their hand. They've just got to take it without seeing it. Well, we're in that same situation. We're running forward in life and the baton's being passed.

We've got to take it positively and run on with it. Close with these words of Philippians before we pray together. Philippians chapter 4 verse 6. Surely they apply to what we've been thinking about.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[38 : 09] Let's pray together. You, O Lord, do not change.

You are forever the same, forever faithful, dependable, reliant. And, Lord, you are not caught out by changes that take place in the world around about us.

Lord, you know exactly what's happening. You know exactly where you're leading this world, this human race. You know exactly what the end is going to be. You've revealed that to us.

We know it will be when Jesus comes again to judge, when we are brought before the very throne of God to give account for our lives. We know that that day is coming, Lord, when we shall see you as you truly are.

And for those who've received your wonderful forgiveness in Jesus, it will be a day of great rejoicing, a day of great delight. Oh, Lord, how sad it will be for those who are not prepared, have lived their lives just for the here and there.

[39 : 11] How terrible, how sorrowful. And, Lord, you know that in this world as we live, there are changes that come and hit us, changes that around the corner we've yet to face as well, and perhaps even changes that we're having to come to terms with at this time.

Lord, you haven't left us unprepared, even though we feel it, and you do have a purpose for good, even though we can't see it. We ask, oh Lord, again, that you would give to us that peace that comes from casting all our cares on you, from trusting you, the God who has our lives in the palm of your hand.

We pray that our faith may increase, and that, oh Lord, at this change, we may meet with thanksgiving to you, and we might positively receive, oh Lord, what you are doing.

Deliver us, Lord, from bitterness. Deliver us, Lord, from despondency. Deliver us, Lord, from being overwhelmed with self-pity and grief. Cause us again, oh Lord, to recognize that we have a loving Heavenly Father who does all things well.

Increase our faith, then, and give us that trust in you for the days ahead, and in these present days, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you before his presence in glory, without fault, and with great joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, before all of time, today, tomorrow, and forevermore.

[41 : 01] Amen.