

Introduction

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[0:00] We are kicking off a new sermon series. We just finished Proverbs, and that was a great time. Took us through the summertime and into the kickoff of the school year, but now, and we're launching into this series just in time for our community groups to start, and a lot of our community groups, they follow along with the sermon from Sunday.

And typically what we do is we go through books of the Bible, and we are gonna go through 1 Samuel just like that, but today is a little bit different. Today is an introduction to 1 Samuel, and that's helped to set the stage for how we're gonna go through it and help us to understand this book a little bit better, and so it'll feel a little bit academic and pragmatic in the beginning, but just hang in there.

It'll get good, I promise you. The sermon will get good as it goes on, and we're also gonna be getting into the larger story, right, that leads up to 1 Samuel, including an overview of the book of Judges that Judges leaves off where 1 Samuel picks up.

And so first off, it's good to know that when you consider going to any book of the Bible, what kind of genre you are reading, right? So you have, you know, different kinds of genres. So if you go to the Psalms, you realize you're reading poetry.

You're reading some things in there. It's like you can't take all of that literally. Like God really doesn't have feathers, okay? Like there's just poetry stuff that's involved with that that's just meant to stir your mind and your heart and to help you to see the things of God in that kind of way.

[1:31] It's like poetry, it ministers to our hearts in a unique and different way. And then there is, you know, there's historic narrative, which is what 1 Samuel is. 1 Samuel is a historic narrative, and it is telling of real events that took place in real places.

But it's, we also have to realize that it's biblical historic narrative, meaning we believe God had a greater purpose for why he included every story in 1 Samuel. And we as Christians, if you're a Christian, what you believe about the Bible is in agreement with what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15, 4.

It says, for whatever was written in the former days, he's talking about, he's talking about Scripture, he's talking about the Old Testament here. Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction. That through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures, right?

He's talking about Old Testament, Genesis, all the way through Malachi, that we'll have hope.

Hope. So you look at those things, and we can read 1 Samuel, and it's true, and it tells something, and it gives us insight to what was happening in that time and that place, but also it is meant for us to help us, to encourage us, because we need endurance.

We need hope. And that's important for us to know. But we also have to realize, and it's good to know, that reading and preaching through historic narrative like 1 Samuel, it comes with some challenges.

[2:54] So first challenge is that you're reading stories, and one story, one little episode, can span several chapters, and guess what? We're not gonna read three chapters in one sitting on a Sunday, right?

Because we'll have five minutes to talk, and then it'll be over. But the solution for that is we're not gonna exposit as like the typical way we would exposit Scripture.

It's not gonna go verse by verse. Sundays, we are gonna have to preach through long chapters and multiple chapters, right? Because it's telling one story. And what we're gonna do to make sure that like, hey, we wanna get, we wanna be a people of the Word, and we don't wanna like skip over any parts of the Word.

So what we're gonna do is we're gonna send you what the reading is gonna be leading up to that Sunday, right? So we'll send you, hey, here's the passage we're gonna cover, and we're gonna really encourage you. During the week, spend time in that passage.

Get familiar with it. Read it. We want all of us reading it and staying up with that. And so we're gonna encourage you to do that. We are still going to use the text to preach from, all right?

[3:59] But oftentimes what we'll do is we'll summarize long chunks to say here's kind of what's happening in a very summary form to move along as needed. But we will focus on key verses and preach from those key verses, okay?

So that is dealing with challenge number one and how we're gonna do that. Challenge number two is the context of time and place in these historic narratives. They can be really lost on us. In those days, the social norms, the cultural norms, they were particular.

And when people wrote about those things, those social and contextual norms were just assumed by the reader of that day. They didn't really write it into the story to explain them at all.

And so we have to appreciate that as we're reading these things, there are significant differences from our modern social structures, our modern religious practices, rules of engagement for foreign affairs and wars, how nations conducted themselves with other nations, all that was going on there. And then also, I would say, especially, you know, including that, our Western mindset, is that they just had a thinness between the physical and spiritual world that they lived in, right?

[5:12] They weren't as modern and naturalistic as I say we would be today in the Western world, right? So those are some big differences that we have to appreciate.

And some of the things that we have to realize too in that time is they were patriarchal and they were agrarian, right? So nations, they were small and stronger nations in that time in the surrounding areas.

And we're gonna read about some of those people. Like, if they were strong enough, they would have a capital city and that capital city was often walled and that was a, that meant you were kind of a big deal, somewhat of a big deal if you had one of those things in place, right?

And that's where the king lived and that's where soldiers were and that's where like, man, if a nation was gonna rise up and besiege another one, like all the people would run into that walled city for safety.

And that doesn't mean everybody lived in the city. It's portions of a nation would live in the city but the rest lived outside the city. So, and again, that time it was a lot more, like the way society was set up was a lot more rural, rural, than it was urban.

[6:21] And here's another interesting thing we have to appreciate about nations of that time.

When we read this, territorial boundaries weren't as clearly defined, right? You didn't look on a map and it was like, okay, this is where, you know, my nation stops and their nation starts.

Nations often fought over territories to expand their kingdom which meant for them power and wealth but actually we're gonna realize as we get later into this sermon, there's a lot more spiritually going on with that as well, undergirding that, wanting to expand their nation and the breadth of their kingdom.

And I say all this to say as we approach these things, there's a lot of danger in us approaching this text and overlaying our modern mindset and sensibilities onto that text to try to understand maybe what they're thinking because they probably behaved and thought very differently to what we do today.

How we process, how we perceive the world today is vastly different to them. We must consider, as we read this, the author's original intent for the details and the stories included.

And that brings us to challenge number three is that it is, we have to be careful not to lose sight of the bigger story. Much of 1 Samuel is believed to be written by the prophet Samuel with contributions from a couple other prophets, Nathan and Gad, but it wasn't finished until generations later after the kingdom of Israel was divided.

[7:45] So after David had reigned and died, and then Solomon reigned and died, and then the nation of Israel was divided between the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom. And it's believed that the final contributions that kind of closed up 1 Samuel and some of 2 Samuel was added by some unknown authors, and that's okay.

God has a hand in guiding all of those things. And as much as this book is focused on a small window of time, we have to appreciate 1 Samuel is focused on a very small window of time, and we

think about all of Israel's history, we have to remember that it's part of a bigger story. So locating, we have to locate Samuel in, one Samuel in the bigger story. And so, we aren't gonna start there, and we're also not gonna start at the prequel to 1 Samuel, which is Judges. We're not gonna start at Judges just yet. We're gonna get there. No, we need to go back even further. We gotta go back to the very beginning. Because the Bible is telling one story. 1 Samuel's just a part of that one big story. And if you realize what Jesus told his disciples much later on, he said this about Scripture before he sent it into heaven, and he taught them how all of the Old Testament, the law and the prophets, everything Moses had written in, everything that was in Scripture, is actually telling a story that anticipates and foreshadows God's kingdom and its king, who is Jesus Christ.

[9 : 15] So if you really want to understand the Old Testament clearly, if you really want to see how actually even 1 Samuel is telling this one story and there's continuity from beginning to end throughout the whole of the Bible, you have to understand that like, hey, these things are pointing to you and fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

To understand Israel as God's kingdom is partially revealed then is to understand, helps us understand how we live in God's kingdom today as God's people.

So let's go back to the very beginning. God created his good and perfect kingdom called earth, right? He created people to fill his kingdom and bring dominion over it through multiplying and spreading out from that place where he put Adam and Eve from Eden itself.

And so in this perfect garden kingdom, this paradise God had made, they would be his people. There his people would be his people. And they would get to enjoy him and glorify him through their obedience to God and by fulfilling what he had created us for.

He said to Adam and Eve, fill the earth, multiply, subdue it. That's what they were called to do. And as they multiplied and filled the earth, more and more of the earth would rejoice under the good dominion of God's emissaries, God's emissaries of going out and being his representative, his image bearers to all of creation.

[10 : 36] And in that place, as they went out, God would be glorified as they brought dominion over the earth. And that's how it was supposed to happen. That was God's intent from the very beginning. And the first two chapters of the Bible, you can read the first two chapters and they set up the rest of the Bible.

It gives us the pattern for God's kingdom. Okay? Creation, the earth, without sin and all of its goodness, just as God intended, Eden there, that is the pattern for God's kingdom.

You get to see what it's about. And here is what that means. God's kingdom is God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's presence. That theme plays throughout the rest of the Bible.

God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying his presence. But then man sinned. We ruined it. Yet, we see God didn't give up on that plan.

His kingdom purpose remained. But now, it's a little bit different. He's bringing it about through his plan of redemption. Slowly revealed throughout history.

[11 : 41] The scriptures that we see after the fall, after Genesis 3. And the Bible follows God's plan through Abraham and his offspring that became the nation of Israel. And he delivers them out of Egypt.

They're in slavery to Egypt. They're in bondage to Egypt. And he brings them to the, his point of bringing them out of Egypt was bringing them into an inheritance in a promised land that he has set aside for them called Canaan.

And the promise there and they were expecting from him is there in Canaan, each family and each tribe would spread out and fill that land. Right? Each would be given a plot of land, a garden inheritance you might call it, to keep and to cultivate for themselves.

And the increase of their land and their herds would be used for worship to God, Yahweh, and to enjoy life together as his people. And so that was the big plan.

And then on the way to Canaan land, he stops. He stops, says, Israel, let's pause here at Mount Sinai before we get there. I'm gonna give you my laws, I'm gonna give you a sanctuary with its sacrificial regulations for the atonement of your sins and for proper worship to me.

[12 : 50] And guess what? That sanctuary, when it was built and it was put together, existed right at the center of the camp. God dwelt among his people again. And only after that, after he established these things, I will be your God, you will be my people at Sinai, that covenant was

made.

Then they moved on and eventually they possessed Canaan, God's inheritance to them. And so you see this God, it's kind of summarized the big part of this here is the God who delivers Israel from Egypt, the God who delivers his people, is the God who demands something of them.

He says, you will be a people who obey my law and worship me as I have directed you to worship me. You will worship me rightly and I will be the God, not only who delivers and demands, I will be the God who dwells among you.

See how the kingdom pattern is just being revealed over and over and over again in different ways and different stories throughout the Bible. It's telling one story and it's being revealed through Israel and again, it's for our benefit, it's for our encouragement.

And we have to realize even today, you and me, in God's kingdom, that purpose has not changed. It's his kingdom, his people, and his place under his rule in his presence.

[14:07] So whether it's Eden or Israel, the church or the new heavens and new earth, this is the consistent theme of pattern and pattern of the Bible story and this is how we're meant to read the Bible.

It's more than a set of moral codes or inspiring stories. It is the story of a king and a kingdom from beginning to end. And I believe it bears out in every person because God created us to be under authority and I think deep down there is a desire for that even though it is somewhat corrupted and misguided because of sin.

I believe that we all are searching for a king and I believe of the Bible, that is the big story of the Bible is like despite whether you realize it or not or whether you accept that tenant or not, we all are searching for a king.

Here's an ironic proof of that in our modern day. We've all heard of that no kings movement, right? And I'm not here to criticize it, I'm not here to condone it, but why is it even a thing? And it would be wise for us to step back and if you're a Republican you step back objectively without any prejudice and you, let's consider this, let's consider this objectively, let's assume the best.

Well, it comes from the concern that the office of the president is garnering too much centralized power and working around constitutional checks and balances. And an honest look back over several decades and many people are starting to do that on both sides of the aisle reveals that drift didn't start in 2024.

[15:31] It's been happening on both sides of the aisle because both sides approve when their guy takes more power to do the outcomes of their liking. Right? Because when we want things, when we are so desperate in a place, like we need things to go a certain way and we don't like what is happening, we look for a king type figure to get it fixed as soon as possible.

We need that, we desire that, we want that. We believe that centralized power and authority in the right hands is actually a good thing. Every single person.

It just may work out a little bit differently. And that's looked differently at different times in history.

Today in the West, we're far removed from the days of monarchy and kings sitting on thrones.

That was like so normalized. When you think about it, we're in a rare part of history. It's only been a few centuries since like kings were normal to rule over nations. It's not been a long time.

Instead, what we, and again in the West, I think what's drifted, what's happened over time is instead of like saying like, man, the kings, a king on the throne somewhere having authority over us, man, they could be a good thing and they could be a really bad thing, right?

[16:47] So we've replaced that in our modern mindset and we've said, you know what, we've made ourselves the king that our hearts are searching for. We've gone from like one person to everybody being their own king. We're the land of the free and the home of the brave.

But is every man being his own authority the best solution to avoiding tyranny? Enter the book of Judges, which is again, like I said, is the prequel to 1 Samuel.

The book of Judges, if you want to read a proof text for why you should not be the king of your heart, that is, that text shows over many generations of Israel that being your own authority, being your own king, king leads to nowhere good.

Israel without a king was incapable of covenant faithfulness to God. They would worship idols, disobey God's law, moral decay would increase and then God would discipline them at some point through the surrounding nations in order to get them to return to him and then Israel would turn to God for help in those times.

It's like, oh my gosh, things are so bad. And God would raise a judge, he would raise a leader for that time to deliver Israel out of the hands of their enemies and Israel would go and they would repent and they would return to the Lord and return to proper worship and they would reestablish, like they would make vows again, like we're never ever gonna fail again and then the cycle would repeat itself in time.

[18:14] And friends, we were, so the elders get together early on Sunday mornings to pray together, pray for the service, pray for y'all, pray for each other and we were just talking about this thing of like, man, the drift that happens in our hearts.

Like, when things are going well, we drift from God. That's often, like when, in the time of the judges, Israel drifted from God when things were going well.

When there was grain in the barn, when there was plenty of herds and flocks to care for them, like that's when they started to drift. You know? It's rarely in the times of like, hey, what preceded judges was Joshua and it was like, man, there was always hills to take and mountains to take and wars to fight and trusting in God for those things to take ground and it's easy to have so much faith and just be like, right on and on fire for God during those times and faithful to him but what about in between that and the difficult times?

That's where we have to be careful. That is the most dangerous time for our hearts to be tempted into idolatry. So when things are just going, yeah, I gotta wake up another day, I gotta get the kids to school, I gotta do my job, I gotta pay bills, I gotta do, rinse and repeat over and over and over again, it starts to be like, oh my goodness, this is so boring.

Where's the, where's the joie de vivre of life? And so we go looking for it in all the wrong places. That's what we do.

[19:54] So we can understand this cycle that Israel's in. But here's the thing, what you see in Judges, which we have to recognize to be very, very careful about, in each cycle that they went in, all right, moving away from God, God disciplines them, they turn to God, they repent, God saves them, and then the cycle repeats.

Each time it gets darker and their sin gets worse. The book of Judges opens with the failure of the tribe of Benjamin and coming in to possess their part of God's inheritance.

They were supposed to drive out the Jebusites from the land. And they didn't. And you know what? The book of Judges ends with a civil war because the tribe of Benjamin turned a blind eye to evil. Here's what happened. Some of the men of their tribe, some Benjamite men, physically and sexually assaulted a young lady all night, resulting in her death. News about that spread to all the other tribes of Israel.

They were like, these guys need to be brought to justice, but the tribe of Benjamin chose to protect these men instead. Civil war ensued. The tribe of Benjamin lost 25,000 fighting men and the other tribes lost 30,000 fighting men because of that civil war.

[21:16] See, there's real danger when we are our own authority, when we are the king of our own hearts. The drift isn't into good places. The drift isn't into liberty and freedom for everyone.

It's a drift into greater confusion. chaos and evil. And that's inevitably what happens because you become what you worship and guess what?

We're all worshipping something. Here's the thing we have to remember. Israel occupied Canaan, right? Canaan was already an occupied territory when Israel came to possess it.

And all the Canaanite nations that were there, they worshipped Baal and they worshipped Asherah. And Baal, you have to remember, Baal isn't a single god. It's not talking about one god of how we think of gods.

Actually, it's the name applied to a territorial deity who every nation believed was in charge of their land. He had power over their land, their little plot in Canaan.

[22:17] And so, worshipping your local Baal was important because Baal controlled the rain and he controlled the outcome of the harvest where you lived. And I mean, you know, back then, if your crops didn't do well, that was more like life or death than it was like, hmm, less money in my pocket.

And then there's Asherah. Asherah was the goddess of passion over sexual vitality and military might. And an author, academic, Jay Thompson, in his book, *The Bible and Archaeology*, he said this, Canaanite religion of that day we're talking about emphasized fertility rights of a highly sensuous nature, including male and female temple prostitutes engaging in sexual practices believed to ensure crop and livestock prosperity.

The sacrificial rituals, including the names of offerings, the animal sacrifice, and the ceremonial procedures, resembled those of Israel that would later, that Israel would later offer to Yahweh. So we kind of get an idea from the sacrificial system God puts in, like kind of what was going on in the other nations. Every Canaanite nation believed, Asherah particularly, was a goddess queen who was married to either the local Baal or, so the local Baals were like the sub-gods. And then they had, there was like another level of gods higher than that and they were called the Elohim or El, right? And you know what's interesting about that is that from Genesis onward, God calls himself and reveals himself in scripture as El or Elohim, like the plural form of El is Elohim until he reveals his covenant name to Israel and he says, you're gonna know me not by that, you're gonna know me by Yahweh.

[24:02] And although the surrounding nations have a sense there is this higher God above our local Baals, they don't really fully know him. So God's saying, I am the El, isn't suggesting that the Canaanites had it right and they were doing it right.

He's connecting himself to what people around were seeking but not fully understanding and then he goes on to make a clear distinction between, hey, these guys, you guys aren't believing rightly about me and he reveals himself to Israel as Yahweh.

So you see this thing of the Canaanite peoples, they had this intuition about the one true God, this God that was the higher God but it was just an intuition. Israel had the true revelation and it was through Israel that the one true Elohim would continue his plan of redemption and restoration. He was very different in nature and kind to the false Elohim that these men believed in, the Canaanites believed in because they had manipulated and adjusted that to their sinful blindness. So think about this, that spiritual nature, these gods that these Canaanite nations believed in that they were holding on to, well, we find that Israel driving out the Canaanites had a particular purpose and pattern that was actually redemptive.

[25:22] See, the people of these lands were wholly given over to the worship of their false gods and they believed that these false gods had dominion over those territorial boundaries and so because of that they worshipped them but again, they became what they worshipped.

They became like the gods they worshipped. What's interesting and very different to the God of Israel about these false gods is they had no moral codes and so there's been a lot of academic research that is done on this and so kind of summarize what many scholars and historians have said at that time.

Baal and Asherah worship was devoid of any moral accountability. Their religious system stood in stark contrast to Israel, especially it was a cult where worshippers engaged in lewd, immoral acts. That's what the gods led them into. Be lewd and be immoral. What is revealed through their worship is a system where a religious practice manipulates the gods through human behavior rather than conform human behavior to divine standards.

And so you see that with the Baals and Asherahs. That's what was happening. People were able to manipulate the gods to do what they wanted, to conform to their needs. And the God of Israel was very different. He's like, no, no, no, no. You're conforming to who I am.

[26:45] You're conforming to who I want you to be. And I would say these Baals and Asherahs, as lewd as they were, they weren't even the worst in that area. If you kind of broaden out outside of Canaan, the neighboring nations, the Ammonites and the Moabites, they worshipped these two gods called Molech and Chemosh.

And these gods, their worship required that parents burn their own children and to engage in bestiality. That was how they had their worship done.

So when you engage in worship that makes people objects, whether it's prostitution or human sacrifice, what you are doing is you are dehumanizing. You are tearing down the nature of the dignity, the image of God that God has put on his people, his creation, until you begin to dehumanize them, which means that you start to treat people how you want to in an undignified way.

And so what ensues is moral decline. That's what happens. Because you look at people and all they are is collateral in their commodities to be used to gain favor with the gods for your own needs, to garner wealth for yourself or protection for yourself or simply just to satisfy your lustful passions. Think about it. These Benjamins, these men of Benjamin, they didn't drive out the Jebusites in Judges chapter 1. They began to worship the gods of the Jebusites and then generations later, generations later, the moral decay reaches a point where a whole community turns a blind eye to a

group of men who physically and sexually abuse a lady to her death.

[28:26] Sin doesn't stay static. History keeps repeating this because no one listens. It gets darker, sin gets darker, it gets more destructive over time and over generations when we stop worshipping the one true and living God and God's church needs to be on warning for this just like Israel needed to be on warning for this.

Israel assimilated the culture and the gods of their neighbors and you know what? We can look at that and be like, oh, we're different now. No, we're not. It's easy for us to fall into that trap too. It's very easy.

Small compromises today put us on a trajectory to a greater downfall later on and that might be only generations later on. We may never live to see that and that's why God cares so much about us staying pure in our worship to him alone while we are living among a people who don't worship him. God's purpose for Israel was not to assimilate to the surrounding nations. He wanted them to stand out as a witness of him as the God, the Elohim who is completely different and superior in every way not how they thought Elohim was but how he truly revealed his true nature and how he was doing it through Israel.

See friends, whether it's Israel or whether it's the church, our holiness bears witness to the invisible God. One Samuel, as we go along, there's gonna be some tough stories and it's gonna be like why in the world, why was God seems so particular and demanding but God cares about holiness.

[30:09] He cares about his people's holiness because we become what we worship and according to God's redemptive plan and purposes for you and me, his people, his church, we are to become more holy because he is holy.

We take sin seriously because God takes sin seriously. He takes idolatry seriously. Driving the Canaanites out of the land was really driving their idols out of the land because God doesn't abide idols and idolatry in his kingdom.

And so we have to reckon with that too. We need to be those who are driving out the idols in our camp, in our own hearts. And our hearts are idol factories.

So the question you and me we have to reckon with is, is my life, is our togetherness, are we moving towards God's holiness? Are we moving towards his righteousness?

Or is it bending, are we bending the rules, are we bending things toward our preferences and our passions? sins? We have to understand that God and believe this, that God is interested in all of our hearts, in all of our obedience.

[31:28] That's where he wants us to get to. Because idolatry not only leads to moral decline, it gives us the false sense that we are in control.

See, when we start to engage in idolatry, we can even do that towards God. We start to use him like the people use the Baals and the Asherahs. If I just do some things, then like God has to respond to me how I want him to respond.

We approach God as like we can control him somehow. Like he's some genie in a bottle that if we just do the right thing, he gives me the wishes of my heart. And we start to live in a way that we, man, we want to bend God or we live in a way if we're not Christians, we bend the gods or the fates or the universe, whatever it is, to like, hey, towards our will and the desires of our heart.

But Yahweh is like, no, no, no, friends, my people, he says to us over and over again, I'm altogether different. I'm not conforming to you. You are my worshipers who are conforming to me.

You are becoming like me. That's what you're meant to do. And the more that we conform to the holiness of God and to his nature, the more that we are bearing witness to him, we get a chance, we get the privilege of making the invisible God visible.

[32:40] We put on display God at work in us as we live our lives in our togetherness. We are putting on display, we're saying, if you want to know kind of what God is like, just look at us.

That's a scary thought. All of Israel's history is held up against this idea of holiness. You have to look at it that way.

You have to read the Old Testament that way. That's God's greater purpose, that we are to bear witness to the true nature and character of the King of kings and the Lord of lords and to his kingdom.

The prophet Isaiah talks about Israel time and time again after God had disciplined them and they were scattered throughout all the earth by the Babylon and Assyria and various places. He's like, you know what?

I'm gonna return you to a place. You're gonna be my people again. I'm gonna restore a remnant. And you know what? Man, my righteousness is gonna flow out from you. A throne will be established again and you know what?

[33 : 37] You're going to be a light to the nations. You are going to bear witness to the nations about who I truly am. That is what God is saying to his people.

Here's the thing. When you look at what happened in Judges, Israel tried it without a king and failed over and over and over again.

And Samuel begins where the book of Judges ends and it says this in Judges 21-25. It's the last verse in Judges. In those days, there was no king in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in their own eyes. What Israel began to realize is this. We need a king. Okay? We've tried it for generations and it keeps not working out. We need a king. Why?

[34 : 35] To save us from ourselves, to save us from our enemies, to lead the way, to unite us. And that's kind of where they were at. And we see that later on in 1 Samuel.

They say, man, we want a king so we could be like the other nations. They realized they wanted a king, but they wanted it for the wrong reasons. More than what they were looking for in a king, they needed a king to unite them and guide them to live towards what God demands of his people in his kingdom.

God's people in God's place, under God's rule, in God's presence, for God's glory. They needed a king that was to guide them through that. Samuel finds them honest. It finds us honest. We're also searching for that king.

But often, the search that we have for a king is the king that we want and not the king that we need. We want a king who will rescue us, yes and amen, from our sins and troubles, who will fight our battles.

That is good. But as much as we need that, we also need a king to guide us like a shepherd. We need a shepherd king. A king who sets the example of holiness, who leads us in paths of righteousness for his namesake, who can show us the way to live in God's kingdom.

[35 : 52] We need a king that is after God's own heart. All of us are searching for a king. And here's the thing, what the Bible says over and over again is Jesus is the king our hearts long for.

Jesus is the king that we are all searching for. He is the king who is able to save us from ourselves and he is the king who saves us from our enemies.

And when we drift into idolatry and sin, he was the king who stayed faithful to God. Where we fail to be holy, he succeeded.

Where we face certain defeat by death, we all face that. He became the champion king who defeated death, faced it down.

He fulfilled what we couldn't so that we could live for him. So that we wouldn't have to earn our place in his kingdom and hold our place in his kingdom and having received our place through his free gift of grace.

[36 : 58] See, the idea of holiness for you and me, until we have this idea of like justification by faith, that should terrify us. Because if we're trying to be as holy as God is holy, we have to be honest with ourselves.

Man, we have an enemy within that ruins that all the time. It bends us away from God's holiness all the time. And to know that Jesus did it for us and he is working it out in us is the greatest news. It's the great news of the gospel. That in him and by faith in him, we are justified by that faith. We are justified because he earned a righteousness we could never earn.

And so, because of that, oh, I can live from that place. I can live towards God's holiness knowing that when I fall short, I don't have to despair or feel like I'm out of the kingdom anymore.

No, I'm still in there because I can go to this throne of grace. I can go to this king who is there to say, do not worry. Let's get you back on. Let's get you back on the way. It's gonna be okay.

[38 : 03] He's working it out in us. And he gives us grace after grace after grace. He gives us gifts. He gives us the spirit who empowers us and is at work in us to become more like him.

Jesus is the king that we're looking for. He is the king above all kings. And what he does, he comes and he offers to us his peace, his righteousness, his victory, and a place in his kingdom that will never end.

But, it's an invitation to come, live his way. It's not an invitation to come and live your own way. We gotta follow him. We must follow him.

