

Your kingdom come

1 Samuel 18 – 31

You'll find the word kingdom over 300 times in the pages of the bible. 16 times in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. And over 100 times in the gospels of matthew mark and luke.

And when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray. The significance of the kingdom is right up there.

Most important. Your name be honoured. Hallowed be your name.

But straight after. YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Here's the first request you should make when you're going to pray. Before you start talking about YOU.

Remind yourself that you're not actually the centre of the universe. Get yourself properly oriented.

Place yourself. And YOUR desires. And YOUR concerns. Place THEM.....in proper relation to. God and his kingdom, and his will.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done.

Now of course. Having prayed those things. That might mean modifying your request for a Ferrari.

I don't know. Maybe not.

But it's a great way to start. Because in a sense..... You can't really pray the rest of the prayer. Until you're good with God's glory and God's kingdom and his will. Over against your own.

And right through the book of 1 Samuel. And we're having our last look at it today. The story that starts with the childless Hannah and the birth of Samuel at the start to the death of Saul in the last chapter.

From start to finish it's the story of God's kingdom. We're reading about GOD'S PEOPLE. And we're reading about God working out HIS PURPOSES through them.

And specifically. In these last chapters. The focus is on the king....of God's kingdom.

And what we're seeing. Is where people sit with that. Do they want God's kingdom to come. With his appointed king? Do they want to do his will..or not?

And at this point we're clear on one thing. And that is. David is God's choice.

We know it because God told Samuel to reject Saul who disobeyed. We know it because God told Samuel to go and anoint David in his place.

We know it because God's spirit's with David. And because he knocked off a huge brute named Goliath.

But here's the surprising thing. If David's God's chosen king. And if that's God's will. If David's the anointed. If David's just saved the nation. Then why aren't we looking at a coronation here in chapter 18? Why does David have to run around like a fugitive.....instead of being lifted up onto the shoulders of the men with a crown on his head?

It's a strange thing. David's the chosen leader. But plenty of people either can't see it....or they won't have it.

But I guess when you think about it. Jesus was God's anointed as well wasn't he. It was clear that he was God's chosen one as well. And you see the kind of treatment he got. And we'll see the parallels on the way through between David and Jesus. And the way people treat them. They're both polarizing figures. Because they force people to make that decision. About where they stand with God's kingdom and God's will. Over against their own.

And we're going to run the highlights reel of these last 10 or so chapters.

And we'll just take a note. Of people's motives. And reactions. To the king in waiting. Of God's kingdom.

And right from the start. Saul and his son Jonathan, are at polar opposites.

Chapter 18. First few verses there.

Jonathan thinks the world of David. Jonathan's the number one ticket holder of the I Love David fan club.

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.

Now it's worth noting that both Saul and his son Jonathan. Both of them stand to lose out if David gets the kingship. Saul's the king. And Jonathan's the heir. So they have the same amount to lose.

But look at what Jonathan does. There in verse 4. And make sure you get the symbolism of this.

Jonathan takes off his royal robe, and gives it to David. Now there's no mention that David's cold. That's not the point. Point is..... here's the king's son. Handing over the symbol of the heir.... Along with his tunic, sword, bow and belt. to God's anointed. To God's choice for king.

As if to say. I give up my rights. I give up my future. It's a handover. Thy kingdom come says Jonathan.

And Jonathan makes a covenant with David. Which seems to over-ride his loyalty even to his father.

Jonathan loves David.

But as you get to verse 6. You can see David's having the opposite effect on SAUL. they're coming home from battle and the girls are celebrating. They're dancing and singing.

Saul has slain his thousands. But David his tens of thousands.

And Saul's not too happy about playing second fiddle.

This refrain galled him. They have credited David with tens of thousands, he thought, but me with only thousands.

Everything's relative isn't it!!

And then the words that cut to the heart of the matter.....What more can he get but the kingdom?

And there's a list of emotions in the next few verses. Saul's jealous of David. And three times. We're told he's AFRAID of David. He's ANGRY at David. Tries to KILL DAVID.

But the bottom line is he's **scared of him** because God is with him. Which maybe explains what's driving people if you've ever found they're against you simply because you're a Christian. And was **certainly the case** when the Pharisees and the Saducees and the teachers of the law were so determined to kill Jesus.

Verse 15. You'll see it again. When Saul saw how **successful** David was, he was **afraid of him**. And the same down in verse 29. Saul became **still more afraid of** David, and he remained his enemy for the rest of his days.

In this case again because his own daughter so **loves David**. As so many others do.

And so in his jealousy and in his fear, King Saul sets out to **kill him**.

Saul's refrain. My kingdom come. Not his.

Chapter 19 verse 4. Jonathan tries to speak sense to his father.

**1 Samuel 19:4** .... "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.

Don't you remember he says. How he killed the Philistine?

.....Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"

" And for just a second you think sense will prevail. Saul swears an oath.

As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death."

But Saul's kingdom's threatened. And his heart's as hard as a rock. And he's beyond reason.

So David's on the run until Saul's last living breath. First in chapter 19 to a place called Naioth at Ramah, and chapter 20 where he's warned by Jonathan, and chapter 21 where he runs first to **Nob**, and then in verse 10 it says this is how desperate he is. "That Day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath" which is a Philistine city. Where David pretends he's a madman. He scratches marks on the gates and lets the saliva run down his beard as though he's crazy and then chapter 22 he escapes to the cave of Adullam and then from there to **Moab** and from there to the forest of **Hereth** in verse 5 of chapter 22. Where he gathers around him a disaffected rebel army.

And if you want to gauge the intensity of the rage. The paranoia of Saul. Read verses 16 to 18 about the slaughter of the innocent Ahilimelech the priest along with every man woman and child, infant, animal in the town of Nob.

And it's echoes of Jesus again. And King Herod's slaughter of the innocents.

It's worth noting that when the shoe's on the other foot. When David has a chance to kill Saul and advance his kingship. He doesn't. Twice he gets the chance. Twice he refuses to do it. The first time in chapter 24 David and his men are hiding from Saul in the back of a cave. And I guess there are no public toilets in the desert. And Saul comes into the cave by himself to use the amenities. And David's men are saying. Here's your chance. More than that. They're saying. God has given him into your hands. But David says NO. I refuse to lay a hand against the Lord's anointed. Instead he just cuts off the end of Saul's robe. And again proves his own innocence and worthiness. And at the same time shows a grace that gives even the unworthy Saul and chance to repent.

All the while **Saul** continues on his irrational, vengeful trail of destruction. David's got **enemy Philistines on the one side**, and **enemy Saul** on the other side. The Jews and the Gentiles are all against him. If you want to imagine how that feels for a minute, you can actually read about it in the some of the **Psalms** David writes while he's on the run.

And as we track through the kind of reactions of the people who meet him while he's a fugitive, while we're going to see in a moment that some **recognise him** as the king that he is, most often there's **opposition**.

Take a quick look at chapter 23. And there's this little town in Israel called Keilah. being attacked by Philistines. And David being David comes to the rescue. But as Saul gets to hear about it and calls up his forces, David wisely seeks God's advice. "Will the citizens of Keilah **surrender me and my men to Saul?**" Will they give me up? And God says. Too right **they will**. So David and his six hundred men move on to **Ziph**.

And verse 19, the dobbing **Ziphites** go up to Saul in Gibeah and say to him, "Isn't David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh on the hill of Hakilah?" They say to Saul, **come on down** and we'll hand him over to you.

Let me tell you, if **Osama bin Laden** had friends like these, he'd have been well and truly caught by now.

Now, while you wouldn't say everyone shares Saul's death wish for David, I wonder.... in a way..... if they're all doing the same sort of thing – in protecting their own interests? .....more concerned about their own skin. Than God's kingdom. Or even doing what's right.

And if you want to be generous you might say they didn't have a choice. You might even say they were WISE. After all, if you don't look after yourself, WHO WILL?

You might think that. Except in chapter 25. there's this great little story That reminds us of the foolishness of failing to recognize God's king.

David and his men are out in the desert and they've been protecting Nabal's shepherds. And he sends some men to politely ask Nabal for some food. But Nabal rudely sends 'em packing. Who is this David?

Red rag to a bull. And David and his men get suited up for a slaughter. They're on their way and Nabal's wife Abigail hears what's happened. And she quickly puts some stuff together. Two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, sheep, roasted grain, cakes of raisins and pressed figs. She loads them on donkeys and, without her husband knowing, rushes to David. And throws herself at his feet. There in verse 25. Listen to what she says. Talking about her husband.

. <sup>25</sup> May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name-- his name is Fool, and folly goes with him.

Here's someone who's seeing things clearly. Who recognizes David for who he is. My husband's foolish she says. He can't see it. But I can see. Verse 28

**1 Samuel 25:28** <sup>28</sup> Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles.

Don't kill us she says. More than that. She says. Verse 30

**1 Samuel 25:30-31** <sup>30</sup> When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ..... when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant."

It's a bit like the thief on the cross beside Jesus.

Remember me. When you come into your kingdom. That's what she's saying.

Thy Kingdom come.

David says. <sup>33</sup> May you be blessed for your good judgment. And he sends her home. I have granted your request.

It's good judgment. To recognize God's king. It's foolish not to.

And in the very next story. David sneaks into Saul's camp. For the second time could've killed Saul. But doesn't. When Saul realizes he confesses.

Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly."

It's good judgment. To recognize God's king. It's foolish not to. I admit it. Saul says. But he can't help himself.

And in the end Saul's a shell of a man. Even though he's the king with the resources of the nation at his disposal. He has to resort to an undercover visit to the Witch of Endor. Disguises himself like Michael Jackson used to do every now and then. Goes to the medium.

And when it comes to God's will. Sometimes we'll just keep going from one place to the next until we hear what we want to hear.

And Saul asks her to consult the now dead Samuel. In the vain hope that he'll tell him what to do. But even the dead Samuel rebukes him.

It's the same irrational opposition Jesus faced isn't it. It's the same political opposition Jesus faced. From Jews and Gentiles alike.

And as a clear thinking observer with 20/20 hindsight you wonder why they couldn't see it. What were they thinking?

But just maybe. When it comes to recognizing God's king. When it comes to living for the king. When it comes to asking for thy will to be done over and above our own.....We're not as far away from that as we might think.

I mean here's Saul The king of God's people. Who even had God's spirit. Doing the exact opposite of what he should be doing. Trying to preserve his own kingdom. At the expense of God's.

And maybe you're a regular church attender. Maybe you're a high official even in the church. Maybe even a minister. And you can find yourself.

Mouthing words of allegiance....but in reality....Living for number one. Saying my kingdom come. And forget that we're serving another king. Which means submitting to him in everything. Which isn't easy.

Don't get me wrong - you'll have all sorts of good reasons. But when the truth comes out you'll say. I have been a fool. I have erred.

It's at least worth stopping and asking yourself isn't it?

Be clear on the sort of way you're living. Is Jesus really your king?

One other thing that's important to note. While it's wise to live with the real king as your king. It's not easy.

Jonathan had to give up his hopes for a kingdom. Had to have split loyalties with his family. Had to trust David at his word. That when David was king he wouldn't kill him off as a threat to his kingdom.

And Jesus makes the same point. You want to be my disciple? Wise choice. But bare this in mind. If anyone would come after me, he must DENY HIMSELF.

Which is what's involved in saying THY WILL BE DONE. And more than that Jesus says. HE must deny himself, TAKE UP HIS CROSS... and follow me.

Lets be people who encourage each other to do just that. Let's keep reminding each other about the real king. The one God's chosen.

We'll do that now as we sing.

