

small group **discussion**

Faithfulness: the Life of Samuel

For the sermon on October 18-19, 2014

“The Heartbeat”

Get Acquainted

Was there someone in your life who made a profound impact on your life? What was the impact?

Get Started

What resonated with you most as you listened to this week’s sermon? What was the single most compelling or impactful thing you heard?

Background to the Story | 1 Samuel 15.10-30

Saul has taken matters into his own hands and blatantly disobeyed God’s direction. He has failed as king and become a grievous disappointment to God. Samuel tells Saul, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors . . .” (v 28). Samuel is brokenhearted over Saul’s rebellious heart against God. He weeps and mourns for Saul as if he has died. God has turned away from Saul and is now focused on a new leader for Israel. The aging prophet is instructed to go to Bethlehem and anoint a new king—a man after God’s own heart.

Listen to the Story | 1 Samuel 16.1-13

- Option 1: The small group leader tells the story accurately and passionately from memory. The group listens with Bibles closed.
- Option 2: Someone from the group reads the story while the group listens with Bibles closed.

Tell the Story | 1 Samuel 16.1-13

- Option 1: Everyone gets a partner and retells the story to their partner from memory.
- Option 2: One or two people volunteer to retell the story to the group from memory.

Read the Story | 1 Samuel 16

Read the story with everyone following along in their copy of the text. Feel free to use another Bible version if you have read it before.

Explore the Story

What do you see? What does this mean?

1. Who are the characters and what roles are being played in the story? What did they say and do?
2. Describe the tension in the story.
3. What choices are being made? What choices *could* be made? What are the outcomes of the choices?
4. What did you find compelling in this story?
5. What questions do you have? (Something you don’t understand or need more information about.)

How does this story connect with *your* story?

Hope. Samuel is weighed down by the disappointment of Saul as the king of Israel. He’s stuck in his grief as he mourns what Saul could’ve been. God allows Samuel to grieve but then he challenges Samuel to let go and move forward. God doesn’t just tell Samuel to move, he points him in a new direction and gives him new hope. Often God brings beautiful things out of desperate situations.

What loss or disappointment are you grieving? Read Jeremiah 29.11-13. Do you believe God has a plan for you that will give you a hope and a future? Why is “hope” such an important component of traveling through grief? What would it look like for you to trust God with this disappointment or loss? What’s one step you can take this week to move forward in your grief or disappointment and look for the beautiful things?

Heart. Samuel goes to the house of Jesse to anoint the future king. As the first son is paraded before him, Samuel thinks that he will be the next king; but God admonishes Samuel to not look at the outward appearance. God reminds Samuel what he is truly looking for in a leader—a heart that acts like God’s heart.

How’s your heart? Is it pure? Is it devoted? Is it muddled by envy or petty resentments? **This week’s One Big Question is...What areas of growth or change would move you closer to reflecting the heart of God?** What’s one thing you will do this week to begin to move closer to reflecting God’s heart?

Legacy. The people mourned the loss of Samuel—his integrity, his voice, his faithfulness. Samuel was a faithful servant to God and the people and he will be deeply missed. What do you want to be remembered for? What type of legacy are you leaving? What attributes of someone’s life would be worth remembering? What wouldn’t be? Are you living in such a way that you will be missed?

Finishing Well. It’s easy to begin this journey with good intentions, to start off strong but finish poorly. Living the faithful, God-centered life for the long haul (like Samuel) takes a relentless persistence. Read Hebrews 12.1-2. What does “fixing our eyes on Jesus” look like in your life? How do we relentlessly pursue God when the world around us is constantly encouraging us to do just the opposite? Will you finish well? What do you need to do now to ensure that you will?

The “How-To” of Living a Faithful Life. How do we live a faithful life of holy redundancy, day after day, month after month, year after year? Walking through life the heart gets soiled. How will you launder it? Those choosing to live a faithful life constantly take ruthless moral inventories of their soul. As a group, walk through the following exercise of quiet reflection.

***Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139.23-24***

- Find a quiet place, or simply sit quietly in your seat. Prayerfully reflect on the verses above.
- On a blank note card, write two things:
 1. A Confession. What “offensive way” in you has God revealed to you in your reflection?
 2. A Next Step. How will you remove this offensive way and what step can you take toward a better legacy?
- Put your card in an envelope, seal the envelope, and place your name on the front.
- Your leader will collect the envelopes and will hold them until sometime around the New Year.
- At your first gathering after the New Year, your leader will give your envelope back. Then, you will open it and evaluate how you’ve grown in this area over the past couple of months and discuss your findings and discoveries with the group.



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