

## To be served or to serve? (1 Samuel 11:1-15 & Mark 10:35-45)

12-May-19

G'Day Church Family

It would be great to have your Bibles turned to 1 Samuel chapter 11

And you have the usual outline for you to take notes

Let me ask for God's help though, before we begin.

Let's pray...

### Recap

Let's remind ourselves of the story so far

#### [PowerPoint 1-Recap]

- The people of Israel - unhappy with the prospect of having the prophet Samuel's corrupt sons as their leaders - have asked for a King - **a King like the other nations**
- But of course, they already have a King - God Himself
- So, there were rejecting God as their King
- Nevertheless - God gave them the King they asked for
- The Prophet Samuel anointed Saul - a man from the tribe of Benjamin as the King - **in private**
- His mission was to deliver the people from the **Philistines** and **govern the people** (1 Sam 9:16-17) and to **wait for instructions** from God (1 Sam 10:7-8)
- Then last week, we saw that Saul was then **publicly** coronated as King
- Then he went back to his hometown of Gibeah - to wait for God to tell him what to do next

- And there was a mixed response to Saul being crowned as King
  - 10:24 - Long live the King!
  - 10:27 - Some scoundrels said "How can this fellow save us?"
- For some, Saul would have to prove himself before they would accept him

Which bring us to today's passage from 1 Samuel 11 [\[which you can turn to now\]](#)

### The Problem (1 Samuel 11:1-4)

Picking up from 1 Samuel 11 - verses 1 to 4 - there was a problem for one of the towns of Israel - a place called *Jabesh Gilead* [\[Explain Map\]](#)

[\[PowerPoint 2-Problem/Map\]](#)

- Nahash, the leader of the Ammonites went up to attack town of Jabesh Gilead
- This Israeli town - Jabesh Gilead - has a *checkered history* from back in Judges chapter 21 - they were the town that refused to assemble with the rest of the tribes of Israel to punish the tribe of Benjamin for a dreadful thing the Benjamites did in Judges chapter 19
- Israel also had history with the Ammonites - there was a claim in Judges 11 that Israel had stolen land from the Ammonites - when the Israelites came out of Egypt - and entered into the Promised Land
- So, here in 1 Samuel 11
- *Nahash, the Ammonite*, was trying to take advantage of the fact that Israel was in the early days of their Kingship - and disorganized - by bringing disgrace on Israel - by defeating Jabesh Gilead - and giving himself some glory and prestige and fame

- Nahash wanted Jabesh Gilead to *serve* him
- Nahash basically gave Jabesh Gilead 2 choices
  - Either they surrender and become Nahash's servants
  - Or they make a treaty with Nahash - where Nahash will gouge out their right eyes
    - The problem with gouging out their right eyes (apart from being very painful) - it would mean they can't fight - normally a shield is held in the left hand covering left eye - and a sword in right hand but they won't be able see. Also having eyesight in one eye = means no depth of vision
- Is there a way out for Jabesh Gilead?
- They bought some time - by asking for 7 days to see if the rest of Israel would help
- Nahash must be pretty confident they won't get help - to allow Jabesh Gilead 7 days - to come up with the help
- And given the history of Jabesh Gilead's disobedience back in Judges 21 - there's no guarantee - the rest of Israel will help
- But remember, they are God's people and God is in control...
- So, the elders of Jabesh Gilead sent messengers throughout Israel - asking for help
- When the messengers came to Saul's hometown of Gibeah? The people of Gibeah wept. They can see the dilemma for Jabesh Gilead - but remember also the people of Saul's hometown did haven't a high opinion of Saul as King - they didn't think he would be able to save anyone!

## The Solution (1 Samuel 11:5-11)

Which brings us to the solution to the problem - verses 5 to 11

### [PowerPoint 4-Solution]

- In v5 = Saul returned from the fields where he'd been working with his oxen
- From this - we can see Saul was a humble guy - going about his normal work until the Lord called him into action
- When Saul found out what the situation was - and that Jabesh Gilead was under threat from the Ammonites - there was **a turning point** in verse 6 - immediately the ***Spirit of God is with Saul***. From this we can deduce that God is not going to stand for this injustice against His people, Israel
- Saul was angry - it's okay to be angry about injustice - Saul's anger - was righteous anger - it's okay to be angry - but we shouldn't sin in our anger - as the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 4:26 - **in your anger do not sin**
- Saul was also decisive in v7 - he chopped up his pair of oxen and sent the pieces by messenger to the whole of Israel - calling them to act and follow Saul & Samuel - by mentioning ***Samuel - the man of God*** - Saul was showing this is ***God's plan*** to stand against the Ammonites, not just Saul's plan.
- Saul warned the Israelites if they didn't stand together with Saul and Samuel - their oxen would also be chopped up - this would mean a loss in their livelihood
- So, the tribes of Israel mustered - 300,000 from tribes of Israel and 30,000 from Judah - they gathered together at a place called Bezek [near Gilgal?]

- The gathered tribes promised the messengers from Jabesh Gilead - that Jabesh Gilead would be rescued by the next day
- The men of Jabesh Gilead - now full of confidence - knowing they would be rescued - deceived the Ammonites into thinking that they would surrender by the next day
- Meanwhile - Saul made a decisive strategic plan - he made 3 divisions of his army and attacked and destroyed the Ammonites overnight
- He scattered the Ammonites - so there was no chance of them regrouping
- It's was a great victory
- And it was Saul's first battle - which gained him great credibility as being the sort of king the people wanted and had asked God for.
- It was a **unifying victory** - silencing Saul's doubters

### Response - Glory to God (1 Samuel 11:12-15)

After the victory - there was a response by Saul and the people - that's in verses 12 to 15

#### [PowerPoint 4-Response]

- In v12 - some people wanted to take revenge on those who had doubted Saul those that said that Saul wouldn't be able to save anyone - they wanted those doubters killed
- But Saul decisively said - No! - and he attributed the victory to God - and gave God all the glory - see another key verse - v13 - **'this day the Lord has rescued Israel'** - a lesson for us to attributed our victories and blessings in life - to God!

- It would have been a grave mistake for Saul - to have defeated the enemy and then agree to start killing their own people
- Satan can trick us into fighting amongst ourselves - instead of giving glory to God and staying united under God
- Instead Samuel took the opportunity to confirm the kingship of Saul
- Saul had proven himself as a worthy king -
- So, they made sacrifices to God in thanks - and had a fellowship meal together
- Saul had *served the people well*
- It was celebration time:
  - Hava nagila,
  - Hava nagila,
  - Hava nagila,
  - Ve' nismecha.
- This all worked out because Saul was a Godly king
- And it will only continue to work out whilst Saul remains a Godly King - and not a king like the other nations - who serve other false gods and serve themselves and look to glorify themselves - like Nahash, the Ammonite did.

### **A Servant King (Mark 10:35-45)**

Which brings us to our NT passage today from Mark 10:35-45 [\[Please turn there now\]](#)

- And as we think about serving and who gets the glory
- In this passage

[\[PowerPoint 5-Servant King\]](#)

- Two of Jesus' disciples - James and John - they want the glory - they want to be recognised and sit at Jesus' right and left hand
- Just like - Nahash the Ammonite wanted the glory and prestige and power of defeating God's people - James and John want to glorify themselves
- But thankfully, Jesus doesn't think or operate like James and John - nor Nahash
- Jesus is a **different leader - a different king** - He says - if you want to come first in His kingdom - you have to be last and serve people - not be served and glorify yourselves or be glorified.

Jesus says here He's a different kind of King - He came – not to be served – but to serve – and to give his life as a ransom for many.

In other words - he's a king who goes into battle against the enemy of sin - and defeats the punishment for sin - by taking the punishment for all of us - and dying for sin. Nahash wouldn't do that - because there's no glory - he thinks - in dying for his subjects.

Jesus challenged James and John - that they don't know what their asking - being a follower of Jesus - means the glorify comes in - doing what Jesus does - and being sacrificial and serving in our lives - even perhaps facing death like Jesus. James and John want the glory without doing anything sacrificial - but just getting the glory for being Jesus' mates. But that's not what followers of Jesus are supposed to be like - Jesus says. His followers have to be self-sacrificing, servant like - loving and serving others - not serving themselves - not being served - not looking for glory - but being serving and humble - like Jesus was all the time - and like Saul was in this story.

## Applications

### [PowerPoint 6]

3 applications for us to take home today...

1. What if I told you *Nahash's* name means "*serpent*" or "*snake*" - it throws a different light on things. Just like the serpent in the Garden of Eden was Satan - Nahash - the serpent - is a picture of Satan and evil - and what Satan can do.
  - Satan wants our surrender to him - but remember he's a defeated enemy
  - Satan wants us to serve him and will attempt to intimidate us into giving into him - and have us thinking of things which are not God's way - like James and John looking for glory instead of realizing God gets all the glory. We can be tricked into thinking we need glory, power and status
  - Satan wants to blind us - like Nahash threatened to blind the people of Jabesh Gilead. If Satan can't blind us completely - he will blind us partially - and have us ineffective

### [PowerPoint 6a-App1]

- We need *to be alert to Satan's tricks* - and claiming God's help and protection in prayer!
- God should be our *first resort* for help and protection - not our last resort!

### [PowerPoint 6b-App2]

2. In the story from 1 Samuel 11 - King Saul attributed his success entirely to God - in the key verse - v13 - [this day the Lord has rescued Israel](#). In the same way our Lord, Jesus - the ultimate Godly King - rescued us from the danger and enemy of sin. He is a King who fights and defeats the enemy of sin and is prepared to die for his subjects - because he came to serve - not to be served. He saved us instead of himself. We need to model our lives on him - always bringing Glory to God - as Saul did and as Jesus always did - modelling Jesus will look like serving others sacrificially rather than serving ourselves and looking for glory like James and John did

### [PowerPoint 6c-App3]

3. But how are we going to do that serving? Well the turning point in 1 Sam 11 is v6 - The Spirit of God came powerfully upon him (Saul). It's the Holy Spirit - that makes all the difference in our lives too - He empowers us. See the Apostle Paul's advice in Galatians 5:22-25: [<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.](#)

So, our lives need to be spirit-filled lives - ***keeping in step with the Holy Spirit*** - and claiming the fruit of the Spirit

Take a look at the fruit - which in that list - do we need work on any of them - to claim them for our lives? If we were in step with the Holy Spirit

- this fruit of the Spirit - would show itself in our lives as humble,  
loving and serving - always seeking to give God the glory

So, a challenge to finish with, then...

[PowerPoint 7-Challenge]

Would we say - with honest self-assessment -

that we are currently here to be served

or

that we are currently here to serve?

(pause)

Are there changes we need to make?

Let's pray...