

What Makes the Best Leaders?

First Samuel 9–10

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Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on humility and on the Lord

Prelude:

I. The world cannot function without leadership, but

- A. not everyone who is a leader should be a leader, and
- B. some who were good leaders later lost what made them good leaders.

II. I want to show you today,

- A. a man who started out with the right qualities to lead God's people, but
- B. later he lost those qualities.
 - 1. We shall not look today at why he lost his good qualities, but
 - 2. we will find out what made him a great leader initially.

Persuasion:

I. First Samuel 9.1–2 – Do the Handsome Make the Best Leaders?

1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. 2 And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

- A. Saul was young, tall and handsome, but
 - 1. turned out bad.
 - 2. David was good-looking, but
 - a) turned out good.
 - b) What then do looks have to do with leadership?
 - (1) Being the right leader has nothing to do with the right looks, but
 - (2) it has everything to do with having the right spirit.
- B. Kish was a mighty man of power or wealth.

1. That would mean Saul was wealthy or came from a wealthy family.
2. Does that matter when considering leadership?
 - a) Often it does, because they know how to deal with such matters,

**17a Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles...
(Ecc 10.17a)**

- b) However, the Lord can and does make exceptions to any rule.

II. First Samuel 9.3–4 – Problems and Challenges of Life

3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." 4 So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.

A. Life throws challenges at us.

1. Those challenges consume us.
2. Yet, those challenges form us.

B. With Saul, it was during a challenge of life

1. that he met a man
2. who changed his life forever.

III. First Samuel 9.5–10 – From Lost Donkeys to Lost Sons

5 When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease caring about the donkeys and become worried about us." 6 And he said to him, "Look now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go." 7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" 8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel,

when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: “Come, let us go to the seer”; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.) 10 Then Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.

- A. Saul knew that his father valued him above donkeys.
- B. Saul and his servant sought a man of God for solving a challenge, but
 - 1. the man of God would reveal something wonderful to Saul.
 - 2. Saul just wanted to find his father’s donkeys, but
 - a) the kingdom of Israel found him.
 - b) He went from personal concerns to national concerns.
- C. Saul and his servant were concerned with giving, but
 - 1. later Saul would be concerned with taking.
 - 2. Here he did not think of himself.
 - a) That made him a giver.
 - b) When he sought glory for himself he became a taker.

IV. First Samuel 9.11–14 – A Lost Son Found a Prophet

11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, “Is the seer here?” 12 And they answered them and said, “Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because there is a sacrifice of the people today on the high place. 13 As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him.” 14 So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

- A. Saul went to meet a prophet, but
- B. the prophet went out to meet him.
 - 1. Saul sought the prophet/seer for mere donkeys, but

2. the prophet/seer sought him for the kingdom.
 - a) We get wrapped up in our little worlds,
 - b) not knowing that those things prepare us for the Lord's Kingdom.

V. First Samuel 9.15–17 – The Lord Selected His Man

15 Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying,
16 “Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me.” **17** So when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, “There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people.”

A. As Hebrews 1 said,

1 God...[in]...various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets... (Heb 1.1).

1. In this case, He spoke in Samuel's ear.
 2. It was an audible sound that he could understand.
- B. The people had cried out to the Lord about the Philistines, and
1. He heard their cry, and
 2. His solution was Saul, son of Kish.

VI. First Samuel 9.18–21 – From Donkeys to Israel

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, “Please tell me, where is the seer's house?” **19** Samuel answered Saul and said, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. **20** But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father's house?” **21** And Saul answered and said, “Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?”

- A. Looking for lost donkeys was of little concern for a king, Samuel thought.
- B. Yet, Saul did not know how to handle such talk about himself.
 - 1. He was a humble man.
 - 2. Yet, if you want to see of what a man is made,
 - a) give him power,
 - b) give him success.
 - (1) Does it make him better, or
 - (2) does a new and sinister side reveal itself?

VII. First Samuel 9.22–24 – Community Meals

22 Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there were about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Set it apart.’ ” 24 So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, “Here it is, what was kept back. It was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

- A. Great things happen at community gatherings.
- B. In this case, Samuel had something special for Saul.

VIII. First Samuel 9.25–27 – Listen to the Word of God

25 When they had come down from the high place into the city, Samuel spoke with Saul on the top of the house. 26 They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, “Get up, that I may send you on your way.” And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel. 27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us.” And he went on. “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God.”

- A. I did not detect reluctance in the voice and actions of Samuel.
- B. He knew that the Lord’s will now included a king for Israel.

1. Therefore, Samuel did what the Lord directed him to do.
2. He even seemed excited,
 - a) knowing that he stood before the man whom the God of heaven
 - b) had chosen as Israel's first king.

IX. First Samuel 10.1–8 – Signs

10.1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance? 2 When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' 3 Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. 4 And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. 5 After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. 6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7 And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. 8 You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."

A. The Lord provided amble signs

1. to let Saul know that his days of chasing donkeys had ended, and
2. that his days of chasing the enemies of Israel had begun.

B. Much of what Samuel said

1. are things that Saul did not have to obey;
2. he would simply go on his way, and
 - a) these things would come to pass.

- b) However, in verse 8, Samuel gave the new king clear instructions.
- (1) Would Saul follow them?
 - (2) All that he had to do was wait at Gilgal until Samuel arrived.
 - (a) Samuel would offer the burnt offerings.
 - (b) Samuel would offer the peace offerings.
 - i) Saul just had to wait for seven days after arriving at Gilgal.
 - ii) Just wait.
 - (1) When Samuel arrived he would tell Saul what to do.
 - (2) Could Saul wait?
- C. What Samuel said at verse 7 is also important.
1. Saul would have the wisdom necessary
 2. to carry out what had to be done.
 - a) That, of course, did not mean he could ignore God.
 - b) Truly, in a particular episode, the one mentioned in verse 8,
 - (1) God would have specific instructions through Samuel for Saul.
 - (2) However, if he started to trust in his own wisdom,
 - (a) he would eventually do something
 - (b) that would bring his and Israel's downfall.

X. First Samuel 10.9–13 – Saul a Prophet

9 So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. **10** When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. **11** And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" **12** Then a man from there answered and said, "But who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" **13** And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

A. As it is with presidents, so it is with kings:

1. The more a president sounds like a prophet
2. the better his nation does, but
 - a) the more he sounds like a fund-raiser,
 - b) the worse his nation will do.

B. You as a leader have to know what your job is.

1. Is it merely to raise funds?
2. Or, if you fulfill your job as a leader,
 - a) will the funds just come in anyway?
 - b) I am of the opinion
 - (1) that if you fulfill your organization's purpose for existing,
 - (2) the funds to carry out your organization's goals will appear.

C. As a child of God, as Saul and Samuel were,

1. when you submit to the Lord's leadership,
2. submitting your life to Him,
 - a) He will take it and
 - b) lead you to do things and to go places you never anticipated.

D. Samuel grew up in the house of the Lord with Eli's training.

1. Thus, Samuel may have expected that the Lord would use him somehow.
2. However, Saul just worked for his father.
 - a) Then one day, he meets a judge and prophet, and
 - b) becomes Israel's first king.
 - (1) He had no experience, but
 - (2) as long as Saul followed the Lord's direction,
 - (a) he would succeed.
 - (b) Keep yourself humble, and

- i) you will one day find the Lord using you
- ii) as you never expected.

XI. First Samuel 10.14–16 – A Humble Man

14 Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel." 15 And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you." 16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

- A. A man who kept himself in the background,
 - 1. naturally would not tell anyone
 - 2. that he had just been anointed as Israel's first king.
- B. If only Saul had kept his humility.
 - 1. When you become successful or powerful,
 - 2. do not let it make you think you are greater than you are.

XII. First Samuel 10.17–19 – Fix Rebellion By Presenting Yourself Before the Lord

17 Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah, 18 and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' 19 But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, "No, set a king over us!" Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans."

- A. In the Hebrews Scriptures, the Lord reminded Israel frequently,
 - 1. that He had brought them up out of Egypt, and
 - 2. that He had delivered them from their enemies,
 - a) during the wilderness wanderings, and
 - b) during the time of the Judges.

B. Therefore, they owed Him something.

1. They owed Him acceptance,

2. accepting Him as their king

a) rather than looking for a human king.

b) However, as you can see in the last part of verse 19,

(1) the Lord had every intention of giving them

(2) the king for whom they asked, and

(a) He had already told them of the all-consuming nature

(b) of the new government they desired.

3. Please think of your requests to God.

a) What if He gave you what you want?

b) Would it turn out as you hoped?

C. Finally, Samuel began the selection process.

XIII. First Samuel 10.20–24 – Another Sign of a Humble Man

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, "Has the man come here yet?" And the Lord answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment." 23 So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?" So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

A. Saul kept himself as the new king hidden from his uncle.

B. Likewise, he kept himself hidden from all Israel.

1. How does a big guy like that hide himself?

2. If he wants to, he can.

- C. Both Samuel and the people were impressed with Saul's appearance.
1. I guess liking a national leader for his looks is not new.
 2. We might think that our television generation is the first, but it is not.
 - a) Do you know what people were saying of Abraham Lincoln?
 - b) He was tall, 6'4", but no one described him as handsome.
 - (1) George Washington was also tall, 6'2".
 - (2) America's two greatest presidents thus far, have been tall men.
 - (a) Were they great because they were tall?
 - (b) It was what they were on the inside, humble men.

XIV. First Samuel 10.25–27 – God Touched Their Hearts

25 Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. 26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

- A. Samuel had already told Israel of the nature of royalty, but
1. they needed to hear it again.
 2. Leadership, especially governmental leadership,
 - a) with no checks and balances
 - b) can become an all-consuming monster.
- B. So for the time, Saul went home to Gibeah, but
1. he did not go alone.
 2. Valiant men went with him, because
 - a) God had touched their hearts.
 - b) If you contemplate leadership in the church or anywhere else,
 - (1) you may think to yourself that you cannot do it by yourself.

- (2) If you lead, others will help you.
 - (a) They were waiting for someone to lead.
 - (b) You are it.
 - i) Do it and
 - ii) see what God does in the lives of other people to help you.

Exhortation:

I. What makes the best leaders?

- A. Does Jesus make the best leader?
- B. Does He have the qualities that make you want to follow Him?
 - 1. If He does have those qualities,
 - 2. are you following Him?

II. Jesus is not a president whom we can ignore without consequence.

- A. Jesus is King.
- B. Jesus is Lord.
 - 1. To ignore Him now brings eternal consequences.
 - 2. When Jesus allowed the Romans to nail Him to a cross,
 - a) He took on the consequences of ignoring God,
 - b) not that He had ignored God, but
 - (1) He experienced in the flesh
 - (2) what we shall experience in the spirit,
 - (a) if we ignore the Lord and
 - (b) question how He could possibly save us.

III. Confess His lordship, which His leadership.