

Title: Who Are You Going to Serve?  
Text: 1 Samuel 8  
Theme: We think we know what's best  
Series: 1 Samuel (1 Samuel 8 part 2)  
Prop Stmnt: When we think we know what's best, our solutions tend to add to the problem.

She grew up being compared to others and never measuring up. Her parents seemed embarrassed by her at times. She feared that no one would love her, so she did whatever she thought she had to do to be wanted or desired. This did not lead to love, just more emptiness and more insecurity. He never knew his dad, really and while his mom did the best she could, the constant moving, changing schools, changing friends made him realize that he had to figure out a way to survive. He learned how to make people laugh. If they were laughing at him at least they were noticing him. But this did not lead to what he thought. He was funny, but not respected. He was seen as the clown, but not really seen as a friend and deep down, all he really wanted was some good friends. We know the stories. A lonely person is taken advantage of and someone takes their money. Someone who just wants to be loved, thinks that having a child or even adopting will give them someone who will always love them, always adore them, always want to be with them and when they don't the pain is almost intolerable.

Insecurity creates all kinds of situations where people try to fix it, because it hurts so bad, but over and over only make things worse. We all know stories of insecurity because we all live with it. But in 1 Samuel 8, the problem of insecurity is national, not just personal, therefore, the proposed solution is going to be national as well.

Read Text:

Samuel's leadership provided Israel with spiritual direction and physical protection. It is likely that the land enjoyed good weather, good crops and much growth in the flocks and therefore, the economy. For, perhaps a few decades, Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity. But Samuel was getting old and now what?

### 1. The problem of insecurity (1-9)

Last week we looked at the immediate problems of Continuity and Unity. But underneath that lay the ultimate problem of not trusting in God. The problem of insecurity is intended to drive us to God. Sadly, God is about the last option we exercise only after we have exhausted all others. Sin creates desires that we try to fulfill in poor ways. We want to be loved, known, appreciated, desired, respected, (secure) and we try to do things to get those, but the things that we do only reveal how needy we are, and we hate that about ourselves. Trusting in ourselves produces insecurity because we are not good enough. Insecurity is inherent to living in a sin-cursed world, and is something that we sadly learn by experience. We don't measure up and our world lets us know. People walk in and out of our lives and we are not sure who we can trust. Promises made are often not promises kept. Even good gifts don't last. Parents die.

Spouses die. Children grow up and move away. Your company gets bought out. Your job gets transferred. Your program is cancelled. Samuel is going to die. What are we going to do?

Well, let's see here. Who was it that gave Samuel as a gift to the nation? God! It was God who raised up Hanna who, against so many odds, believed God for a son and gave her only son to the nation so that whoever would believe in his words would not die at the hands of the Philistines, like so many others, but would love God and live. If God loved Israel so much to raise up a savior for them like Samuel, then would God abandon them now?

What is it about us that we are so inclined to distrust God and so incline to trust in ourselves? Honestly, it is ignorance, arrogance and rebellion. We are so stubborn. Many of you know that God gave Israel the law. The OT law is summarized by the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 and even the 10 commandments are summarized by Jesus who said, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself. That seems odd to us. We think of the 10 commandments or the law as duties to perform, not a response of love and delight. But I don't think that you really understand the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 if you don't understand Exodus 19. Exodus 20 is like the diamond and Exodus 19 is like the setting. In Exodus 19, God says this to Israel.

*You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I **bore** you on eagles' wings and **brought you** to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my **treasured possession** among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy** nation.*

Think of those verbs, bore and brought. Those are motherly terms. I carried you. I gathered you to myself. You shall be my treasured possession. Here is the God who does not need anything. All the earth is mine. I don't need a thing. All treasure belongs to me. But I am making you my treasured possession, not because I need you but because I have chosen to delight in you, that you might delight in me. Therefore, these laws that I give you are so that you will enjoy me and enjoy life and so that you will fulfill your purpose and be satisfied. Why then, did Israel throw God under the bus and ask for a king?

## 2. **The problem with our solution to insecurity** (10-18)

The life of a follower of God is the life of faith. There is no getting around it. Israel was not asked or told to believe blindly. She had enormous reasons to believe. And yet, she was unwilling to believe in the God who over and over kept his Word, because, they couldn't see God. They wanted a "god" they could see. They wanted a king like them, like the other nations. They came up with a solution to their insecurity – a king. The problem was, that their solution would only add to the problem.

There are a couple of things to note in these verses. 1) God told Samuel to solemnly warn Israel about what they were asking for. Even though they were rejecting God, God was still merciful to inform them that this was not going to go well for them. 2) This is what God does over and

over. He tells us ahead of time, what to expect so that we can avoid the heartache. 3) This warning is coming from the God who rescued them from Egypt, who wiped out the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. Who brought them into the Promised Land. Who consistently did what he promised to do to those who obeyed him and who consistently did what he warned about to those who didn't. God tells you the truth ahead of time because he loves you. Satan does not tell you the truth ahead of time because he hates you. He hates you because he hates God and you and I are nothing to him. We're nothing more than a joint he will smoke and discard in an effort to get what he wants. Why then are we so quick to accuse God of not loving us?

Moms and dads can relate to this. Moms, you spend nine months carrying your baby. The first three months you perfect the art of throwing up and the last three months are spent with heartburn. Then, look at what you do to your body. But that pales in comparison to giving birth. You go into the valley of the shadow of death, so that your baby can live. But being born alive is only the beginning. Now this little life has to be fed every 30 minutes and changed every 20. You don't sleep for 6 months and have to give up some of your favorite foods and on and on, the sacrifices go. You know the sheer panic of watching your child choke on something, or getting croup and not being able to breathe and nursing them to health. You will spend 45 minutes in the drive thru for Taco Bell for them and freeze to death at their soccer games and try to comfort them when their basketball teams loses – again. You help with homework, take them to gymnastics, wash their clothes, take them to the doctor, laugh at their jokes and watch Baby Shark and pretend to like it. You drive minivans, go to Disneyland, and in a moment of complete insanity take them to Chucky Cheese. Then, what happens. They turn 10 and demand a smartphone. Give me a smartphone so that I can be like all the nations. Or, they turn 12 and want to go to a sleepover in a crack house or somewhere that you aren't so sure about. And if you say, *“no, that isn't going to happen.”* Then what do they say? *“Aw dad, thanks so much for displaying such loving wisdom on my behalf. I know that I don't see the world as you do and I get it. You are doing this for my good, and I'm good with it.”* Is that what they say? Is that what you said to your parents? Not even close! *“You hate me! If you loved me, you would buy me this, or let me stay out all night. How do you know that I wouldn't actually like life in prison? Why can't I be like all the other nations?”*

Stop the movie. What just happened? Your kid is tempted to believe that having a smartphone (or whatever) will give them acceptance and they believe that this acceptance by the other nations is more valuable than your love. They are willing to believe in this fleeting, flimsy, shallow “acceptance” more than the years of demonstrable, sacrificial love that you have displayed. Is this logical? No! But sin is not logical. It causes brain damage.

Look at the verses 10-18. Here are “the ways of the king who will reign over you” (v.11).

- He will take your sons (11b)
- He will take your daughters (13)
- He will take your best fields, vineyards and orchards (14) and whatever is left...
- He will take (taxes) your grain (15)

- He will take your male servants and female servants, the best of your young men (workers) and your donkeys (16)
- He will take a tenth of your flocks (17)
- He will take you (17)

What does that sound like? It sounds like Egypt – right? A king that is powerful enough to protect you from your enemies is powerful enough to attack you so that he is protected. The problem with their solution to their insecurity is going to give them more insecurity. After the king is done taking everything that you have, he will simply take you. On that day, when you are grinding meal in one of the castle kitchens, or doing the midnight shift, guarding some political prisoner at a jail site on the other side of the country from your home and family, or when the local conscriptor comes and takes your best farm hands and leaves you to plant the fields by yourself, or takes your wife and kids, are you still going to think that this king thing is so awesome and necessary? But they wouldn't listen. In their minds, this was the solution.

1 and 2 Samuel are very political. If I am going to faithfully preach these texts, then I will be doing a lot of talking about politics, but it may not be how you expect. The heart of politics, as we understand it, is laid out right here, and I think that this is really helpful for you to see. The heart of politics is this: how can I get from others what I think I want and need? For the citizen, I think that I want and need security. For the politician (king, leader) I want power and control (security). We will make you a king, if you give us security. If you make me president, I will give you security. The people feel like they have the power to elect and the politician feels as if he/she has the power of the office. Both the citizen and the leader will be willing to do some very desperate things when that security is threatened. Over and over, we see that it is a love/hate relationship. What the people want, the king cannot always give. Every earthly king will let you down; every single one. (Case in point: With our past president, we had no idea of what would come out of his mouth. With our current one, he has no idea of what comes out of his mouth.) And, if you are a king, your people will not trust you, love you or respect you like you think they should either. People are threatened by their king and the king is threatened by the people and by others the people start to like more than the king. And both are threatened by enemies. Politics, power, and people are all on display in their ugliness throughout these books. Our attempts at solving our problems are notorious for making more problems. Again, case in point: Some on the political right have attacked the legitimacy of the last election. Some on the political left are attacking the laws of election. Both sides believe there is truth to their positions. But, do you see the result? Everyone now has distrust which creates enormous disunity and insecurity to that our enemies see this as a strategic time to attack.

But what is the solution to our insecurity? What should Israel have asked for? God was not against them having a king. He actually planned for it. God told Abraham that kings would come from his line (Genesis 17). Jacob prophesied that kings would come from the line of Judah (Genesis 49). ***The problem wasn't having a king, it was having a king now, having a king for these reasons and having this kind of a king. They wanted a king who would help them be like all the other nations. God wanted them to have a king who would lead them into being NOT like all the other nations.*** They weren't willing to listen to God's Word, so...

### 3. God will let you find out the hard way. (19-22)

Many of you know that, already. Your solution has not worked out. Are you willing to admit it? Will you be humble enough and wise enough to admit it? The way of the wicked is hard. God loves you enough to tell you, but he also has not made you as a robot. Who will you trust?

The life of a follower of God, is the life of faith. There is no getting around it. Faith is believing what God has said, and in what God has done, no matter what. If, in, the moment, you demand a king, a smartphone, or something else that you think you have to have or have a right to have because others have it, and God doesn't go along with your plan, do you think you have a right not to trust him? God, didn't give me what I wanted, so I think that I have a right not to trust him. I know you are tempted to think like that, but what about the cross? What do you do with that? What do you do with Jesus? God gave. God gave his one and only Son to this earth to die on a cross so that, whoever believes in him, would not perish but would have life that would never end. Does that not count for something? The fact is, that counts for everything! That is the ultimate trump card that overrides everything.

You think you want a king so that you can be like all the nations when God knows that you need a king so that you won't. If you pick a king, a savior, a god, you will pick one that is too much like you. If you pick a king, you will be tempted to pick one who looks impressive, who is strong, handsome, appealing, smart, witty, wise and who will give you what you think you want from a king. But the king that you want will be insecure. He will be threatened by those who disagree with him. He will be threatened by those who look more impressive, who are stronger, younger, more handsome, more appealing, smarter, wittier, and wiser. He will be threatened by his brothers who are threatened by him, by his sons, by his uncles and cousins. He will have counselors who will use their closeness to power for their own gain, and will shift loyalties when the winds of popular opinion shift. The king that you think will give you what you want, will take what you have. That is what all the kings, all the gods, all the idols of this world do.

We need a king who is not insecure. We need a king who will not use us to make himself secure but who himself is secure and therefore will give us what we need to make us secure. That means that we need a king who doesn't need our love to make himself something, but who is love and is perfectly loved, and therefore perfectly secure so that he can perfectly love us. We don't need a king who steals from the rich in order to give to the poor because after he has taken everything away from the rich, he will then take everything away from the poor. We need a king who does not take from others to give to us, but who gives to us what we need from an unlimited supply. We need a king who does not need to tax us in order to make himself rich, because he is already rich. We need a king who does not draft us to protect himself or demand that we die so that he doesn't. We need a king who does not need us to die for him so that he can live, but one who will die for us so that we can live, but if he dies, will rise again and live forevermore. We need a king who is not threatened by his enemies or is deceived by his enemies, or is ignorant of the wiles of his enemies or taken advantage of by traitors and spies in his administration. We need a king who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and

immutable. We need a king who is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the living one who holds the keys to death and hades, who was dead and is alive forevermore. We have this king. His name is Jesus.

If Jesus is not your king, then you are insecure and nothing but Jesus will fill it.

If Jesus is your king, then your “insecurity” is only perceived, but not real. You say, you feel, you long – I just want to be loved! Beloved, you are! Listen. Listen to the words of your king. Listen to what he calls you. Listen to his word and look at what he has done for you. Look at the cross, and the empty tomb. Remember the promises that he has kept and what is going to do. If you don't believe him, it is not on him. He came to you. He called you. He provided for you. He loved you. He lived for you. He died for you. He rose again for you. He put your name on his heart. He is coming back for you. He is going to take you to live with him forever. He is all in all. He fills every hole, every need, every longing. Listen to him, not to yourself. Look to him, not to yourself. Listen and look: Christ is yours forevermore.