

## **When God Isn't Good Enough**

1 Sam. 8

(preached 4/22/15; Pine Grove BC Wed PM)

### **Introduction**

Bass fishing is no longer a cane pole, a cricket and a cork.

It is an industry now that generates billions of dollars a year in boat and motor sales, rod and reel sales, and fishing tackle sale.

There are so many lures available now to catch fish that you can't count all of them.

I love to fish for bass and have fished many tournaments over the years.

And most of the time, I have 5-10 different rod and reels with me each time I go.

Each has a different bait, and each is placed in the boat, so I can grab a new bait if I need to.

And after years of fishing like this, I have noticed something highly unusual about fisherman, including myself.

Sometimes, often times, we will catch a fish on a certain lure, and then almost immediately put it down and start fishing a completely different bait.

Most of you would say, well that is not smart.

The fish you just caught is proof that you were using the right bait, so why in the world would you change baits and start doing something different?

And the answer to that is that fisherman, including myself, simply want to catch fish on a bait that we like to throw.

Most fishermen have a favorite way that they like to fish.

Maybe it is a favorite part of the lake or a favorite rod and reel or simply a favorite bait.

And we don't care what the fish may be biting, we want to fish our way and catch fish the way we want to catch them.

Or how about the couple who picks out the perfect piece of land, designs and builds their dream house on that perfect spot...

And then in 5 years or less is tired of their perfect home and is ready to move...

What is going on in each of these situations?

Simply put, discontentment.

This is the sin of never being satisfied with what you have.

This is what the fisherman does when he selects another bait even though he just caught on this lure.

It is what the couple does when they want a new house even though the one they are in is perfectly fine.

The idea that there is always something better out there even though you have something that is perfectly suitable for your needs...

Is the source of never being content with what you have.

And it affects every part of our life.

Today, people want a new spouse, and they go out and find one even though they made vows to God.

Today, people want a new iphone, they go out and buy one even if they can't afford it.

Today, it seems as if people gets dissatisfied a lot quicker than years past.

And it leads to a lot of problems in their life, their marriage, their finances and their careers.

Now, discontentment may be a good thing.

You may grow discontent with a constant struggle against sin.

You may be discontent with your lack of time reading the Bible.

Being discontent can be good when it motivate us to take our walk with the Lord more seriously.

However, most times discontentment leads us away from the Lord instead of toward Him.

The dictionary defines discontentment as the restless and constant struggle for something that may never be attained.

And that is a good definition.

Restless.

People who are discontent can never sit down and stop.

They can never let their minds rest.

The wheels are always turning; they never seem to enjoy anything.

Now, this is clearly a problem for unbelievers.

In fact, they will never be content until they repent and trust Christ and fix their relationship with the Lord.

Contentment for the unbeliever can never be found apart from saving faith.

Unfortunately, believers are also very discontented people at times.

We must constantly seek to fight against that temptation in our lives as well.

Listen to what the Paul said should be our aim in life....

***<sup>11</sup> Not that I speak <sup>[g]</sup>from want, for I have learned to be <sup>[h]</sup>content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup> I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things <sup>[i]</sup>through Him who strengthens me.***

The solution for discontentment is finding our strength to battle it through the person of Jesus Christ...

We will talk more about that in a minute...

But I wanted to introduce 1 Samuel 8 to you in this way because I think discontentment is possibly the greatest and most common sins among believers today...

But it has been a constant problem since sin entered the world in Adam and Eve...

And it was a continual sin among the nation of Israel..

We are going to see that very clearly tonight in chapter 8...

Now, remembering what has happened up to this point in 1 Samuel will help us understand this better..

And especially the events of 1 Samuel 7 are going to be important to what we will see tonight in chapter 8...

Remember last week was a battle between Israel and the Philistines....

Now, this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> battle among these two nations so far in 1 Samuel...

The first two were won by the Philistines..

After Israel's 1<sup>st</sup> defeat in 1 Samuel 4, they decided to take the ark of the Lord into battle next time...

This was Israel's way of twisting God's arm to give them victory..

The ark was going to be their lucky rabbit's foot.

But the Philistines defeated them again.

God was not going to allow Israel to see Him as a good luck charm...

So, they were beaten and 30000 Israelite soldiers died.

Then we fast forward to chapter 7 and the Philistines meet Israel again in battle.

This time, Israel wins the battle because they went into battle with a correct view of God.

Previous to the battle, they had confessed their sin and repented before the Lord...

And they won because God fought the battle for them...

And when we left off last week, Israel now has uncovered the key to victory against their enemies...

Live in obedience to God.

Keep their relationship to him clear of sin.

Live in a constant state of repentance, where they are continually confessing and then turning from their sin..

Again, this is not rocket science here...

They haven't found some magical formula to win their battles..

They simply need to be a people who trust the Lord and keep their relationship with Him unhindered by sin.

If they were fisherman, they have now found the bait that works.

They just caught their first fish of winning this battle against the Philistines...

They should be saying in their minds....

This is the way to do it...

Live in repentance, obey God and trust Him.

This is the way to catch some fish, but guess what happens in chapter 8?

They pick up a new bait and try a different way...

We are going to look at this chapter in two parts...

### **I. Wanting the World Not God (1-9)**

### **II. Listening to the World Not God (10-22)**

Let's begin with the first 5 verses of chapter 8...



## **I. Wanting the World Not God (1-9)**

*1 And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. 3 His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; 5 and they said to him, “Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.”*

Well, we have talked about evil sons before in the book of 1 Samuel.

In the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, we met Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phineas, who evil men even though they worked in the tabernacle of God..

It is also true that Eli’s successor, Samuel, had evil sons as well.

His sons, Joel and Abijah, were also dishonest men who were thieves and unjust judges.

So, the people go to Samuel and ask for a king instead of Samuel’s sons.

Now, this is a very interesting request.

On the surface, it seems like a good idea.

Samuel's sons are evil and poor leaders, so the people ask for a king to take their place.

That would make sense to most of us.

If we are governed and led by evil men, let's simply change our system of government.

But here is what we miss in this seemingly harmful request.

Israel had just won an incredible battle against the Philistines...

And what was the recipe for success in chapter 7?

Repenting of their sin.

Praying to God for Him to fight for them.

Israel prospered when it relied upon God in chapter 7.

It prospered when its only weapon was prayer in chapter 7.

Now, just one chapter later, Israel has not yet learned the important truth that God is their only hope in this world...

And now, the nation is placing its trust in government to save them.

If we only had a king, our nation would be better off.

That is the cry of verse 5..

Give us a king so we can prosper like the other nations...

I have never been a fan of suspenseful movies.

At 41, I will still close my eyes or look away when a movie scene starts that music in the background that makes us all nervous...

Other people will simply yell at the people on the TV when a scene gets suspenseful....

“Look out!”

“Turn around”

“Look behind you.”

Right here in chapter 8 verse 5, you need to be yelling at your Bible?

What are you thinking Israel?!

You just won a battle that you have never won when you simply turned in prayer and asked God to fight for you...

Now, you think the way to win is by replacing God with a human king?!!

What in the world are you thinking?

The way to blessing is through repentance, prayer and obedience...

How did you forget this so quick?!

Now you think they way to blessing is through a change in how you are governed?!

There is no question that sinful leadership is harmful to a people and a nation.

Israel had just experienced that when they were under the leadership of Eli and his sons...

But don't think for a minute that Samuel was the magic one that gave you victory over the Philistines....

He is a righteous judge for sure, but victory came through a right relationship with God...

Not because you had a better leader...

That is why you can go into communist China and you can find some people who have incredible relationships with the Lord...

You can go into Iran and find Christians there who are blessed beyond measure even though they live in a country hostile to God.

Blessing comes through being right with God, not having the right kind of leadership or government..

It is fine for Israel to want good leadership, but the problem is thinking that the right government is going to keep them right with God...

Here's the incredibly ironic point in this request...

Israel already had the perfect king.

They were led by God.

He went before them.

He went after them.

He led them into battle.

Yet, for some reason, Israel had amnesia.

They constantly forgot that God was the One who was responsible for their success as a people.

Instead, they always returned to their own way of thinking that success came from their hand and their power and their wisdom.

And in this case, they wanted a king like the other nations.

How sad and how tragic is that..

When God simply isn't good enough any longer.

When you can't find satisfaction in God, you will never find satisfaction.

If you can't be content with Him, you will never be content.

The grass will always look greener on the other side, but it will full of poisonous green weeds.

Yet, that was Israel's request in verse 5...

And let's see how Samuel and God answer that request...

*<sup>6</sup> But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. <sup>7</sup> The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."<sup>8</sup> Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. <sup>9</sup> Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."*

John Andrew approaches a wall outlet with a screwdriver...

Tonya runs after him with all her might...

I say, "Let him do it. It will only happen once."

At times, God runs to protect Israel from certain disaster to teach them a lesson.

At times, he lets them run into sin to teach them a lesson.

Israel wants a king in 1 Samuel 8, and God tells Samuel to give them what they want.

But before He does, he tells Samuel, this is not a rejection of you.

This request is a small picture of how Israel has rejected me for centuries..

Samuel, it may look like they are rejecting you, but the truth is that they are rejecting me because I am the one who placed you over them.

You all know the scene where a girl walks up to a guy and plans to break of their relationship..

Trying to be nice, she says...

It's not you, it me.

That is what God is telling Samuel here.

It's not you they are breaking up with Samuel, they are breaking up with me.

They want the ways of the world.

They want a king like the world.

They don't want the king of the world.

The Bible speaks of time when God will simply give you what you want.

Romans 1:28..

***<sup>28</sup> And just as they did not see fit <sup>[u]</sup>to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,<sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, <sup>[v]</sup>haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.***

Sometimes God protects and sometimes, he simply removes his protection.



That is the direction of this country for sure.

America is getting what America wants because it no longer wants God.

And so are countless other nations of the world.

And so are countless people in the world.

God will protect and show kindness to a man or a nation for so long...

But eventually Romans 1 will occur...

Or 1 Samuel 8...

Where God simply tells Israel...

“Ok. You want another king besides me. That is what you will get.”

And I see 1 Samuel 8 as an incredible turning point in the history of Israel and in the entire Bible...

Things will never be the same for Israel now that they want to give God’s throne to a human king.

And that gets to the heart of this passage..

Wanting a king is not bad, but wanting a King other than God Himself is disastrous...

And with that, we move from Israel wanting the world to...

## **II. Listening to the World Not God (8:10-22)**

Verse 10....

*<sup>10</sup> So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked of him a king.*

I have always loved the show “Let’s Make a Deal.”

It is a game that often involves trading a smaller prize in hopes of landing a bigger prize..

Often times, it goes something like this...

Here is \$500 dollars. You can take it and sit down or trade it for curtain #3.

The only problem is you don’t know what is behind curtain #3.

It may a car or it may be something worthless.

The risk is to trade with any promise of knowing what is coming next.

In this second section of 1 Samuel 8, God is going to show the people what they will get if they trade God for a human king.

In the verses that we are about to read, God is pulling back the curtain on what is coming if they get a king like all the other nations.

So, Samuel starts out with this in verse 11 with some consequences of getting a human king...

***<sup>11</sup> He said, “This will be the <sup>[d]</sup>procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup> He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to <sup>[e]</sup>do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.***

The first consequence of having a king is that he will enlist your sons and daughters to his service...

Your sons will fight the king's battles and plant the king's crops..

Your daughter's will cook the king's meals...

Then verse 14...

***<sup>14</sup> He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. <sup>15</sup> He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants.***

Ever heard of taxes Israel?

Well, if you want a king like the other nations you will be taxed like the other nations..

Verse 16...

***<sup>16</sup> He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and <sup>[f]</sup>use them for his work. <sup>17</sup> He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants.***

Not only will require you to pay taxes, a king will also get the best of your animals and servants.

And then the end of verse 17 is really a summary of getting a human king...

The people will become servants to the king.

They will eventually lose their own freedom.

Then in verse 18, we see the ultimate outcome of choosing a human king over God...

***<sup>18</sup> Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.***

It will get so bad with a human king that the people will eventually cry for freedom from this king....

But guess what?

God isn't going to answer in that day.

How many times as a parent have we said something like this?

If you go out there and climb that tree that I told you not to...

And you fall out and break your arm, what do we say?

Don't come crying to me.

And that is essentially what God is saying right here...

A human king comes with consequences for you..

If you look back over verses 11-17, we see the major consequence of wanting a king...

Look at the word that is repeated over and over about a human king...

Verse 11...He will take...

Verse 13...He will take..

Verse 14...He will take...

Verse 15....He will take...

Verse 16, Verse 17....He will take...

That is the price of having a king other than God Himself...

He will take from you...

Now, compare that to having God as your king...

What does He do?

He gives.

He gives you victory in battle.

He gives you food to eat from heaven..

He gives to supply all your needs as a people and as a nation..

So, the point of verses 11-18 is to lay out the consequences of wanting a human king...

To show them what is behind the curtain that they are trading to get...

And how is true is that in our own lives?

God shows us what is behind the curtain of sin.

Nothing good is back there.

Yet, we trade for that curtain everyday when we know it will lead to problems...

And guess what?

Even after God was gracious and kind to show Israel what was behind the curtain of wanting a king...

Look at verse 19...

***<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, “No, but there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup> that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”***

We look at those words at the end of verse 20 with disbelief.

They want a king who will go out before us and fight our battles...

What happened in chapter 7?

God went out and defeated the Philistines for them.

Yet, somehow, somehow, that wasn't good enough for the people.

Even though the Bible said in chapter 7, that they routed the Philistines in their last battle...

The people still aren't satisfied with God fighting for them..

So they insist on a human king, and in verse 21 and 22, God gives them what they want....

*<sup>21</sup> Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the Lord's hearing. <sup>22</sup> The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and<sup>[g]</sup> appoint them a king." So Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."*

And with that simple verse, Israel takes the fork in the road that will give them a human king, and things will never be the same for them.



## **Conclusion**

So, what do we make of chapter 8?

Two lessons...

***First, discontentment leads to serious problems.***

We live in the information age.

We know more today than ever before.

The world is literally before our eyes every day because of the internet..

And the ability to travel and communicate globally only makes our discontentment worse...

We see how the rich and famous live, we see their houses...

We see all these vacation spots..

We see the cars, the clothes, and the fame of nearly every person on the planet.

All of this leads to a discontented life...

WE want the bigger house, the bigger car, the best clothes...

The grass is always brown in our yard but green ride down the street.

It leads us to envy, jealousy and ultimately to being unsatisfied with our life.

And that leads to all sorts of problems...

The solution to that is just like Paul said...

Find your contentment and satisfaction in Christ.

Count your blessings.

Enjoy the Lord's goodness to you.

Even in poverty, the believer has more than the richest man in the world...

Because he or she possesses eternal life, forgiveness of sins and the treasures of heaven.

Find contentment in those things. They are the world's greatest treasures.

Second lesson for us is this...

***Education alone does not transform the heart.***

Here is what I mean..

Ever watch the news describe a problem in society?

What is the solution that is most always offered to any problem?

Well, we need to educate people about the problem.

Let's say we determine that Diet Mt. Dew causes cancer.

So the first solution offered to that problem is educating people about it.

And it is based on this faulty assumption.

We believe that education will transform how people act.

We say to ourselves, "If people only knew that Mt. Dew would kill them, they will stop drinking it."

Guess what?

People would still drink it even if they know the truth.

Israel was told that a human king would lead to problems.

God gave them an education on what would happen if they wanted a human king.

Yet, what did they still do?

They still wanted a king.

Which proves the point that education is unable to transform the human heart.

That is why you can teach someone all the truths of the Bible and they still go to hell.

Actually, hell will home to many people who were well educated in the Scriptures.

And though I firmly believe in the power of the Word of God, unless God transform the heart....

All the education in the world is powerless to save someone.

And that truth helps us deal with people who we know hear the truth and refuse to believe it.

People can walk in uneducated about salvation and leave educated about how to be saved...

But only God is able to take that education and lead someone to salvation.

It is not enough to know the truth, you must act upon the truth as well.

Israel heard the truth about getting a king but failed to act.

May all of us not be as stubborn.

Let us pray.