

# Firm Foundations?

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Sermon Audio file

Saul had been looking for days for his father's lost donkeys and had not found them. His servant said,

"Why don't we ask the prophet Samuel?"

So they went to visit Samuel,

who told them not to worry.

Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying,

"Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?"

When you leave me today,

you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb,

at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you,

"The donkeys you set out to look for have been found."

And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you.

He is asking,

"What shall I do about my son?"

Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor.

Three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you there.

One will be carrying three young goats,

another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine.

They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

After that, you will go to Gebir of God,

where there is a Philistine outpost.

As you approach the town,

you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with liars, timbrels, pipes,

and harps being played before them.

And they will be prophesying.

The spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you,

and you will prophesy with them,

and you will be changed into a different person.

Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do,

for God is with you.

As Saul turned to leave Samuel,

God changed Saul's heart,

and all these signs were fulfilled that day.

When he and his servant arrived at Gebir,

a procession of prophets met him. The spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying.

When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets,

they asked each other,

"What is this that has happened to the son of Kish?"

Is Saul also among the prophets?

Later Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah and said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel,

says. I brought Israel up out of Egypt,

and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you."

But you have now rejected your God,

who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities.

And you have said, "No,

appoint a king over us."

So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.

When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes,

the tribe of Benjamin was taken by Lot.

Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan,  
and matri's clan was taken. Finally, Saul,  
son of Kish, was taken.

But when they looked for him, he was not to be found.

So they inquired further of the Lord,

"Has the man come here yet?"

And the Lord said, "Yes,

he has hidden himself among the supplies."

They ran and brought him out. And as he stood among the people,

he was a head taller than any of the others.

Samuel said to all the people,

"Do you see the man the Lord has chosen?"

There is no one like him among all the people. Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

Oh, man. Okay. Yeah,

finish it there.

So this is the story from one Samuel 10 of the first king of Israel.

It's a guy called Saul. And,

uh,

there's some strange aspects to the story.

So he has this private call, uh,

where Samuel anoints him with oil.

It all starts off with some lost donkeys.

They've lost a donkey.

And Saul and his servant are going to look for Dad's donkeys.

And they can't find them.

And Saul's servant, not Saul,

says to says,

"Why don't we go to the prophet? Because this is prophet.

He'll tell you where the donkeys are."

Not had that too much for me.

I haven't had too many people ring me up saying,

"Uh,

can you just inquire of the Lord where my donkeys are?"

But that's probably some of what Samuel did back then.

So Samuel does that. And he says,

"Oh, don't worry about it. You're going to do this is going to happen.

This is going to happen. This is going to happen."

And the donkeys have been fine.

He anoints the guy with oil.

Pours oil over his head.

And says, "You're going to be king."

So he Samuel has the Saul has this private call.

And often when God wants us to do something,

he'll talk to us first privately.

Before it goes public. Then,

uh,

there's this amazing thing where he says,

"And this is the kind of for me, this is like a type,

a prototype of Pentecost.

Where in verse 6 of chapter 1,

Samuel, chapter 10, it says,

"The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you.

You will prophesy with them.

And you will be changed into a different person."

Isn't that just what happens?

At Pentecost? Isn't that what just happens?

As we come to Christ, as we get filled with the Spirit,  
the Spirit comes upon us.

We get the gifts of the Spirit,  
possibly prophecy or tongues or something like that.

And then we're changed.

God begins to change us.

So Saul was like a forerunner of what's going to happen at Pentecost.

But it doesn't end well for Saul.

Because he doesn't lay some great foundations.

And so as part of the story,  
it carries on. These things happen.

The Spirit of God comes upon him.

There was a company of prophets that were dancing along,  
playing their timbles and liars. Again,

I see a lot of prophetic people nowadays.

But I don't often see a company of prophetic people dancing along,  
playing their harps.

And prophesying. But that's what happened to Saul.

He met them Spirit of God comes upon him.

It's really obvious. He starts prophesying.

And people go, "Wow. Is Saul even a prophet?"

So it's a great start.

He's changed.

He's filled with the Spirit. He's prophesying.

And you can see how it's going to go wrong very quickly with Saul.

Because the next thing that happens is when Samuel goes, "All right, then we're going to appoint a king." He brings the whole of Israel, the whole nation together.

And they pick out by lots,

which was a kind of an Old Testament way of hearing from God in a way of what was going to happen.

And it comes to Benjamin's tribe.

And then a particular clan.

And then Saul's picked out.

Where's Saul?

Where's the man that's really tall?

Who's filled with the Spirit? Who's been prophesying?

Who can has been changed into a different person?

Where is Saul?

He's hiding in the backs.

He's hiding in the baggage. He's hiding with the supplies, as the NIV puts it.

He started out well.

But he's not continuing well. And it's all going to end in complete disaster.

And it's not.

A number of reasons for that.

I mean,

so Saul's story is a tragic one. It's a tragic one.

Of a bad character.

Wasted potential.

And ends up in a sad demise.

And I think there's six quick reasons why that happened.

So two kids.

I need you to help me.

Because there are some A4 cards around the room with a number on them.

And I would like you to find them. Havilah, you're nearest the first one.

Next.

To Joshua.

Ah.

There we go.

Okay. Meanwhile, Emily,

can you see one as well? Do you want to grab the one that you can see?

Yep. There's one there.

There's a number two somewhere.

Can somebody find number two?

Keisha, well done. Do you want to grab it? You might need some help getting that.

I know you can jump that high for a five. But I don't think you can jump that high for a paper, can we?

Hold that for a second. Bring it down.

Excellent. Okay.

And then there should be a four, five, and six. Who's got number one?

Okay.

So number one. What's that say?

Insecurity.

There was something about Saul where he carried on being insecure for the rest of his life.

He never dealt with insecurity.

And one of the things about insecurity is that it's a bit like VO. We don't be a body odor.

We don't know we have it.

We don't know where we are at.

And we don't deal with it when we do have it.

And he never dealt with his insecurity.

One of the things that we need to do with insecurity is realize it.

And realize our confidence is in the wrong place.

And put it in the right place. Jeremiah 17.

It's a Jeremiah day today, isn't it?

Says this.

Jeremiah 17 says,

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man,

who draws strength from mere flesh,

whose heart turns away from the Lord.

That person will be like a bush in the wastelands.

They will not see prosperity when it comes.

They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,

whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water,

sends out its roots by the stream. Does not fear when heat comes.

Its leaves are always green.

Has no worries in a year of drought.

Never fails to bear fruit."

Insecurity is best dealt with by putting our confidence in Christ.

Our confidence in God. Who's got number two?

Ah, Keisha, can you read that word for me? Impatience. Impatience.

Saul was kind of impatient.

Wouldn't wait for the prophet to come later on.

Waited a couple of days. Gave up waiting.

Did something really stupid.

Ended up getting in big trouble.

Okay. Emily, what have you got? Number three.

I think that might be a bit difficult for you.

Can you read that? No. Okay.

Fear of man.

How many of us are scared of what others think?

How many of us are being dishonest by not putting our hands up?

Many of us.

We struggle with the fear of man.

We struggle with being more worried about what people think than what God thinks. Thank you, kids, for finding those.

Can we find number four and five and six? Where are they?

Okay.

Do you want to run over and get that one? Which one can you see?

Go and run over and get that one. Emily, there's one over there.

Can you see that one? On the pillar.

Go, go, go, go, go, go.

I can see another one over there near the sound desk.

Okay.

Cannot for the life of me remember where I put number five. Oh yeah, there it is.

Oh.

There's number five. Excellent. Number six is nearby.

Ah,

well done, Havilah. What have we got?

Do you want to read that one?

No time. No time, my God.

I think one of the big foundations that he didn't lay in his life,

I don't think Saul spent too much time with the Lord.

I think he kept going to all sorts of people,

even went to a witch at one point, didn't he?

Didn't spend enough time with the Lord.

And I think if you want to ongo carry on and lay good foundations and build on those good foundations, we need to spend good time with the Lord.

On a daily basis, if we can. Here we go.

Number five. What have we got? Do you want to read it?

No accountability.

No accountability.

He didn't have anybody that was speaking into his life.

Didn't have anybody asking him difficult questions, I don't think.

He had a bunch of yes men around him.

And that made a right mess. Now, Emily,

you've picked the really long one, haven't you? Here we go.

Okay.

No ongoing filling with the Spirit.

See, he had that amazing account with God,

didn't he, at the start?

He was filled with the Spirit. Changed person.

But it didn't last.

Because he didn't ongoingly keep going back to the Lord to be filled with the Spirit. Thank you very much, Emily.

We need to keep getting filled with the Spirit.

Now, in the book,

it talks about the fact that no leader is perfect.

None of us are perfect. Only Jesus is perfect.

And he also mentions a great verse in John 5:

44,

where it talks about the issue of the fact that because the disciples weren't looking to get glory from the

Lord and get the Lord's Pleasure over what they were doing,  
they were always looking for glory amongst themselves.

That was causing a big issue.

So I need some more help now of some good readers who can help me out.

Because I printed out this verse and then I dropped it on the floor.

Probably deliberately.

And mixed up the order of the verse. Can you help me?

Anyone help me get this order?

Come on, Keisha.

Anybody else? Oh,

Isabel's going to come and help. Brilliant.

Excellent. Right.

Let's get it on the floor.

And see if you guys can get it in the right order for me. Okay.

It's going to be I'm going to read it out.

All right.

I'm dropping it on the floor. Making it even worse, aren't I?

Do you know what? I might drop it.

It might randomly go in the right order. But I doubt it. Somehow.

Look at this. What do you reckon? Do you reckon? Oh, that one's upside down.

Oh, look. There's a capital letter.

That's a clue, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. Let me read the verse.

And you might want to grab a Bible.

What do I have to read into the book?

You can put it whichever way you like.

As long as it makes a sentence.

I want to go this way. And try and work as a team.

Okay.

John 5:44.

How can you believe?

How can you believe? Oh.

They're fast, aren't they?

How can you believe?

Since you accept?

Since you accept?

Since you accept?

Where am I?

Glory from one another.

Did you say the glory?

Oh, how can you believe?

Since you accept glory from one another. Do you mind?

Need to go for two lines, I think.

But do not seek. Here's another.

Where's.

One?

One.

But do not seek the glory that comes from the only God. But where's but?

Hey.

We're always like a but, don't we? Here we go.

Okay. Here we go.

Have we got it right?

How can you believe?

Since you accept glory from one another.

But do not seek the glory that comes from the only God. Where's seek?

You know when I said I dropped it?

You know when I said I dropped it after I printed it?

I think I dropped the word seek.

Okay. Here we go.

How can you believe?

Since you accept the glory from one another.

But do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.

Quick.

Done it right. Seek on there.

Before they notice. There's a pen over there.

Right. How are we doing?

Where's the Bible coming? The verse? Right at the end. Oh, no. It doesn't.

The only.

God.

What about the second? Right. Here we go.

You messed up,

haven't you? Yeah. Basically.

How can you believe?

Since you accept? How can you believe?

Since you accept glory?

From one another.

But do not seek.

Quickly. Quickly. Before they notice.

Seek.

Seek the glory.

The glory.

That comes from the.

Only God.

And it says the Father.

Quick. Change it. Come on. Quick.

Change it. Come on. Change it. And then accept.

What happened to accept? Oh, yeah.

Okay. How are we doing?

How can you believe?

Since you accept glory from one another.

But do not seek the glory.

That comes from the only God.

Where does this?

Do we have another gun that we accept that doesn't go anywhere?

Should we make up a point?

What did Saul not accept?

God.

Praise from God.

He looked from praise from men. Thank you very much.

Did I make a complete mess of that?

Yeah. You did. I did.

Go on then. Go and sit down. I did.

Oh.

But.

It's a clever verse. It's an amazing verse, though,

isn't it?

How can you believe?

Since you accept glory from one another.

But do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.

How many times in our life do we look for approval from other people?

Do we look to praise from other people instead of praise from our other Father? From God.

And this is one of the big things that Saul got wrong in his life.

He started out so, so well.

Private anointing.

By the prophet.

He got filled with the Spirit in an amazing way.

He was changed.

It's almost like, you know,

the kind of new text. It's pointing towards the New Testament.

How, as we come to Christ,

we are a changed person at that moment.

And he gets this amazing gift of the Spirit that he can use.

But he doesn't because of his insecurity.

He ends up hiding with the baggage.

Because of his fear of man. And his impatience.

And his impetuosity.

And doesn't keep seeking the Lord.

Goes to witches. Goes to people.

Goes to wherever. Isn't accountable. What a mess.

What God wants us to do is be the kind of people that look to him.

The kind of people that look to that well-done,

good, and faithful servant at the end of our lives.

And the thing is with that verse that we've tried to do there is that God does.

Jesus does acknowledge the fact that we do need encouragement.

We do need people to praise us.

We do need these things.

But so often,

we're looking in the wrong place.

We need to get these things from the Lord.

And as Jesus was baptized in Luke 3:

17, can we read that verse to us?

This is amazing account of that he has. Where the Holy Spirit comes down for him, too.

I'll say it. 21.

When all the people were being baptized,

Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying,

heaven was opened.

And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven,

"You are my Son."

Whom I love.

With whom I am well pleased.

And that is before Jesus has done anything. It's right at the start of his ministry.

God wants us to start well.

He wants us to have that great foundation of coming to him. Being filled with the Spirit.

Being changed by him.

Getting the gifts of the Spirit.

But he also wants us to keep going in him.

To keep looking to him.

To get our security and our significance and all these things in him, ultimately.

Because people won't always get it right for us.

Still need to be encouraging to one another.

We still need to call out the good in one another.

We still need to make ourselves accountable to the one another.

And have grace for one another when we mess it up.

Because we're all works in progress.

But we need to start well and keep going well.

Let's go back to 1 Samuel 10,

verse 6,

as we land. Come to land.

The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you and you will prophesy with them.

And you will be changed into a different person.

And as Saul turned to leave Samuel, verse 9,

God's changed Saul's heart and all these signs were fulfilled. That day.

God wants to raise up people that serve him.

And people that serve him the whole of their days.

That if you read carry on reading the story of Saul,

it just is such a disaster.

He ends up committing suicide.

But it's such a disaster.

He wants us to be people that the Spirit has come upon.

That we've been filled with the Spirit.

That we eagerly desire the gifts of God.

Especially that you may prophesy.

And prophecy brings strength and encouragement to one another.

And he wants us to be changed.

He wants our character to be changed. Amen.

Amen.

Let's pray and I'm going to give an opportunity for us to pray for one another.

Might be that this morning you need that foundation in your life.

Might be that this morning that you need that foundation of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's funny in churches all across the world,

people are celebrating Pentecost today.

They're celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit.

And for many churches,

that'll be a sense of the one time in the year when they think of these things.

But we could be filled with the Spirit any day, any Sunday, any time.

If you want to be filled with the Spirit.

If you've not yet received any of the gifts that you know of,

he'd love to do that.

If you want to be somebody that can prophesy,

that Acts 2 talks about young and old,

men and women, being able to hear from God,

whether it be dreaming dreams or prophesying, whatever it is,

different ways that God reveals to us.

This morning,

if you desire in that,

I feel the Lord wants to impart it.

But let's pray and then I'll give an opportunity for us to pray for one another.

Father God,

we thank you for this amazing story. Lord,

we want to be people that start out well. Carry on well.

And finish well.

We want to be people that that that that you've carried on the work until completion in the day of Christ,

as Philippians 1 says.

We want to be people that you're going to say, "Well done.

Good and faithful servant."

We don't want to be people that that blow it because of sin.

That blow it because they haven't we haven't been following you.

We've let fear of man come in or insecurity come in.

God,

I pray that you would help us to start well. To carry on well.

And to end well.

No matter what happens. Lord, this morning,

we've we've had exhortation that you are with us even in the difficult times.

And many of us are under great pressure.

But Lord,

we pray that you would keep filling us.

That we would keep close to you in the dark times and in the good times, in the valley,

in the hills. Lord,

as we're struggling to get out of the valley,

into the top of the hill, God,

that we would know that you are with us. Lord Jesus,

God,

I pray for a sense of the presence of God upon each one of us. In Jesus' name.

If this morning,

if you if this morning you need a you need the Holy Spirit to come upon you.

If you need a touch of the Holy Spirit, I'd love to invite you to come and and and receive prayer.

Amen.

## **Application Questions**

1) Saul started with a private call from God before his public anointing. How has God spoken to you privately about His calling on your life? What difference does it make when we encounter God personally before stepping into public ministry or influence?

2) The sermon identifies six things that derailed Saul: insecurity, impatience, fear of man, no time with God, no accountability, and no ongoing filling with the Spirit. Which of these resonates most with your

own spiritual journey, and what would it look like to address it?

3) John 5:44 reveals that seeking glory from people blocks our ability to believe in God. When do you find yourself most tempted to seek approval from others rather than from God? How might that be limiting your faith?

4) Jesus was affirmed by His Father's voice ('You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased') before His ministry began. How does receiving God's affirmation first change the way we approach our calling and deal with criticism or rejection?

5) The sermon emphasizes starting well, continuing well, and finishing well. What does each of these stages look like practically in your Christian life, and where do you need the most support or accountability right now?