

MESSAGE - Part 10 - Formed to Trust - 02.01.26

A couple weeks ago I shared something on Facebook about reading the Bible in a year. A lot of us use an app for that. And that's not a bad goal! But I think there's always the worry of keeping up the pace.

To keep up, you'd have to read about 3 to 4 chapters per day. Honestly, that's a lot! And if you're like me, it doesn't take long before the app's saying you've missed 20 days!

That's where I'm at — I'm only averaging about 1 chapter per day.
And that's okay!

[SLIDE 1] The goal of reading God's Word was never meant to be how much we can consume in a certain amount of time.

God's Word was given to us for a lifetime of study, contemplation, and daily application. We're not meant to hurry through it.

We're meant to *rest* in His Word... let it *linger*...
give it the time and space it deserves to **form our heart**.

Psalm 1 says:

[SLIDE 1a] Psalm 1:1-2 - Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the LORD [aka Scripture], and who meditates on his law day and night.

Meditation in today's world tends to be about emptying our minds and just being present in the moment. But that's not the kind of meditation we see in the Bible.

Biblical meditation is about being present with God's Word and allowing it to slowly seep into our hearts.

Rather than rush through it, we return to it... we pour over the same verse, the same passage, again and again... allowing every word to shape who we are as God's people.

That's what it means to meditate on God's Word day and night.

In fact, God describes His Word as something to be written on our hearts. We're supposed to keep it close and carry it with us through daily life. It's not meant to be rushed. It's meant to be *lived with*.¹

But — you know — when you're reading a bible in a year plan, and it constantly tells you how behind you are, **it's tempting to skim through passages like 1 Samuel 10 and think: "Okay. I got it. Saul became king."** And then move on.

But, if we allow ourselves to slow down and let it marinate... We'll see that passages like what we heard this morning are so much more than a history lesson.

[SLIDE 2] 1 Samuel 9–10 reveals what it looks like when God forms people to trust Him.

Throughout Scripture, **God forms His people in two ways: Through His *Word*, and through *lived experience*.**

**God speaks...
and then He walks with people as they gradually learn to trust His Word.**

That's exactly what's happening in our passage today. Everything Saul experienced was for the purpose of slowly **shaping his trust in the LORD**.

Now, to be fair, when I think about Saul, I usually think about how he mistreated David and how he sinned against the LORD. But that's not where we're at in the story.

Saul isn't the villain in these chapters.

He's not outright rejecting the LORD... not yet anyway. What we're seeing in Saul is part of his spiritual growth. We're not yet told if Saul ends up fully trusting in the LORD.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:6–9; Proverbs 3:3, 6:21, 7:1–3; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3

All we have so far are moments of spiritual formation — and right now, those moments reveal a man who's confused and afraid of what the LORD has planned.

But the beauty in all this, is that the LORD was already forming Saul before he even realized it... And, I love that!

Because that's what God does for us. He uses His Word and our experiences to shape and strengthen our trust in Him. And even if we don't understand everything that's going on, the LORD is still working.

There's *never* a moment when He takes a break or gets distracted.
He's *never* caught off guard or surprised by our confusion.
He's *always* in control—reshaping our hearts even before we realize it.

Our spiritual growth is a lifelong process.
And for Saul, this is just the beginning.
He's still confused as to why Samuel singled him out.

And so, as readers, we're meant to wonder how Saul will respond once he sees that the LORD actually does have plans for him!

[SLIDE 3] 1 Samuel 9:25–10:8 — Signs from God

This is where Samuel and Saul are getting ready to hit the road, but before they left town, Samuel wanted to talk privately to Saul. But this wasn't about checking for directions for where they're headed...

Before Saul says a word, Samuel pulls out a flask of olive oil, pours it on Saul's head, and anoints him as the king of Israel! And again, before Saul could say anything, Samuel explains that a few things will happen to Saul on his way home as signs from the LORD:

He said that Saul will:

- Meet two men on the road that said his donkeys were found
- Then he'll meet three men who offer him bread

- Then he'll meet a group of musical prophets — and the Spirit of the LORD will come on him “powerfully” — Saul will even prophesy with them

Again, these were signs for Saul. He was meant to see them as confirmation that the LORD was not only with him, but that the LORD chose him to rule Israel.

We don't know what Saul thought about all of this. All we know is, verse 9:

[SLIDE 4] 1 Samuel 10:9 - As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.

Wait a second... God changed Saul's heart? What does that mean? Is Saul fully trusting in the LORD now? Not exactly...

If you look back up to verse 6, it says that the Spirit of the LORD would come powerfully upon Saul, enabling him to prophesy.

That doesn't mean Saul becomes 'saved' and the Holy Spirit enters into him like we experience today. **This is the LORD empowering Saul for the moment *he's in***—it's a snapshot in Saul's story, not the whole picture.

This was the LORD teaching Saul what it's like when He's with him.

And his heart was definitely changed — at least for this moment. People who knew Saul even witnessed it! They saw him prophesying with a bunch of musical prophets... and were left confused. Look at verse 11...

[SLIDE 5] 1 Samuel 10:11 - 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?”

This wasn't Saul's typical behavior. In fact, it was so odd that people all over were wondering what exactly happened to him.

Again, it was a *temporary* heart change. But it was still a moment of *real* spiritual formation.

But the question is: Did these moments have a real impact on Saul's heart?

We'll catch a clue when Saul runs into his uncle.

His uncle asked him where he'd been. Saul said...

[SLIDE 6] 1 Samuel 10:14-16 - "Looking for the donkeys," he said. "But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel." Saul's uncle said, "Tell me what Samuel said to you." Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

I have to ask: Is there anything here that seems odd?

Saul didn't say *anything* about being anointed as king!!

I mean... that's kind of a big deal! You'd think he'd say *something*!

But the writer of 1 Samuel wants us to notice Saul's **silence** after the signs from God.

Why would Saul keep quiet? *We don't know yet!*

The writer keeps us hanging in that silence on purpose.

Because in this moment: **Saul's response to God's call is silence.**

That's important, because remember what we said earlier?

God forms His people in two ways: through His *Word* and our *life experiences*.

In other words: God speaks — and then He walks with us as we gradually learn to trust His Word.

But *learning* to trust the LORD is often the hard part.

Notice we haven't really seen Saul fully trust in the LORD yet.

He's *experienced* some amazing things.

But there's still plenty of room for God to work on his heart.

And that shows with how he responds here and in the next scene...

[SLIDE 7] 1 Samuel 10:17-22 — Saul is publicly made king

This is where Samuel gathers the people of Israel in Mizpah. Mizpah was a city where Israel held important, national events. However, Mizpah was *NOT* their main place for worship.

That's an important little detail in the text. It was normal for national events like this to take place in Mizpah, but still... there's something missing... and as readers, we're meant to notice it.

The LORD was there... but that's because He was *with Samuel*.

But *what should be there* to represent the presence of the LORD for the people of Israel?

The Ark of the LORD!

Where was the Ark of the LORD? It's *still* stored away in someone's house! It's been there ever since the Philistines brought it back. And worse yet, it doesn't come out of storage until 2 Samuel 6 when David is made king and he brings it to Jerusalem.

I know that might seem like a small thing, but the Ark's absence highlights Israel's rejection of Yahweh as King. It's *not* there for Saul — it *will* be there for David — and we're meant to see the tragedy in this.

The LORD was giving Israel what they asked for, but He was *NOT* happy with them — And Samuel was bold enough to say what needed to be said:

[SLIDE 8] 1 Samuel 10:17-18 - 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.'

[SLIDE 9] 1 Samuel 10:19 - "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.'"

Imagine being Samuel. I know he's just being faithful, but wouldn't that feel risky? He was really putting his neck out there...

But that's the point. Samuel doesn't stay silent.
 He doesn't hesitate or hide.
 And he's not afraid to expose the hearts of those who drifted from the LORD.

He's willing to obey the LORD, even when he knows this isn't *really* what the LORD wants. This is what the *people want*. And now the LORD is giving them exactly what they asked for — a human king.

But before Samuel officially anoints Saul as king, the people of Israel still needed proof that Saul was who the LORD was giving them.

So, Samuel had everyone separate into their tribes:

[SLIDE 10] 1 Samuel 10:20-22a - When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot...

What are lots?

Taking lots is kind of like drawing the short straw. We don't know exactly how the process worked. But the point is that **this was *the LORD's choice***.
 Nobody was manipulating the outcome.

So, as lots were taken, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen first.
 Then Matri's family clan. And finally, the lots fell on Saul.

But when they looked for Saul, he was MIA!

The text says that they "inquired further of the LORD."
 And the LORD responded!
 Look at verse 22...

[SLIDE 11] 1 Samuel 10:22b - And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

Why was Saul hiding?

Remember: Saul had clear signs from the LORD that he was going to be king. *He experienced* what it was like when the LORD was with him. And yet, when asked about it, he was silent.

And now, when confronted with the reality of his calling, ***he's found hiding behind some boxes!***

Why? Well, let's think about this...

How long has it been since Saul was looking for his father's donkeys? Maybe a few days? Probably no more than a week?

That short amount of time is worth considering.

Let's say my dad asked me to drive down to Washington DC to pick something up. But when I get there, I run into the vice president. The next thing I know I'm having dinner at the White House. And the following morning, I'm being sworn in as the president of the United States — *whether I wanted the job or not!*

As crazy as that sounds... *that's exactly what happened to Saul.*

I think for now it's okay to cut Saul some slack! It's been a crazy few days! And now he's being given a responsibility he might not even want.

No wonder he stayed silent!

Now, there's something else important here that the writer of 1 Samuel wants us to see — We're supposed to notice the contrast between Saul and Samuel.

Both were chosen by the LORD. Both were asked by the LORD to do something they didn't want to do. But only one of them was willing to quietly trust the LORD and obey — that's Samuel.

Notice that Samuel didn't protest when God called Him. He didn't run. He didn't hide or stay silent. He simply trusted the LORD and said what needed to be said.

Saul, on the other hand, tried to hide. But you can't hide from the LORD. Here's what happened when they found him...

[SLIDE 12] 1 Samuel 10:23-24 - They ran and brought him out [seized], 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!"

Picture this moment: Saul's hiding behind the boxes.

The LORD reveals his hiding spot.

Then people rushed over to him, grabbed him and *forced* him to stand in front of everyone. This was going to happen whether Saul wanted it or not.

Even if he wasn't ready for the job, the people were determined to have a king that *looked* like a military leader. After all, he's the tallest guy around!

And so now, Saul's standing there in front of everyone.

Samuel presents Saul as the LORD's chosen king, and the people eagerly accept him. Then Samuel explained the rights and duties of a king.

And when he finished, he sent everyone home — Including Saul...

[SLIDE 13] 1 Samuel 10:26-27 - Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. But some scoundrels said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.

It's interesting that the nation was divided.

Some aligned with God's choice.

These were "brave" men who were ready to serve in Saul's military.

Others despised God's choice. The text calls them "scoundrels" (worthless).

All they could see was a tall and scared young man.

And what was Saul's response to all of this?

Silence.

Again, that's not to say that he was a failure... or that he's the villain of the story. He hasn't rejected God yet. He's just been caught hesitating and hiding from God's will.

But even in the uncertainty, the LORD was working in Saul's life. Saul could still learn to trust in the LORD. After all, he'll be working with Samuel!

In a way, Samuel could relate with Saul. *He also learned* what it's like to trust the LORD even when the path ahead wasn't clear.

And so here we've got two people in two different stages of spiritual formation. Saul was just starting out. But Samuel has spent a lifetime with the LORD.

And so what I want us to see in today's passage is more than a history lesson. I want us to see how God forms His people to trust Him over time. I hope we're seeing that...

[SLIDE 14] Spiritual growth isn't simply learning to recognize God's voice. It's the lifelong process of being formed to follow His Word, responding with trust and obedience, even when it feels uncomfortable.

Responding with trust and obedience is all about surrendering to God's will.

It's why Jesus taught us to pray:
*"Father... Your kingdom come, **Your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven."*

Praying for the LORD's will isn't easy. It can be *painful*. It's easier to stay silent and *not* pray. But praying for the LORD's will is also beautiful, because it's a moment of surrender—trusting that God is in control.

These are the moments when He forms our hearts to look more like His. And that's a core truth we see in today's passage...

[SLIDE 15] We're formed to trust Jesus and His will as we learn to surrender to Him.

I'm sure a lot of us can relate with this...

Have you ever felt like the LORD was leading you into something and you were unsure about it?

That was me when I was in college. My mind was set on being a professional drummer. But God had other plans. A guy named Mark was sitting next to me in one of my classes and invited me to a bible study. I went, and over time, I felt the LORD calling me into ministry.

That wasn't what I had planned.

I wasn't even sure I *wanted* to do that.

But this is how the LORD forms people.

**He speaks through His Word, and if we're willing,
He equips us to do what we've been created to do.**

And so, maybe one takeaway from today's message is this:

[SLIDE 16] Is there an area of our lives where we might be hesitant or fearful to obey what the LORD is calling us to do?

What parts of our lives is the LORD asking us to surrender and trust Him?
And is there anything holding us back from what He's asking us to do?

The song we're about to sing asks exactly that: ***Whom shall I fear?***

Will we fear our enemies? Will we fear our own circumstances?

Will we give in to the doubts of our own abilities?

Or, will we trust in the One who goes before us;
the One who delivers us; the One who reigns forever?

May we surrender our trust to Jesus, our true King.

May we hold on to His promises and truth.

And may we be a people formed to trust in Him,
strengthened to step out in faith toward what He's calling us to do.

Let's Pray