

FEATURE: JOEL CATHEY/COLLEGE MINISTRY

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 8. 1 Samuel 8. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 8. That's on page **230** in those Bibles under the chairs.

INTRODUCTION: VACATION

Well, it's good to be back with y'all this morning. I want to thank you for the couple weeks off.

Man, this Fall was crazy, and the march to Christmas is a lot of work. So, to just rest for a couple weeks was so good for me and my family.

- I snowboarded.
- I went for walks.
- I hiked with my new puppy.
- I went for runs.
- I read a book for my soul.
- I grew a beard.
- All awesome things!

I slowed down to be with Jesus. And listen, it's really good for your pastor to love Jesus more. So, thank you.

And as I rested for those two weeks, 1 Samuel was in my head. This new sermon series today.

- And I just chewed on it.
- And meditated on it.
- And I think there's a ton in it for us.
- And I'm just a little energetic today,
 - cause I haven't preached for 23 days!

So, I'll probably go 2...maybe 3 hours.

So, let's get after it. 1 Samuel chapter 8. Verse 1:

1 SAMUEL 8:1-3

[1] When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel.

[2] The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. [3] Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.

EXPLAIN: RECAP

Ok, the book of 1 Samuel can really be broken up into three sections:

- Chapters 1-7 cover the life of the prophet Samuel.
- Chapters 8-15 cover Saul, Israel's first king,
- And chapters 16 to the end usher in King David.

And last January we preached 1 Samuel chapters 1-7.

So, let me catch us all up to where we are.

- After God delivers the Israelites from Egypt via Moses' ministry,
 - They are headed to the promised land...
 - That is, the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - But on the way,
 - the people of God grumble,
 - and don't trust God,
 - and worship idols.
- And so, God disciplines them...
 - by causing them to wander in the desert for 40 years...
 - instead of going into the promised land.
- And after those 40 years,
 - Moses dies,
 - and his successor, Joshua,
 - leads the new generation of Israel into the promised land.
- But there are occupying peoples in this land,
 - thus begins the time of the judges of Israel.
 - You can read about them in the book of Judges,
 - and suffice it to say: things go from bad to worse.

The theme verse for Judges was Judges 21:25

SLIDE JUDGES 21:25

[25] In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

That's Old Testament for "you do you," ok? **BLANK SLIDE**

So, now we turn the page to the book of 1 Samuel.

- There's no king in Israel.
- Everyone's just doing whatever the heck they want.
- And onto the scene comes Samuel.
- And he was Israel's greatest prophet.
 - He spoke directly to them the words of God.
 - But the people still don't listen.
- And now we're coming to the end of Samuel's life.
- And unfortunately, Samuel's sons turn out to be dumpsters.
 - The text says they took bribes,
 - and perverted justice,
 - and ran for congress...
- They just don't follow God.

TRANSITION

And that leads us to 1 Samuel 8...so, we'll break this chapter down into three sections. And the first section is verses 4-9 where we find

SLIDE THE REQUEST

Follow along in your text:

1 SAMUEL 8:4-9

[4] Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah [5] and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the

nations.” [6] But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. [7] And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. [8] According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. [9] Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

POINT 1: SUBSTITUTE

The REQUEST of the elders of Israel is for a king...

- they don't want another judge...
- or a prophet...
- but they want a king...
- like all the other nations.

But there's more here. What they're really requesting is:

SLIDE THE REQUEST: A SUBSTITUTE

They are demanding a king who would protect them, and prosper them, and fulfill them.

- But God was supposed to be those things for them.
- God was supposed to be their real king.
- They were supposed to fully trust in God.

But this request was more like treating God like a safety net.

- *“Yeah, we want you God!*
- *But we also want a king...*
- *just like all the other nations!*
- *We want God + a king.”*

And when you demand God + anything you end up with NOTHING!

Now, the demand for a king was not wrong in and of itself. Ok?
In Deuteronomy 17:14-20 God gives permission and parameters for a future king of Israel.

- So, the fault was not in the fact of the request,
 - but in the motive for the request.
- It was not the request itself,
 - but what was behind the request that tainted it.

Again, it was God +.

- God is not enough.
- We demand something more.

APPLICATION

And that’s applicable to us.

What is that in your life?

About what in your life do you think, *“If I have that I’ll have security and prosperity and joy. And if I don’t have that thing then it’s over for me.”*

- Is it influence?
- Is it success?
- Is it physical beauty?
 - Or physical fitness?

- Is it money?
- Is it romance?
- Is it fame and respect?
- Is it having children?
- Is it having children live close by?

Or is it something a little more tangible...

- like a home in the mountains...
- or a remodeled kitchen...
- or a new car...
- or a solid retirement plan.

What is it that you'd say, *"If that's present, I'll have security and prosperity and joy."*

- That's your +...
- That's your SUBSTITUTE...
- and the biblical word for that is IDOLATRY.

You see, the request for a king reveals that Israel is not fully relying on God, but rather, they want a substitute. They want God +. It's idolatry.

ILLUSTRATION: BEAR GRYLLES

So, on my time off Maryse and I watched a show called Running Wild with Bear Grylls.

- You seen this thing?
- You guys know who I'm talking about?

Bear Grylls is a British adventurer, made famous by the show Man vs. Wild.

- But in Running Wild he takes guests,
 - normally celebrities,
- with him on his adventures.
- And many of them have no business in the wild...
- which is why it's so entertaining!

Now, I'm not much of a bucket list kinda guy. By that I mean:

- I don't think I'm holding on to some experiences...
- that I want to do, but haven't done,
- in an attempt to complete my life's experience or purpose.

But given the opportunity, I would drop everything else to go on an adventure with Bear Grylls.

- Seriously church, if you got connections with Bear...
- and you want to bless your pastor...
- there's the gift I want.

Like, if Bear showed up right now...

- like zip-lined into this room,
- gave me a knife,
- and said, "*let's go*"...

I'd be like, "*I need an elder up here! You're preaching...I'm gone.*"

And here's why I want to go on an adventure with Bear...I know he'd keep me alive! Cause he'd be like,

- "*Alright Chris, come eat these berries...*
- *because they're full of vitamins and energy.*

- *And you're gonna need it because we're going to*
 - *run down this hill full speed,*
 - *and jump off that cliff down there,*
 - *and avoid those razor-sharp rocks,*
 - *and plunge into that crystal clear water below...*
 - *even though there a walking path right over there!*

I'd love it!

Now, I bring all this up because as we watched Running Wild on my vacation, Maryse kept asking me the question,

- *"Would you do that?"*
- *Could you do that?"*
- *Do you think I could do that?"*

And I'm like,

- *"Sweetie, if Dwight from the Office can do it..."*
- *if Will Ferrell can do it..."*
 - *I mean, these are models of fitness and athleticism!*
- *I think we can handle it!"*

ILLUSTRATION: RAPPELLING

But one of the things that almost every single guest does is rappelling.

- And that is something that I know about,
- because in high school I started rock climbing.
- And rappelling is how you get down...
- after you've climbed a rock face.

So, I started climbing in the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. And one of the fun climbs we would do was called Montezuma's Revenge.

SLIDE: PIC1 Here's a picture of it.

- It's a two pitch climb at about 150 feet high.
- So, not too challenging, but really fun.

Well, after you climb it, you rappel off the side to the bottom.

SLIDE: PIC2 Here's a picture from the top.

So, I brought my climbing rope. This is what you use when you rappel.

This is what keeps you alive.

And to rappel you have to...

- get out over the ledge of the rock,
- and lean back on the rope,
- and put your full weight on this rope.
- And the rope catches.
- And you're perpendicular with the rock.
- And you're parallel to the ground below.
- And then you start to let the rope slide through the belay device
 - which is attached to your harness...
- and you lower yourself down.

BLANK SLIDE

Now, watching Bear Grylls freak these celebrities out about rappelling is one of my favorite things!

- And I'm mocking them from my couch!
- With, like, a bag of chips on my chest!
- But Maryse asks me, "*well, can you do that?*"

And in my macho bravado I say, *“Of course I can.”*

But then I remember the first time I tried rappelling with a buddy.

- And when it came time for me to rappel...
- and I could see from the ground 150-feet below me.
- I got freaked out!

And I must have stood there on the edge for like 10 minutes.

- And then instead of leaning back on the rope,
- Putting my full weight on the rope,

I swung my leg over the edge,

- and proceeded to try to down climb the rock face...
 - the same way I climbed up.

I didn't want to let go of the rock and trust my whole weight on that rope.

APPLICATION

That's the picture of what's happening here in 1 Samuel 8.

- You see, when you're climbing up,
 - the rope is there,
 - but your confidence is really in your arms and legs.
- Whereas, when you are rappelling,
 - you have shifted the weight OFF your arms and your legs
 - and onto the rope ENTIRELY.

Israel here doesn't want to trust God fully...they want to keep some of their weight in another place.

- It's not that having a king was a bad thing.
 - It's that they were essentially hedging their bets.
- They wanted God...
 - but they wanted to keep a little bit of control.

And oh, how this is a problem for us, church!

When things start to get janky in our lives...

- So very often, our first impulse is to assume
 - there is something wrong in our techniques.
- Our problem is mechanics...it's not spiritual.
 - We just need a new church.
 - We just need a new group.
 - We just need a new plan.
 - We just need to use our arms and legs differently!
 - We just need a king.

How easy it is to look for a new gimmick rather than cry out for a new heart.

TRANSITION

So, that's the REQUEST. A SUBSTITUTE.

Now, on to **SLIDE THE REALITY**

Verse 10.

1 SAMUEL 8:10-18

[10] So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. [11] He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will **take** your sons and appoint them to

his chariots and to be **his** horsemen and to run before **his** chariots. [12] And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow **his** ground and to reap **his** harvest, and to make **his** implements of war and the equipment of **his** chariots. [13] He will **take** your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. [14] He will **take** the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to **his** servants. [15] He will **take** the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to **his** officers and to **his** servants. [16] He will **take** your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to **his** work. [17] He will **take** the tenth of your flocks, and **you shall be his slaves**. [18] And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

POINT 2: TYRANT

The request was for a SUBSTITUTE. But the reality was

SLIDE THE REALITY: A TYRANT

When you have other kings besides God, those kings tyrannize you...or to quote Samuel, **you shall be his slaves**.

- The dominant word in this description is ‘take’.
- The king will **take** your sons and daughters;
- he will **take** your crops and your lands
- he will **take** the best years of your lives...
- and he will exploit them for himself.

The irony here is tremendous.

- They looked to a king to GIVE prosperity and security.
 - What they got was a king who TOOK those things.
- They wanted a king whom they could control.
 - Instead, that king ended up controlling them.

They became a slave to a TYRANT.

And this is true for our idols as well.

The God + in our lives always turns out to be a tyrant!

EXAMPLES

For example: if money is your king, then you're always going to be worried about whether you have enough or not. All the sociological data out there shows that more money does not equate with more happiness!

- You start to say:
 - *"How can I protect my money?"*
- Of course you can't give or be generous!
- How could you give away the thing which is most important to you?
 - You can't give it away.
 - You have to protect it!
 - For the future!
 - You must protect it for fear of losing it.
- And in doing so, you've become a slave to it.
- It isn't making you prosper.
- It's taking from you!

If being married is your king, you become a slave to romantic love.

If you're single,

- this might cause you to date people...
- who are a bit more questionable...
- or even sometimes not Christians at all...
- because you just can't be alone.

Romance has become a tyrant who's taking your integrity.

If you're married, and unhappy or unfulfilled...

- then maybe you're in the wrong marriage...
- or maybe you should have an affair.

But you're looking to an idol to give you what only God can.

The reality of the substitute is that it turns out to be a tyrant.

Maybe you depend on some escape for peace or relaxation...some pleasure you indulge in to release stress...and it may even start out as an enjoyable escape you think you can control, but it ends up as a tyrant that controls you.

- Pornography...
 - it can start as a way of escape...
 - something you seem to control...
 - until it makes you it's slave. It takes from you.
- Drugs or alcohol abuse fits into this.
- Over consumption of TV
- or addictions to scrolling on our phones.

They're all substitute kings...and they all prove to be tyrants.

TRANSITION

The request for a substitute.

The reality of a tyrant.

So, what's **SLIDE THE RESULT**

Well, look at verse 19:

1 SAMUEL 8:19-22

[19] But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, [20] that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." [21] And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. [22] And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

POINT 3: JUDGMENT

How tragic are those words? "Obey their voice."

You will always either obey God's voice...or your own.

They request a substitute.

The reality is a tyrant.

And **SLIDE THE RESULT: A JUDGMENT**

God gives them what they want!

Now, you say,

- "Wait, wait, wait. If this request was so bad,
- why did God give it to them?"

You see,

- sometimes God will answer your prayers
- to let you learn the hard way
- that what you were asking for was wrong.

Has this ever happened to you?

On the other hand, to quote the great theologian, Garth Brooks,

“Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers.”

- Some of God’s greatest mercies to us
- are in the form of unanswered prayers.

APPLICATION

Some of you are so mad at God right now not answering your prayer. But do you ever think he might be not answering your prayer because he is protecting you?

- You say,
 - *“Well, it doesn’t look like he’s protecting me.”*
 - *I’m still single.*
 - *“What would the harm be in getting married?”*
- Or,
 - *“What would be the harm if I had gotten that promotion*
 - *and made the extra 20-grand a year?”*

But you see,

- the greatest blessing God could ever give you...
- is the ability to be happy and trust him...
- without those things.

And often, the way he teaches you that is often by withholding it from you.

But sometimes, God will give us our request

- to our own peril...
 - as a judgment.

Sometimes, God granting our request

- may not be a sign of his favor,
- but of his judgment.

And sometimes, God's greatest kindness

- is in NOT answering our prayers...
- exactly as we desire.

Now, I need to clarify here...I am not saying it is wrong to desire many of these things to ask God for them.

- There's nothing wrong with saying,
 - "God, I really want to be married."
 - Or, "God, I really want to have children."
 - Or, "God, I really would like a raise."

Again, the king isn't the problem. It's the God + thing.

- Idolatry is when you take a good thing,
- and make it a God thing,
- and that's a really bad thing.

And church,

- did you know that God will sometimes break your arm...
 - so you'll let go of what will ultimately kill you?
- He'll sometimes break your leg,
 - rather than you wander away from him.

J.I. Packer, one of my favorite authors, says this,

SLIDE *"Still He seeks the fellowship of His people, and sends them both sorrows and joys in order to detach their love from other things and attach it to Himself."* **BLANK SLIDE**

The judgment here is not a threat, it's a loving promise.

- It's not a threat.
 - God's not trying to be mean...
 - He's not trying to scare them.
- He's trying to save them.

CONCLUSION

- So, what safety net might you be trusting in?
- In what ways are you trying to down climb the rock you're on?
- In what ways are you trying to keep your weight
 - on your hands and feet
 - rather than leaning back fully onto the rope?

I can't answer that for you. But we all have our God +.

And the call for us today is not to God +...but to trust in God ALONE.

- We have the opportunity to obey God's voice,
 - OR to obey our own voice.
- Israel chose the substitute...
 - and as we'll see in the coming weeks,
 - it doesn't go well for them.

But we have the chance to make the choice that Israel did not make.

- The choice of faith.
- The choice of trusting in Christ alone.

What is that safety net for you?

The offer is for you to lay it down.

- To follow God, you must step out on faith in Him,
 - with no controls and no conditions.
- No God +
- Just God ALONE

But you have to lean back on the rope.

What choice do you make?

Let's pray. **BLANK SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible: 1 Samuel.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *Rage for Royalty*.
- Greear, J.D. *Tyranny*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. NICOT: The First Book of Samuel.