

1 Samuel 10:17-27 | “Discipline Wrapped in Love”
Preached on November 28, 2021 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 10, and we will be in verses 17 through 27.

That’s a very short section compared to the huge section that we tackled last week, isn’t it?
[pauseeee]

Have you ever heard of a leader in hiding?

This can happen from time to time, as a leader is threatened and he has to go into a bunker or somewhere remote in order to avoid being attacked. *[pause]*

For years, Osama Bin Laden was a leader in hiding, as the U.S. was looking for him.

So a leader in hiding is pretty common. *[pause]*

But what about a leader in hiding, who's hiding when he hears that he’s chosen to be the leader?

Now that rarely, if ever, happens.

Imagine a president who gets elected, but when he hears about it, he hides.

Imagine a person applying to be the leader of a company, and the company goes to talk to him about how he got the job, but he hides from them in fear.

Now that’s just ridiculous, isn’t it?

Yet today we will find the anointed king of Israel hiding among some baggage, and it will teach us some very important things. *[pauseeee]*

We are progressing through the book of 1 Samuel, and we were first introduced to Samuel, and we heard all about his birth, his upbringing, and his ministry in Israel.

He was the national leader, who had led the nation in the right direction under God’s Kingship.

But then Israel demanded a king “like all the other nations,” and God told Samuel to give into their demand.

That wasn’t a good decision by Israel, yet that’s the path that they took. *[pause]*

So when we came together last week, we learned all about the providential circumstances that it came to be that Saul was anointed king.

But Saul’s anointing was private, and now all of Israel needed to find out who their new king was.

That's where our story comes in, as we discover Saul's public appointment to kingship.
[pauseeee]

The first truth that this story teaches us is this...

I. Sometimes God disciplines us by giving us what we sinfully want.

God gave Israel a king after they sinfully demanded one.

Now you may be wondering, "How is Israel being disciplined here if God is allowing Israel to have a king?"

Like, "Wouldn't God just not give them a king, if they were truly disobeying?"

Well not all discipline looks the same. *[pause]*

Imagine a parent with a child.

The parent tells the child not to eat any more candy, but the child is caught grabbing a piece of candy out of the candy bowl. *[pause]*

One form of discipline is to confront that disobedience right away by explaining to the child what they did wrong and dispensing the appropriate discipline.

And then moving the candy bowl out of the reach of the child. *[pause]*

But there's another form of discipline that can be likewise powerful at times, especially when a child is older.

And it's the discipline of getting what you want. *[pause]*

Now at first, this seems like it's not discipline at all, right?

How is it discipline if they get what they want? *[pause]*

But I want you to think about this...

In this form of discipline, the parent sees the child take candy after candy from the candy bowl, but remains silent.

And the parent remains silent for a reason - to help the child learn from their foolish choice why they should listen to mom and dad. *[pause]*

So the child eats a bunch of candy, and what happens? They get a stomach ache.

And so the parent goes to the child, and says...

"Hey buddy, this is why I gave you the rule to not eat a lot of candy because it's not good for you.

If you eat too much candy, it can give you a stomach ache and that's why I told you to only have two pieces. Do you see why you need to listen to me and your mother?" *[pause]*

That kind of discipline can be powerful because the child is vividly and experientially confronted with the foolishness of their decision to go against the rule of their parents.

They realize, "That was not a good thing to do, it only brought pain in the end. Maybe my parents have reasons for the rules that they give." *[pause]*

So also in a way, that's sort of what God is doing here with Israel.

God gave Israel what they wanted in discipline...

For some discipline is actually giving you what you want, in order for you to experience the foolishness of life without Him. *[pauseeee]*

Now in giving Israel what they wanted, God made it clear that their sin was NOT okay.

God is never light on sin, and He always makes the sinfulness of sin clear, even if we get what we want. *[pause]*

So getting what we *sinfully* want is not an indicator of God's approval of it.

If a church *sinfully* uses unbiblical methods to grow a church in numbers and *sinfully* tries to grow a church to make themselves look good...

...The growth in numbers at their church is NOT an indicator that God backs their methods and motivation. *[pauseeee]*

If you *sinfully* want to steal something, so you steal it, and get it - getting it is NOT an indicator that God is fine with stealing.

No, God has already made it crystal clear how he views stealing. *[pause]*

Well in verses 17-19, we see how God rebukes them for their rejection of Him by demanding a king, and follows that with actually giving them what they demanded in rebellion against Him. *[pause]*

This shows us that the giving of Saul was a form of discipline.

In fact, these verses 17-19 reflect a way that God talks when he is about to give a declaration of judgment!¹

He says something about His relationship with them, something about the great things that He has done, how they have sinned against him...

¹ An example of this can be found in Amos 2:9-16.

...And that's when the judgment usually comes in. *[pause]*

Just look at that structure come out in our passage...

Verses 17-19 say, "Now Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah.

And he said to the people of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'

But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, 'Set a king over us.'

Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your thousands."
[pauseeee]

Did you catch that?

God is like, "I'm your God, I delivered you from Egypt, I saved you from all of your oppressors, yet today you are rejecting the God, who saves, in asking for a king."

How much more clear can you get than that?

This is a strong rebuke of their rebellion in asking for a king, yet He then proceeds to give them a king.

This is truly discipline. *[pause]*

Later on in chapter 12, in Samuel's farewell address, he reprimands them strongly about their demand for a king, causing even *them* to admit that it was evil.²

It's like the Lord was giving them one final reminder of the wrong they were doing before giving them what they wanted. *[pauseeeee]*

What Israel did was wrong, God made it clear that it was wrong, but God was going to use it for good.

They meant it for evil, but God used it for good.³ *[pauseeeee]*

So God plainly tells Israel that what they did was wrong, and He also shows them how it's foolish. *[pause]*

Now to see how it's foolish, you need to pick up on it in the rest of the story...

² See 1 Samuel 12:12-19.

³ An allusion to Genesis 50:20.

Samuel gathered all of Israel at Mizpah, and then each tribe was to present themselves to the Lord, as they were going to discover, by lot, who God had chosen.

Let's pick up reading at verse 20 and finish out the story, "Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.

He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found.

So they inquired again of the Lord, 'Is there a man still to come?' and the Lord said, 'Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.'

Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.

And Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.' And all the people shouted, 'Long live the king!'

Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the Lord.

Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home.

Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched.

But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man save us?" And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace." *[pauseeee]*

So lots are taken and it comes to be that Saul is the one, but he's nowhere to be found.

That's weird, where is he?

They look everywhere, but can't find him, so they have to ask God Himself where he is.

And God tells them that he's hiding in the baggage.

They pull Saul out of the baggage, and they excitedly proclaim, "Long live the king!" *[pause]*

Samuel then gives the rights and duties of the kingship, some men of valor follow Saul home, and some other men doubt Saul and despise him.

But Saul holds his peace. *[pause]*

That's the story in a nutshell.

But did you catch how God is showing them the foolishness of their demand for a king rather than having Him as their King? *[pause]*

God just said, "I'm your God. I delivered you out of Egypt. I delivered you from all of your oppressors. Yet you are rejecting the One who saves for a king."

And now God shows them who their king is going to be, and *he's hiding in the baggage!*

It's like God is saying, "This is your choice, and your choice is hiding over there!" *[pause]*

Here is Saul so scared, so insecure, and so not wanting to be king that he's hiding from everyone.

And this fear and insecurity in Saul will actually come to the forefront in his life as king, as you read on in 1st Samuel, especially when it comes to his animosity towards David. *[pauseeee]*

So here is the king that they longed for - hiding - when they had God as their victorious King, who has delivered them time and time again.

The comparison between the Lord and Saul couldn't be more evident.

The foolishness of their decision is on full display as they have to pull their king out of his hiding place.

In fact, the foolishness of this decision is even more highlighted when you look at how God works in the story. *[pause]*

Saul is hiding and trying to avoid his responsibility as king.

But God is showing Himself to be in charge throughout the whole event. *[pauseeee]*

The Lord is the one who chooses their king, revealing his control over the situation.

This wasn't going to be an independent election by the people, free from God's purview, but it was a sovereign election of God choosing Saul to be their king. *[pause]*

Even after Saul is revealed to be the appointed king, God uses Samuel to tell them the rights and duties of the kingship.

Again, God is still in charge and they are still accountable to Him. *[pauseeee]*

There was Saul hiding in the baggage, trying to not become king, and there was God showing that He is their authority and true King.

How foolish it was to demand a king when they had the greatest, most perfect One! *[pauseeeee]*

In the story, He also shows their foolishness in the fact that even in the appointment of their new king, they were dependent on Him.

They needed God to tell them where their new king was!

And then God provides Saul with the beginnings of his army by touching the hearts of some men of valor. *[pauseee]*

There they were, rejecting God as King, yet utterly helpless without Him.

“Um, God, where’s our new king? We can’t find him. Is he just running late or something? We need your help.”

“He’s in the baggage hiding.”

“Oh. Okay.” *[pause]*

It’s like a child saying to their parents, “I don’t need you anymore!”

And then 5 minutes later, they come back and say, “Soooo, how do I make a sandwich?” *[pauseee]*

God was showing them how illogical their decision was by showing them how greatly they needed Him.

Yet they missed the message altogether. *[pause]*

They have to drag Saul out of the baggage, and they are still excited about him as king.

They even “ooh” and “aah” over his height, as they look only at his appearance, and not his character.

This is utter foolishness. *[pauseee]*

Can you imagine a president being elected, and yet he goes into hiding behind a coat rack because he’s scared and doesn’t want to be the president.

And people have to actually pull the man out of hiding behind the coat rack.

But then imagine after that, people are still excited about him and say, “Wow, look how tall and handsome he is!”

You’d be like, “What’s wrong with these people?!” *[pause]*

To have to pull your new leader out behind the coat rack doesn’t give you real confidence in him, does it?

You’d be like, “Oh great, this isn’t going to be a good four years, the man is terrified and doesn’t even want to be the president.”

Yet Israel is illogically excited over Saul. *[pause]*

But that’s what happens when we sinfully want what we want.

We get it set in our mind that it's going to be good no matter what, and we put our hopes and dreams in the idea. *[pause]*

Like a girl who can't see the major flaws and red flags of her new boyfriend because she's blinded by infatuation...

...So sin can do that in our lives. *[pauseeee]*

Let's say a person wants to gossip about another person.

They get it set in their mind about the thrill, the enjoyment, and the satisfaction of sharing some juicy gossip about another person...

...And as a result, they become blinded to the danger of doing it. *[pause]*

They become blinded to the damage it could cost in their friendship with that person.

They become blinded to the damage it could cost with that person's reputation.

And they become blinded to the division it could create in the church.

All because their mind is set on the delight of sharing that gossip. *[pauseeee]*

Is that happening in your own life even now?

Is sin blinding you to its horrible consequences? *[pause]*

Like God did for Israel here, showing them how their sin was wrong and foolish, so also, God does that for us.

He shows us that sin is both wrong and foolish in His Word.

But how do you respond to these gracious, God-given warnings?

Are you blinded by the facade that sin puts on, or do you humbly listen to the gracious, truthful warnings of our Lord? *[pause]*

It's about time that we take God at His Word, and take His warnings seriously.

Go to God and say, "Lord, please forgive me for the times that I ignore your gracious warnings. Help me, give me the wisdom and strength to listen to your warnings about sin." *[pauseeeee]*

What happens with Saul's hiding should have been an obvious indicator of the foolishness of demanding a king over the Lord, yet they didn't get the message.

Israel responded to the warnings of God by ignoring them, but what will you do? *[pauseeeee]*

Sometimes God's discipline in your life will look like giving you what you sinfully want, in order for you to experience the folly and emptiness of life without Him.

The aftermath of getting what we want leads us to see our great need for Him. *[pauseeee]*

Let's say that you want the approval of some kids in your school in order to look cool.

You desperately want them to like you and to be in their "group", so you start acting like them in not-so-good ways.

And now guess what, you got what you wanted: their approval. *[pause]*

They now like you, but as time goes on, you realize the bad influence that they have had on you, and how you are beginning to act like they do.

You are starting to get into trouble more, and now you regret it. *[pause]*

You also thought it would feel so much better getting their approval, but it doesn't satisfy.

So this leads you to go to God, and seek His wisdom as to what to do next.

You have just experienced the folly of getting what you wanted, which led to seeing your great need for Him. *[pauseeee]*

Here's another example...

Let's say that you are married and another woman at work catches your eye.

You start to sinfully desire that woman.

It starts out pretty innocent, but now there's flirting, and one thing leads to another, and you have committed adultery. *[pause]*

Your wife finds out and your marriage is now in shambles, you are utterly ashamed as your kids and church finds out, too.

You find yourself laying facedown on your bedroom floor bawling your eyes out, and desperately calling out to God for forgiveness and help.

You have experienced the folly of getting what you wanted, and it led you into the arms of the Father, as your only hope. *[pauseeee]*

Have you ever gotten what you sinfully wanted only to recognize the absurdity of it, and fall on your knees in desperation to God? *[pause]*

Maybe God wants to use His Word right here, right now, to give you a wake up call to what you have been doing.

Don't miss the message like Israel, who had to learn the lesson way later than what was needed.

But catch God's message through His discipline of giving you what you sinfully want and the consequences that come along with it. *[pauseeee]*

If Israel was more spiritually aware, they would have seen their new leader hiding in the baggage, and been like...

"You know, this was a bad choice to demand a king and reject God as our King. God is the best King there is, how could we reject Him for this man in the baggage? Let's repent and turn to Him." *[pause]*

And really, that's what God wants, He longs for His people to turn to Him...

...And He will even use getting what we sinfully want, in order to lead us to find our meaning, our hope, our security, and our comfort in Him. *[pauseeee]*

As you go through your week, be alert to what's going on.

When you make a sinful choice and you feel convicted of its sinfulness and foolishness, don't suppress that feeling.

Don't focus on sin's promises, but focus on God's promises.

Say, "No, this is wrong. This may seem promising, but it's foolish. God is so much better!" *[pause]*

When you are tempted to lust after someone, think...

"No, this is wrong. This is foolish to do because of what it will do to my mind, my relationship with my spouse, and my relationship with God...

God is enough. I don't need to do this, but I can be content not doing it, for Christ strengthens me and gives me what I need." *[pauseeee]*

Pray that God would change your desires to be His desires.

For when that happens, then getting what you want will be a good thing, for your will will align with His will. *[pauseeee]*

Sometimes God disciplines us by giving us what we sinfully want...but...

II. But even in discipline, He loves us.

Isn't this great news?

Though God disciplines us, He loves us!

He does it out of love, as he does it for our ultimate good. *[pause]*

In Hebrews 12, the author makes this very point.

He says, “the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

And he goes on to explain that our discipline proves that we are one of his sons, and he does it for our good.

All discipline seems painful, but later it produces fruit.⁴ *[pauseeee]*

God works purposefully in love for His people.

As a good parent does things in love for their child, so that’s sort of how God works with His people.

Even unpleasant things are wrapped with love. *[pauseeee]*

At this point in Israel’s history, Israel didn’t see the giving of Saul as discipline.

They were just happy and excited to be getting what they wanted - a king like the other nations.

But God knew.

Saul would start out great, but end up being stamped with fear and failure.

Yet even in the discipline of giving Israel what they wanted, God still showed love to them.

Even in discipline, God was providing and caring for His beloved ones. *[pauseeee]*

God’s discipline of His children doesn’t negate his care and love for them, but proves it.

Even in discipline, He warned them, appointed their king, and touched the hearts of men of valor to support Saul’s new kingship. *[pause]*

Thank God that His love doesn’t abandon us in His discipline!

Even as we go through times of chastisement, God’s grace is present.

Like a good, godly parent who disciplines their child, yet hugs them, and tells them they love them no matter what...

...So God’s discipline is wrapped with love, but it’s done so much more perfectly and deeply than a flawed, sinful human parent does.

And it’s this love that captivates our hearts with its beauty, so that when we see his discipline in light of the big picture, all we see is *love*. *[pauseeee]*

God’s love for us is even behind his discipline!

⁴ See Hebrews 12:6-11.

God's love is an everlasting love, and it's a love that nothing can separate us from.⁵

What else can we do in response but love Him in return and give thanks to Him? *[pauseeee]*

You know, in the story this morning, Saul was appointed king and he hid in the baggage.

And it made me think of the connection between Saul and Jesus, for Jesus is the great Messianic King. *[pauseeee]*

Though God gave us what *we* sinfully wanted, as we sinned against him and received the due consequences...

...Yet even through that, He loved us so much that He planned to send His own Son to die for our sins.

He appointed us a King and thankfully, our King didn't hide in the baggage!

He didn't even stay in Heaven, even though He could have, but He came down from Heaven to Earth.

He was born of a virgin, lived on this earth, suffered, died, and rose again for the forgiveness of our sins and to provide us eternal life. *[pause]*

And like Saul had mixed responses to his kingship, so Jesus has mixed responses.

Some people's hearts are touched by God and they follow Christ, and some despise Him, and say, "How can this man save us?"

What's your response to King Jesus?

Faith or Doubt? Reverence or Contempt?

Stop cherishing your sin, but turn from it, and find forgiveness in Jesus' death that paid for the forgiveness of your sins.

Stop trusting yourself and your works, and trust in Christ's work alone on your behalf! *[pause]*

There is truly none like King Jesus among all the people, for He is God who took on flesh.

And praise God, we don't have to *wish* that our King will live long like the Israelites did with Saul, for we *know* that our King, Jesus, will forever live for He is the resurrected King.

⁵ See Jeremiah 31:3 & Romans 8:37-39.