

Title: When My Preference Becomes My Prison

Text: 1 Samuel 16:1 NIV

Target: When we cling to our personal preferences over God's promises, we find ourselves stuck in places we were never meant to stay.

Saul is a representation of people's preferences, not God's promise.

But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. "Even so, we still want a king," they said. and the Lord replied, "Do as they say, and give them a king." Then Samuel agreed and sent the people home.
1 Samuel 8:19,22 NRSV

If I am going to break free from the prison of preference, I must...

I. Be honest about the amount of TIME spent in my season of grief.

- A. It's not the POSTURE of mourning that God is dealing with; It's the PERIOD of mourning that He is dealing with
 - 1. "How long..." 1 Samuel 16:1 NIV
- B. Mourning is human. Mourning too long is childish.
 - 1. Scripture calls us to lament, to feel, and to allow grief and sorrow to have their place.

Question #1: How comfortable are you with acknowledging the time you spend grieving over past decisions, mistakes, or missed opportunities? How might God be calling you to move forward?

II. Remember what God TOLD me

- A. "I have rejected him from being king." 1 Samuel 16:1 NIV
- B. When things don't go our way, we tend to blame Satan for things that God is doing in our lives.
- C. "...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4 NIV

Question #2: Samuel was told that God had rejected Saul as king. What can help you remember and trust in what God has spoken to you, especially when things don't go your way?

Question #3: Reflect on a time when you may have blamed outside forces, like Satan, for what God was actually doing to shape or redirect you. How does this perspective shift impact your faith journey?

III. Consistently TURN towards God, not my past.

- A. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1 ESV
- B. "Now the Lord said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king." 1 Samuel 16:1 NLT
- C. "Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this." Ecclesiastes 7:10

D. *"The 'good old days' are the combination of a bad memory and a good imagination"*
(Warren Wiersbe)

Question #4: *How do you view endings in your life? Do you see them as opportunities for God to start something better? Can you share an example where God used an ending to begin something greater?*

Question #5: *How can you encourage others in your life who may feel "stuck" due to clinging to their preferences or past, rather than embracing God's new plans for them?*

Takeaway: In Christ, every ending is the beginning of something better.