

Saul - a calling lost

• At first, God exalted him

• Saul had the necessary gifts

• But at his time of calling, he was tending donkeys

1. Saul was not seeking promotion

• He faithfully obeyed his father

• Likewise Jesus was obedient to His father

2. God often does the unexpected for the faithful

• God used a lot of 'coincidences'

Saul is famous for ruining his life. There came a time when he was abandoned by God for the remainder of his earthly life. God refused to speak to him. He lost his calling.

Yet in 1 Samuel 9 we discover how well he started out. Saul was promoted to become the first king of Israel. Any kind of true exaltation comes from God. 1 Samuel 9 is the story of how exaltation came for Saul.

It was a case of gifts and calling coming together. Saul had the gifts. He was a good choice for a king. His father was a man of standing (that is, 'upper class', 'wealthy')¹. He had a good background with a respectable genealogy². He was tall³, and impressive. So he had the background appropriate for a king.

Yet when we first meet him he is diligently getting on with the calling he was in at the time. Eventually God would take him from looking for donkeys to looking after God's kingdom.

1. **Saul was not wanting this promotion too much.** Promotion did not come for Saul by massive struggles or manipulation. Indeed he would have been rather surprised if you had told him he was to be king. He was not looking for a kingdom. He was getting on with the mundane, boring job of finding his father's asses. If you had asked him what his ambition was he might have answered: to be a successful farmer. He seems not to have been pushing for anything higher than that. Donkeys were lost. Saul was willing to look for them. He was a young man obeying his father¹, and taking a lot of trouble to do so².

Jesus was like that. He did not exalt himself. He did not decide to be a great high-priest for the human race. We are told that Christ did not take the glory of being high-priest upon himself. He was called to it by God. God said to him, I am calling you to be the Saviour of the world¹.

So Saul was going about his ordinary work. He was diligent, capable. If he was quietly ambitious, he was not overbearingly so.

2. **God has a habit of doing the unexpected for those who are faithful.** Saul was looking for asses; he had no interest in looking for the prophet Samuel. He did not suggest seeing Samuel, and he actually put obstacles in the way when it was suggested he do so¹.

When Saul was totally free from manipulating, suddenly a lot of 'coincidences' all begin happening at once. It was traditional to ask a prophet for advice when you were looking for something lost, and to give some kind of contribution. Saul has not come prepared for that. But the servant 'happens' to have a silver shekel with him. Some girls just 'happen' to know exactly where Samuel is¹. Samuel just 'happens' to be in town that very day². It just 'happens' to be the right time to find him³. When they go into town Samuel is the first person they meet⁴. When the time for our exaltation has come we shall not have to manipulate it. God will do it! Everything will fit. We shall know that we are in the will of God.

1 19:1
2 9:2
3 9:3

1 9:3-4
2 9:4-5

1 Heb 5:5

1 9:5-7

1 9:7-11
2 9:12
3 9:13
4 9:14

3. When God exalts, He works at both ends

3. **When you are being exalted God works at both ends.** God was not only working in Saul to come to Samuel, he was working in Samuel to be ready for Saul. This is the way it is when God is truly at work. He brings together the gifted person and the place when he will use his gifts. Samuel was walking in the Spirit. God was able to speak to him. He knew ahead of the time that Saul would be coming¹. When Saul appears God speaks to Samuel at that very time also². God was leading step by step.

1 9:15-16
2 9:17

4. When we are exalted by God, He takes care of all our concerns

4. **When we are being exalted, God will take care of all of our concerns.** What would Saul be especially concerned about at this precise moment? He would be worried about the donkeys. At the key moment when Saul is meeting Samuel and being invited to join the prophet, he is told that the practical matter is taken care of. 'Don't worry about the donkeys', says Samuel.

• Saul is overwhelmed

Saul is overwhelmed. He was not seeking to be king! He feels insignificant¹. But Samuel treats him as an honoured guest², talks with him all night³, and then just before he is about to leave tells Saul he will go with him some of the way⁴. On the edge of town he sends the servant ahead and quietly and secretly anoints Saul as the first king of Israel⁵.

1 9:21
2 9:22-24
3 9:25
4 9:26
5 9:27-10:1

• But faithfully obedient

Glory and Honour

God has made the entire human race for glory and honour¹. The human race was made in the image of God, made to be admired. But all have sinned and lack the glory of God². Man has fallen from God's original plan. Yet it seems as if we all want our glory back but want it back by wrong means. We all feel strongly about what others think of us. We care about our reputation and self-esteem more than we like to admit. We desire praise, self-esteem, a good self-image, honour from others.

1 Psalm 8
2 Rom 3:23

• Man often wants glory but with the wrong motives

• God wants to 'glorify' us

It is not entirely wrong to want to be exalted. God wants to 'glorify' us. The children of God in glory will have visible honour. Holiness will radiate out of them visibly.

• But our 'glory' must come from Him alone

But this honour and glory has to come from God. It is in this matter that Saul begins well. Take glory for yourself prematurely and you are making a big mistake. The secret of getting glory is to get it from God, and God alone. What God will do for you - in your own little way - is to make you a king. He will give you an area of life where you 'reign with Christ' and are much used by him. But it has to come from God, not from oneself.



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