



Afraid to Serve

1 Samuel 10:-11:14

One of the biggest issues for the church in our culture and generation is how difficult it seems to be able to find those that wish to serve the fellowship of God's people. That is not a question of gift or power because we are a fellowship that believes that God the Holy Spirit has gifted each one of us to serve God and enrich the fellowship, and He indwells us with power so strength and ability to carry out the purposes of God. So why is it so difficult?

Let's look at Saul's calling as the first king of Israel. He wasn't exactly putting himself forward for the post was he? Let's see how reluctant he really was.

1. He was too afraid to tell people of his encounter with God

You know the story. Saul was sent to look for his father's donkeys, went to ask Samuel for help and found himself being anointed king of Israel. Samuel had a right to do that as both prophet and the last of the Judges. Effectively he was Samuel's successor. Samuel then gives the obviously bemused instructions which as we know would give a spiritual affirmation to the anointing Samuel had done. The long and short of the story is that the Spirit of God came up on him in power and he prophesied.

Wonderful. I'm sure if that was you or me we'd be so convinced that we'd do God's will – or would we? Was that the point at which Saul was duly steeled up to become the king of Israel. Not on your nelly! Look down to verse 15 and 16. He lies – he's economical with the truth. We're people who are redeemed. We're blessed. We're indwelt by the Spirit. Yet so often we don't speak out about what God has done with us and what He can do in other people. Worse, we don't even do it with one another, let alone with unbelievers. What will it take for God to move us?

2. He hid when he was identified as the king of Israel

So Samuel gathers the people. And Samuel goes down family by family as to who the Lord identifies as king. Saul's family I'm sure were bemused by the whole affair – as Saul had still obviously had not said anything. When Saul was identified – he was hiding amongst the baggage! Oh dear, not a very good royal candidate! But Saul was proclaimed king and people followed him, but some questioned. What did Saul do about it? Did he try to sort them out and assert his God-given authority? Of course not – he just went home to plough with his oxen! That was despite a large number of really good people ready to follow him.

God has called each of us to serve Him and not just on one place and one role either – in our families, in our jobs, in our church, in our community. In a church context, God has equipped each of us with everything we need to give Him glory – but do we know our call, our gifting, our role? And if we do, are we hiding amongst the baggage or hiding away because we are afraid of the criticism of others even though it is probably unwarranted?

3. He got his priorities wrong

At the beginning of chapter 11 we find the nation in crisis. We find Nabesh the Ammonite besieging Jabesh. Where was the rescue? Where was the king of Israel? He was ploughing a field, not attending to office. He's had a month to get things together and was providing no leadership at all when he should have been asserting his leadership, getting his army together and generally learning about being a king.

God has called us. Are we with Him? Or are we hiding amongst the baggage of life, or too busy ploughing our own field to use our gifts and talents: to live according to our calling.

Then God gave him a kick!

Thankfully, this time the Spirit burned within him as soon as he heard about Jabesh and he did the right thing. He acted as the anointed king and went and sorted them out decisively. And that was that – he acted as a wise king in uniting the nation – even his critics – and the rest as they say is history.

I believe that if we are going to move forward as a church in 2010, then the challenge to each of us is to examine our call and gifting – we all have them – and understand what God wants to do in our lives, in our community and in our family – and start to obey Him. I was told an illustration recently of a famous preacher who prayed for revival. He drew a circle on the floor and stepped in it. He said “Lord, revive the nations – and start with the person in this circle”. Revival starts when the people of God act according to their anointing, to their call and to the power of God. And that’s not someone else – the spiritual ones, the younger generation, the keenies – it’s you and me. Let’s allow the Spirit to burn within us.

Send revival, start with me.

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MRBC Felixstowe 21/2/10
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