Getting started with 1 Samuel

The themes of 1 Samuel...

We live in a time where human leadership is especially under the microscope. *Who and what makes a good leader?*

Leadership is the major theme of 1 Samuel. In this book we see that the LORD of hosts (1 Sam 4v4) is the great King of Kings, but that He raises up human leaders as His deputies.

God has promised Abraham that kings would come from his descendants (Gen 17v6,16), and in 1 Samuel we begin to see that happen as a foretaste of Jesus' kingship.

Up to this point in the story of God's people, they've had several leaders. Moses (who takes them out of Egypt), Joshua (who takes them into the Promised Land) and the judges (who governed the early years).

In 1 Samuel we see 4 different leaders.

Eli – the leader who failed.

Samuel – the leader God provided.

Saul – the leader the people asked for.

David – the leader after God's own heart.

The leader who looks impressive in human eyes might not be the leader the people really need. After all, God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance.

Samuel grows up at a time where God's Word was rare (3v1), but he himself is one who listens to God's Word (3v9) and speaks God's Word (4v1). It becomes clear in 1 Samuel that a key to being the leader God's people need is obedience to God's Word. It's failure in this area that leads to Saul being rejected as king (ch 15), and serves as a sober warning to us about the importance of taking the Word of God seriously.

Who and what makes a good leader? The question rumbles on into 2 Samuel, which is originally part of the same book...

Things to look out for as you read. . .

- David is described as a "man after God's own heart". This doesn't mean he was "like God" but simply that, by God's grace, he was the one whom God set His heart on. He was the chosen King.
- Be careful not to read yourself into the story as one of the leaders (e.g. I'm like David in his fight against Goliath in 1 Sam 17). While it's true that we have lessons to learn from the leaders, first and foremost we are one of the PEOPLE, and 1 Samuel is teaching us about the type of leader we need.
- Watch out for how God brings the low high and the high low

Jesus in the book of 1 Samuel...

From the good examples of leadership and the bad, we are constantly pointed forward to the King of Kings.

Jesus is the anointed "Messiah, the son of David." (Matt 1v1)

He is the One who perfectly obeyed God's Word, even to the cross. (Phil 2v8)

Reading 1 Samuel should warn us of the limitations of merely human leaders and make us increasingly grateful for King Jesus!

Jesus ultimately fulfils the promises to Abraham (Gal 3v8). Jesus is the eternal King of an everlasting Kingdom.

Reading Timetable: A chapter a day will get you there!

g r o w .
g r o u p

RBT Grow Group is on
Tuesday 7ᵗʰ November

Bring along some things from your reading of 1 Samuel to share with others.

Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at Biblegateway.com
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.

Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)

- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)

- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)

- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)

- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)

My notes on 1 Samuel: