

## Seemingly insignificant events that can change everything

Samuel 10:17-26  
October 4, 2009-9-29

Today, I want to pick up from the stories from 1 Samuel. In the spring, I was talking from this book reflecting on the God who frames the story of our lives. We began with an inconspicuous woman named Hannah praying alone, crying to God for a child because she was barren. Never in her wildest imagination could she have predicted the results of this prayer – where a new nation would emerge from the ministry of her son. Like so many things in life, the grand stories of the human race do not begin in castles and great halls of wisdom but in the life of ordinary people engaged in the challenges in their lives. Hannah in prayer, Saul looking for donkeys, David watching sheep, mid-wives saving babies, Joseph and Mary having a baby... - on the surface, ordinary nothing to write home about everyday events that change everything for everyone... Today I want to return to the stories of 1 Samuel. We ended our talks in the spring with the people rejecting God as King. Chapter 8 ends with Israel crying for a king like all the other nations ...and one can almost hear the sigh of God, when he says to Samuel, "Listen to them, give them a king." And He gives into the people demands though Samuel warned them very clearly what embracing a political system like everyone else would mean for them...

今天，我想要选择撒母耳记上里面的故事。在春天的时候，我们讲过这卷书，思考过那位塑造我们生命故事的神。这都开始于一位渺小的女子的祷告，他的名字叫哈拿，他向神呼求要有一个孩子，因为她不能怀孕。她即使用尽自己的想象力都无法想象她祷告的结果是什么。这结果就是：一个国家将要从他儿子的使命中诞生。同样，还有很多关于生命的故事，这伟大的对人类影响至深的故事不是始于宫殿大厅，而是始于一个普通女人的祷告。哈拿，在她的祷告中，扫罗开始寻找他失落的驴子，大卫照顾他的羊群，仕女拯救婴儿，约瑟和玛丽亚抚育他们的孩子。。这一切都是始自一个普通的人的普通故事，甚是不值得一提的故事，表面上看来是这样的，但是每件事情都改变了历史。今天我要回到撒母耳记上，我们今年春天提到百姓弃绝了神，不把他当作他们的王。第八章结尾，以色列百姓气球他们能像其他国家一样能有国王。当我们看到神对萨母耳说：“百姓向你所说的一切话，你只管依从。”我们甚至可以听到神的叹息。他也藉着撒母耳警告百姓，他们想要的君王会把他们带到一种不同于他们期望的政治体系之中。

When we come to our text this morning in chapter 10, Samuel gathers the people and gives them what they've asked for, a king in the person of Saul. But the story of Saul does not start there. It starts in chapter 9 with a bunch of lost donkeys. Saul is the son of Kish, a tall and handsome young man about 30 years old. Donkeys, valuable to Kish family farming enterprises had wandered off and Kish sends his son and a servant to look for them. Obediently Saul goes but he wanders all over the countryside but was fruitless in his search. I think the story teller is slipping us some clue about Saul's character. Saul just heads off without any plan and wanders. He does not seek help, nor ask anyone for directions, nor

look for clues. In the end his servant suggests that they seek a prophet and inquire of him where the donkeys could be. Not an unfamiliar thing to do for people those days – inquiring of wise men to discover direction for their lives.

当我们今天读到第十章，撒母耳聚集百姓，把他们想要的给了他们，就是他们的君王，扫罗。但是扫罗的故事不是从这里开始的。第九章就开始了丢失驴子的故事。扫罗是基士得儿子，一个高大英俊的年轻人，大约 30 岁。驴子对基士一家来说是珍贵的财产，丢失了，所以他派儿子带着仆人去找。我想这个故事告诉我们一些关于扫罗性情的线索。他没有任何计划就是四处游荡寻找。他不去找人寻求帮助，不问方向，也不找寻任何迹象。在最后，他的仆人建议去寻找先知，求问驴子到了哪里。在那时，这是很常见的方式，寻求有智慧的人的建议，来找到他们生活的方向。

They go to a town in the district of Zuph and discovers that Samuel has been waiting for them...but, Samuel is not interested in looking for lost donkeys, he had something else in mind. He was looking for Saul... There is an interesting revelation in 1 S 9:16 where the Lord says to Samuel ... ‘...I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin...’. Saul’s seemingly aimless wanderings is God’s way of delivering him to Samuel. Meanwhile, Saul had no idea nor inkling nor any desire ...regarding his destiny. All he was doing was following his father’s orders to look for lost donkeys – nothing more...quite insignificant in the big scheme of things – one would think.

他们到了 Zuph 地方的城市，知道撒母耳正在等候他们，但是撒母耳并不关心驴子的事情，他心里有别的事情。他在找扫罗，9:16 是由有意思的相遇，主对撒母耳说，我会让一个人从便雅悯地来到这里，扫罗似乎是毫无目的的到了这里，而这是神把他带到撒母耳跟前的方式。同时，扫罗并没有任何头绪，也不知道自己想要什么，没有目标。他做的就是跟随父亲的吩咐，寻找驴子，没有别的，与神的大计划相比小显得很渺小。

Saul enters this new place in history indirectly, artlessly, unself-consciously. As he looks for his fathers lost donkeys, it turns out that he himself is the one being looked for. After 3 days of aimless, unguided and unsuccessful hunting for lost donkeys, he is himself found by someone who is not searching but simply waiting for him to show up. Saul ...discovers that he himself is the wanderer who is found. (Eugene Peterson, p. 61)

扫罗到了这个新地方，这是历史的转折点，毫无计划，也没有任何的感觉。当他寻找驴子的时候，他自己也成了被寻找的对象。3 天毫无目的寻找，他被别人发现，而别人正在等候他的出现。扫罗，发现自己才是那飘荡的人，如今被找到。

Sometimes, perhaps more often than we realize, our calling finds us before we discover it.

有时候，或许我们常常都没有感觉到，我们的呼招在寻找我们，而不是我们在寻找自己的使命。

But before Saul is presented to the people as king, there is a quiet moment in at the end of chapter 9

when Samuel anoints Saul to be 'ruler' of God's people. Again the affirmation of God is not usually done with great pomp and ceremony – human beings like events like that – but with God, these important moments usually happens in secret...in quietness... Jesus says in Matthew 6:6, ...when you pray, go you're your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you....The things of God is more often than not, rooted in the quiet moments of our lives...- Samuel anointing Saul as dawn breaks on the road home.

但是在扫罗作为君王出现在百姓面前之前，在第九章有一个很关键的事情就是撒母耳膏立扫罗作为神百姓的统治者。同样，神的确认通常不是在很宏大的仪式之中的，人们喜欢那样的仪式。但是对神来说，这样的时刻通常都是发生在隐秘之处的。耶稣在马太福音 6：6 说道：你祷告的时候，要进入内室，关上门，在暗中向你的父祷告。你的父，看到你在暗中作的，必奖赏你。神的事情，常常是在我们生命中静默的时刻，跟我们发生关系的。撒母耳膏立扫罗就像日出一样，照亮了扫罗回家的路。

It is also significant that the word 'ruler' rather than 'king' is used in that moment – though the implication of kingship is clearly the trajectory. But why use 'ruler'? perhaps it is as the New American Commentary suggests ... that it has relationship with the custom of the Ancient Near East – particularly, Egypt where vassal kings – minor kings – who owed allegiance to the great king of Egypt were anointed in this manner. Thus the authority was bestowed on the vassal king who had no power except that which was given to him by the great King – even YHWH himself. Clearly, Samuel is informing Saul that God had a destiny for him.

很重要的是他用到统治这个词，而不是君王。虽然为王确实需要统治，但是为什么用这样的说法呢？或许，NAC 的注解对我们会有帮助。在古代近东的传统中，特别是埃及，摄政王要对君王效忠，他们通常会用这样的形式来膏立。这样，权威被倾倒在摄政王身上，他只有君王所赋予他的那部分权力。很明显，撒母耳是在告诉扫罗，神为他预备了一条路。Nevertheless, Saul was confused over this declaration over his life. Being king was the furthest thing from his mind...afterall, he was just looking for some lost donkeys – and now this happens. So Saul, himself was on a journey of self discovery...This is confirmed by Samuel in chapter 10:6 ...where Samuel says to Saul, ‘..The Spirit of the Lord will come on you in power, and you ... will be changed into a different person..’ The underlying story in the Saul narrative is that God is involved and directing the circumstances of his life...and Saul was God's chosen one for this leg in the life of the people of Israel. Yes the people had rejected God as king but God wasn't about to let them off the hook... God will help them discover a king in their midst...and teach them what kingship will mean for them. Unfortunately Saul will be the first of many kings who will fail them and lead them away from the God who loved them into the bondage and exile of Babylon....

然而，扫罗对此感到迷惑。他从来没有想过要当王，毕竟他只是出来找驴。而现在发生了这样的事情。所以扫罗，他也在一条自我发现的道路上。这被撒母耳记 10：6 所确认，撒母耳对扫罗说，耶和华的灵药带着能力降到你身上，你会改变，成为一个不同的人。在股

市的背后，就是神不是要让他自行其是，神会帮助他们找到那在他们中间的王。并教导他们王权对他们意味着什么。不幸的是，扫罗是众多君王中第一个失败并背弃神的君王，这些君王把百姓带领得远离神，最后被掳到了巴比伦。

So, what does the story of the beginning of Saul's role in the history of Israel have to do with you and I living out our lives in 21<sup>st</sup> century Richmond? There is much to this story that we could consider but as I reflected on our narrative for this morning message, what spoke to me is how the little things in life, the odd detours, the curves that come our way can turn out to be some of the most transformative events of our lives. Saul could not have imagined that getting lost, wandering all over the countryside would put him in a place where he would become the first king of Israel.

那么，扫罗的故事，它在历史中的角色，与我们，我们这些生活在 21 世纪的 Richmond 的人有什么样的关系呢？这个故事里有很多引发我们思考的事情，但是当我们思考今天的圣经，告诉我的就是，不论生活里面多么小的事情，我们绕了什么样的弯路，生活的道路里面的起伏都会是我们生命转变的契机。扫罗从来没有想到他迷路走遍了那么多地方能够让他做上以色列君王的位置。

What this story exposes for me is that nothing in our lives is insignificant. Our lives are not left up to chance and controlled by circumstances. No, there is something working behind the scene that is bigger than the choices we make and the actions we take. The seemingly insignificant choices, the small acts, that we make on a daily basis are not without purpose. They weave together with the choices and acts and hopes of others that God uses to surprise us... Saul wandering off in search of donkeys becomes part of bigger story of King making as God gives into the people's desires for a king. As such then, the mundane task of life is part of a bigger narrative that God is writing for humanity and the redemption of planet earth. We and the choices and actions we take are part of this grand design of God for humanity...The changing of diapers, the washing of dishes, the drudgery of repetitive work all matters in the grand scheme of things...because we matter in the grand scheme of things...And even though we may bogged down by our endless searching...lost in our wanderings...and even though God may be the last thing on our minds, we are not the last thing on His mind. And as theologian Helmut Theilke once expressed, it is not our thinking about God that saves us, it His thinking about us.

这个故事向我们揭示生活中没有什么是微不足道的。我们的生活不是让机会左右或者是让环境操纵的。不是这样，有一些在背后运作的事情，这超越了我们自己做出的决定，也超越了我们在生活中采取的行动。很微不足道的决定，小的行动，或者我们每天都做，没有什么具体的目的，他们或许会与人们对神的渴望汇聚在一起，产生让我们吃惊的结果。扫罗，到处游荡，寻找丢失的驴子，成为了一个君王的故事的一部分，成为了神对百姓要求立王的回应。这样，很普通的生活中的事件成为了神为人类书写的故事的一部分。换尿布，刷盘子，刷马桶这样重复的工作从更广的意义上来说都是重要的，因为我们在意更大的系统，甚至我们会放下自己毫无止境的寻找，在这寻找中，我们常常迷失，或许我们根本没

有想到神，然而，这不等于他不会想到我们。神学家 Theilke 曾说过，不是因为我们想到神才得到拯救，拯救我们的是因为神想到了我们。

It is clear from our narrative that though Israel has rejected God as King, God has not rejected Israel and is actively working out his purpose in appointing for them a King...though He knows that what they desire will be their undoing. This is the way God treats us – with respect and dignity – giving in but not giving up on us...even in His humiliation, God reaches out to his people...refusing to simply let things happen, carelessly letting thing unfold...no, he is intentionally involved in the process on their behalf though He is deeply hurt by the folks He loves.

很明显，从我们的叙事股市，通过以色列拒绝让神座他们的王这件事，神却没有弃绝以色列，仍然持续的运作他的计划，为他们预备一个王。这是神对待我们的方式，尊重和尊亚，，给与我们需要的，而不放弃我们。即使是在他受到羞辱的时候，神仍然亲近她的百姓，不愿意让事情随意发生，相反，他刻意的参与到其中，虽然他被他爱的人深深伤害，仍然这样做。

I think we can take comfort in that we serve a God who respects the choices that we make even though those choices may not be so beneficial for us. For those of us who are parents, this is a difficult example for us to follow. If only our children – particularly those who are old enough to know better – could avoid our mistakes and do what we tell them to do – then all would be well in the world...but perhaps in the grand scheme of things they are contributing to something bigger than what we know. The story of Saul reveals a God who is in it with us through the thick and thin of it all – working in the background, to redeem even the bad choices we make – though the process may take some time...- and the outcome may not be favorable. This is what I feel is going on in our text. Samuel invites the tribes to cast lots. We are not too sure how they went about doing it but we know that it was a method they used to reach consensus. And what they agreed on was...that the tribe of Benjamin was to be the one from which their first king would come. I want us to make a quick mental note here because the second king, David is chosen quite differently...

我想，我们为我们服侍这样一位神而感到舒服，因为他尊重我们的选择，甚至让这些我们的决定成为事实，并让我们得到好处。对我们那些身为父母的人，这是很难的效法的榜样。只有当孩子特别是那些已经有分辨力的孩子，能够不犯错误作我们让他们做的事情，如果这样就好了，但是，或许他们也是某些更为伟大计划的一部分。扫罗的故事告诉我们，即使是我们作了错误的选择，神仍然在背后工作，不论情况如何，他也去挽回我们，或许需要经历一个过程，或许结果不如人意。这就是我在进入这段圣经前的感觉。撒母耳邀请各个支派来抽签。我们不清楚他们具体的做法，但是我们知道这是他们达成共识的方法。他们决定，便雅悯支派是第一个王的支派。我想提醒大家，因为第二位王，大卫王的拣选方式非常的不同。

We also need to note that there is no sign of manipulation here from Samuel or from God. This was the

wish of the people. Yet God even before this decision was made, participated with them as He prepared Saul for his destiny... But Saul, was a reluctant king...- which is not a bad quality – for he must have had an inkling of the weight or responsibility in this role. I think it would have been worst if hadn't. Nevertheless, he needed a lot of work before he would even have any qualities of a leader. So God was in Saul's life preparing him, though Saul neither wanted nor deserve the position he was about to be given. As we shall see in the insuing messages, even after all that God had done in His life, Saul's character would not hold out to the opiate of power...and the scriptures would later record that God regretted his choice of Saul – quite a statement, I think. However at this time in this unfolding narrative, God and Samuel worked to prepare both Saul and Israel to enter into something completely foreign to them – a new government who is ruled by a king not a judge or prophet. This they will struggle with for the next 500 years... but it begins here at Mizpah.

我们也需要注意到神没有任何操纵的迹象。这是百姓的意愿。然而，神甚至在他们决定之前，就参与其中，预备扫罗装备他。但是扫罗，是个不情愿当王的人，这不是件坏事，因为他一定知道那有怎样的责任。我想如果他愿意当王可能会更糟糕。不管怎么说，他需要做很多工作才能成为合格嘍领袖。所以神在扫罗的生命中预备他，虽然扫罗既不想，也不配担当这样一个位置。我们会看到，即使在神为他做了这一切以后，扫罗的性情仍然无法抵制权利的腐蚀。圣经后面记载神后悔立他为王，我想这是很强烈的表示。然而，在此时，神和撒母耳一起去预备扫罗和以色列开始他们的王权时期。新的政府将要由国王统治，不再由士师统治。在后来的 500 年，他们将要为此有很大的挣扎。但是这些都在这里开始。I think that it is no accident that it is at Mizpah that Samuel gathers the people to choose. Ironically Mizpah was the place back in Judges 20, where Israel made a covenant to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin from their confederation of tribes. A great battle was fought between the men of Benjamin and the other 11 tribes on account that some men of Benjamin raped and murdered the concubine of a high ranking Levite. There is a reason why Benjamin was the smallest of the tribes of Israel. In the book of Judges, most of the men and women of Benjamin were killed on account of this battle. And so the place where Israel condemned Benjamin to die is also the place where a Benjamite – the smallest and least significant of the tribes of Israel – would become king. What a turn of events – who would have thought this, was possible... It's like Barak Obama becoming president of the United States... A few years ago, few would have thought this would be possible.

我想，好不意外，在 Mizpah 这个地方，撒母耳召集百姓区做出选择。很有意思的是在士师记 20，以色列曾经立约要消灭便雅悯。然后发生了便雅悯和其他 11 支派的战争。原因就是便雅悯人强奸并杀害了一个利未人的小妾。这就是为什么便雅悯是以色列最小的支派。从世师记看来，大多便雅悯男人女人都在这场战争中被杀。所以，那个以色列一起来诅咒便雅悯的地方也成了便雅悯人被立为王的地方。为什么有这么大的变化？谁能想到？怎么可能，这就像奥巴马竞选总统一样，几年前，没有人认为一个黑人有可能当总统。What is important for us to consider as we read this text is that our past does not determine how God will

deal with us today... and it is today that matters not our past. And although our past might be sin-bound and filled with disappointment and guilt and shame...it does not have to shape our future. God can heal and restore dignity to those of us who have lost it...He can give us the face that we have lost...the confidence we have shed. The appointment of Saul as King in the place where his people were to be wiped out, is significant for the tribe of Benjamin...who for generations have lived with the shame of their past...now they are restored to a position of honour in the federation of the 12 tribes of Israel. Yet as I reflect on this text of divine and human interaction, I could not help but pick up a hint of trouble to come. Though God has honoured Saul bestowing on him the privilege of kingship...Saul never fully gets it I don't believe he every really understood the gift that was given to him and the role he was invited to play in the history of his people To him was given something unbelievably precious – never before has God given such a gift to his people – to rule in His place.

重要的是，我们读这段圣经的时候，我们知道我们的过去不能决定神在未来会如何对待我们。今天，此时此刻才是最重要。虽然我们的过去充满罪孽、失望、罪、羞耻，但是这不会塑造我们的未来。神能够医治并且更新我们失去的尊严。他能让我们恢复失去的尊严，我们失去的信心也会恢复。扫罗被立的地方就是他们便雅悯曾经被灭绝的地方，是对便雅悯来说很重要的地方，因为他们几代人都在羞辱中生活，如今他们重新有了荣耀的位置。虽然我读这段圣经用的视角是神人见的交互，我却不能忽略一个不好的暗示。虽然神把尊容给了扫罗，让他有了王者的位置，扫罗却没有办法明白这些，我不相信他真的明白了神给她的恩赐还有他的地位是让他历史中扮演的角色。在历史中，从来没有人被赋予这样的职位，让他能统治以色列，就像神一样。

Instead of humbly accepting this honor, what does Saul do? He hides. Knowing the honour and authority as well as the responsibility of such a gift, he hides among the supplies. He has done this before. When his uncle asked him about what happened as he was out searching for donkeys, Saul did not tell him of Samuel and his amazing experience with the prophets when the Holy Spirit descended on him. Perhaps, as one commentary suggest, that Saul's vacancy at his own coronation suitably foreshadows a reign that would vacate responsibilities associated with the exercise of godly rule<sup>1</sup>

扫罗没有谦卑的接收这样的荣耀，他干了什么呢？他藏起来了。直到荣耀和尊贵以及相应的责任，他藏在很多东西的里面。他曾经这样做过，当他的叔叔问他找到驴子没有的时候，他没有告诉叔叔撒母耳的事情，没有说因为圣灵降临，他和一群先知在一起的经历。或许，就像一本圣经注释书说到的，扫罗的逃避缺席，预示了他逃避作为代替神在人间统治责任。What this informs me is that we must not take the gift of God lightly and treat it as if it doesn't mean anything. The grace extended to us is to be received with thanksgiving...and if we truly understand what it is we have received, we would with all our power – God being our helper – live our lives worthy of this gift that we did not earn and we did not buy...

这提醒我们我们不能把神的恩赐当作平常。恩典需要我们用感谢的心来接受，如果我们真

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<sup>1</sup>Bergen, R. D. (2001, c1996). *Vol. 7: 1, 2 Samuel* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (132). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

的明白我们接受了什么，我们就能用我们所有的力量，神也会帮助我们，去活出与这恩赐相称的生活。因为这恩赐不是我们赚取的，也不是我们买来的。

Reminds me of the parable that Jesus told about the man who was forgiven a great debt and when it was his turn to forgive one who owed him a small sum, he not only did not forgive he threw him into prison. This was Saul. Given a great gift but did not know how to appreciate it. This will be his downfall as we shall see...but it can be our downfall as well. It seems to me that as we consider Saul, it is the manner in which he has received this amazing gift of kingship that is as important as the gift itself. And how he handles this will be his undoing in the future.

这提醒我想起了耶稣的比喻，一个人被免除债务，然后该他去免除别人欠他的一点小钱了，他不仅没有宽恕那个人，而且把他投入监狱。这个人就像扫罗。得到了恩典却不知道如何使用。我们可以看到他滑向堕落，但是这也是我们容易跌倒的地方。对我来说，当我思考扫罗，他曾经接受了王位这样一个恩赐。而她如何对待这个恩赐的方式却让她在未来失去了这祝福。

Nevertheless we continue to take comfort in the reality that God may give in to us but does not give up on us. We can take note that the ordinary things of our lives – though seemingly dull and mundane – are the raw material that God uses for our restoration and redemption. As such we must not despise the work we are given – though it may be boring and not we might love to do; or the responsibilities that come to us though they may be stressful; or the people we are connected with though relationships can be complex... All these experiences weave together in the grand story of God's redemption and restoration of planet earth...and you and I, the little choices we make every day, the actions we take – good or bad – is part of this... As such we are invited to live lives that are grateful for every moment, for every opportunity, for every challenge and even struggles...for this life is a gift to you and to me...and how we live it is as important as the gift itself. May we live it well, embracing it as the gift that it is...if we really understand this...we then can become a gift to others as well. May this be our experience in our life together. Amen.

然而，让我们感到舒服的是，神或许会放弃一些事情，却不放弃我们。我们能够数算生活中的小事，虽然似乎很微不足道，这些都是神用来更新拯救我们的事情。这样我们就不会轻看给我们的工作，虽然这工作看起来很乏味，我们也不喜欢做。这责任或许还有很大压力，或者其中的人有复杂的关系，这些所有的经历在一起形成了神队这个世界的拯救和更新。你和我，我们很小的决定，我们的行动，或好或坏，都是其中的一部分。这样我们就被邀请过一种每时每刻感恩，感谢每个机会，每个挑战，每个苦难，因为这个生命就是恩赐，如果我们真的明白这些，我们就能成为对别人的祝福。愿我们一起来经历这生命。阿门