**June 6, 2021 1 Samuel 8:1-22**

***Who Is In the Driver’s Seat***

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 8:1-22 NRSV

*(1)When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. (2)The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. (3)Yet his sons did not follow in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice. (4)Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, (5)and said to him, "You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." (6)But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." Samuel prayed to the LORD, (7)and the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. (8)Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. (9)Now then, listen to their voice; only--you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." (10)So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. (11)He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; (12)and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. (13)He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. (14)He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. (15)He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. (16)He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. (17)He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. (18)And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day." (19)But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! but we are determined to have a king over us, (20)so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." (21)When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. (22)The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them." Samuel then said to the people of Israel, "Each of you return home."*

**Notes:**

1. The people had God as their ***King***; why replace God?
   1. They were tired of ***waiting*** on God.
   2. Why ***wait***, when we can solve it?
2. God knows where the ***potholes*** are.
   1. The ***grass*** seems greener on the other side.
   2. There is a heavy ***price*** to pay to get what you want.
3. When you move God out of the driver’s seat you are going to hit a ***pothole***.
   1. We ***want*** someone else to do our part for us.
   2. You may not be able to handle the ***situation*** you find yourself.
4. What was God’s ***response*** to all of this?
   1. God knew that they were ***rejecting*** Him as King;
   2. He responds by ***Listening*** to us.
   3. God responds by ***warning*** us.
   4. God responds by letting us have what we ***desire***.
5. ***Who*** is in the driver’s seat of your life?
   1. ***You*** have to decide who is going to drive ***you*** through life.
   2. ***Yield*** ***control*** back to the one who created us.
   3. ***Move*** ***over*** and let God drive today.

**Script:**

Have you ever had a tire blowout on you? I remember a time when I was driving and hit a pothole that I even knew was there. My tire blew out and the rim was bent and the tire would not hold a seal. If you have ever hit a pothole, you know what I am talking about. You’re just driving down the road with no problems and all of sudden things go wrong. Life is like that sometimes; things are going well and all of a sudden you hit a pothole and life is “turned upside-down”. Life is like that sometimes.

I remember a time when I needed to get a vehicle from the repair shop and get it back home. Jan was working and for some reason I needed to have it done right then, so I thought Stevin can do it. He was 16, he had his learners permit, and he was doing well driving, so I thought that I would just have him drive my car home and I would drive the other. But no matter how much I tried, I could not instruct Stevin on how to make corrections to the way he was driving. Maybe not my smartest move but I had faith in Stevin and his ability to do it. Yet there were all of the possibilities of things that could go wrong.

Have you ever done something like this? Have you ever given control over to somebody else, hoping that they wouldn’t lose control and have some sort of accident? Who do you trust enough to hand control over to and who do you trust to come through safely?

I wonder who is driving you through life? Today we look at a situation in the life of the Israelites. Samuel is the Judge in charge and the people are growing restless. They want something, a King, they want to give control of their lives over to somebody else, and perhaps they do not realize just what they are giving up, but that is what they want. Stand with me and share in the reading of God’s word found in 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

*(1)When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. (2)The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. (3)Yet his sons did not follow in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice. (4)Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, (5)and said to him, "You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." (6)But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." Samuel prayed to the LORD, (7)and the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. (8)Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. (9)Now then, listen to their voice; only--you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." (10)So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. (11)He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; (12)and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. (13)He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. (14)He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. (15)He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. (16)He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. (17)He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. (18)And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day." (19)But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! but we are determined to have a king over us, (20)so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." (21)When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. (22)The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them." Samuel then said to the people of Israel, "Each of you return home." 1 Samuel 8:1-22 NRSV*

The people wanted a king, but why? They had God as their King; why would they want to replace God? Why would they want to move God out of the driver’s seat? If you think about it, we move God out of the driver seat all of the time. We move God out of the driver’s seat because we have decided that we have had enough of waiting on God, so God is out of time; we are not satisfied with what we have and others have it better than we do; we are tired of doing the work and we want somebody else to do our part for us.

I imagine it is not any different for the Israelites. They have had enough and God is out of time. God didn’t deal with Samuel’s sons like they thought He should have. They were tired of waiting on God. They wanted Joel, Abijah, and Samuel out of office now!

We get tired of waiting on God to do something we think we already have an answer to. Why should God make us wait, when we can solve it now with our brilliant plan? We just move Him out of the driver’s seat and start going our own way. But we need to be careful, God knows where the potholes are; you on the other hand, may not.

The Israelites move God out of the driver’s seat because they decided that other people have it better than they do. They wanted to be like other nations who had a king. Other nations were unified and had a strong army to protect them, (or so they thought). The grass is always seems greener on the other side isn’t it? Let me tell you the obvious, until you have lived in “other people’s” shoes, you don’t have a clue as to how good or bad they have it. As I watch other people, I notice things in their life which would seem to make my life easier and better; but that isn’t always the case once I give it a try. Many people think having a job that pays a lot of money would make life easier they could get whatever they wanted. What they don’t realize is that there is a heavy price to pay for all of the time they are away from their family to get what you want. Have you ever taken time to think God didn’t give us somebody else’s life on purpose? When you move God out of the driver’s seat so you can go in the direction meant for somebody else, you are going to hit a pothole. God has been preparing them to travel that path, not you, they know what to avoid,

When I was applying to colleges, I decided I wanted be an architect. Why? Simple, Architects make a lot of money. I had not yet heard the call of God in my life, or if I did, I ignored his voice and was pursuing my own desires. I had pushed God out of the driver’s seat and let me tell you, while I did not go where God may have wanted me to go at that time, I didn’t get to go where I wanted to go either. Instead, I settled on a degree and a major that was safe, secure and one I would enjoy. I attended California State College, and pursued a teaching degree in Technology Education/Industrial Arts. I was fortunate to get a degree in something I was interested in and enjoyed doing. While I was not pursuing what perhaps God wanted me to do, I was not doing what I really wanted to do, either. I needed to stop trying to be like everybody else, I needed to be who God was making and molding me to be.

Another reason we move God out of the driver’s seat is because we have decided that we want someone else to do our part for us. “(19)But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! but we are determined to have a king over us, (20)so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Samuel 8:19-20 (NRSV)” Can you believe that the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

Did you hear that? They really didn’t want a king to have someone lead them; they wanted a king to go out and fight their battles for them; they wanted a king to protect them so they could be care free; they didn’t want someone to tell them what they were supposed to do, they wanted a puppet thinking that he would do it for them. There is a word for that; Lazy. If you move God out of the driver’s seat so that someone else can drive, you better watch out, because they will take you where they want to go and you may not be able to handle the situation you find yourself in. I will guarantee you it will be like having a blind person drive your car down the interstate; it may not end up so well.

So, what was God’s response to all of this? Samuel took the people’s complaints and requests to the Lord and in verses 6-9 listen to what God says, “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do." God knew that they were rejecting Him as King; but this wasn’t the first time they had done that. When we ask God to “scoot over there” so we can drive, how does He respond?

God responds by Listening to us. God heard their cries and told Samuel to listen to them as well. God really does care about our concerns and worries. He will listen.

God responds by warning us. God wanted them to understand that there were some things they had not considered. God will warn us when we are about to make a bad decision. You may say, “He doesn’t warn me; never once have I heard him warning me.” If you think that God has not warned you, you are wrong. The problem is that you are just not listening. What about that still small voice that says, “do this.” or “you better not do this.” That is God warning you. And then what about scripture. The Bible warns us of many things. If you choose not to study the Bible and live by it, that is your decision; but God gives everything you need in scripture to devise an escape from your bad decisions.

God responds by letting us have what we desire even though he knows the failure and heartbreak it will bring. “(21)When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. (22)The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them." Samuel then said to the people of Israel, "Each of you return home." 1 Samuel 8:21-22 (NRSV)”

If you keep on, God will eventually stop and say, “Fine, but I warned you”. The Nation of Israel would regret their decisions over and over again and they would regret for years. Perhaps you have regrets too, so I ask you, “Who is in the driver’s seat of your life? If you have told the Lord to scoot over; if you have taken the wheel; if you are trying to control the road you are on; if you’re tired of hitting everything in your path; turn control over to the Lord of your life.

For our graduates, you are on the verge of the rest of your life. You are about to begin making decisions that will affect the rest of your life; if you will continue your education, where you will continue your education, and how you will afford that education, what career path to pursue. Each decision will have an impact on your future, some more than others. But making the right decision is difficult and you may find yourself going back and forth between decisions. You’re going to have to decide today who is going to drive you through life. Trust in the Lord to guide you in making these decisions.

We live in a world that seems so out of control. Potholes are found around every turn in the road, situations that we cannot avoid, and circumstances beyond our control. We must yield control back to the one who created this world, the one who created us and wants to be in control of our lives. Move over and let God drive today.