

Looking for a Leader (Summer Bible Exposition 4)

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Preacher: Andrew Reid

[0 : 00] Yes, please sit down and I'll pray for us. Father, we thank you very much for your word and we pray tonight that as we read it together that you would speak to us about your son and tell us how to live rightly before you and before him, that you might be glorified.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I bet none of you ever thought that you could learn something from a phone book apart from a phone number, but you can, you know, you can learn lots about human nature from the phone book. Let me show you.

I want to take you tonight on a tour of the Perth Metropolitan Phone Book. Now, let me explain what I'm going to do. I want to tell you that in the Perth Metropolitan Phone Book, the only reason I know this is because one day I did it when we lived in Perth for 11 years.

In the Perth Metropolitan Phone Book, the word power is spread over one full page. And did you know that in Perth, you can not only stay at the Powerhouse Boutique Motor Inn, you can also go to Power Personnel, you can go to Power Shop, Power Tech, Power Dental Studio, the Power Dinghy Racing Club, and you can go to the Power of One Academy.

And you can get in Perth, power beer, power buggies, power tools, power exhaust systems, power software support, and power peripherals.

[1 : 32] And you can engage in all sorts of wonderful activities such as power learning, power accounting, power coaching, power management, power lifting, and even power cleaning.

And if you've got some ailments in life, you can go to all sorts of wonderful people. Solicitor A, Power, Power and Jolly Power Chartered Accounters, Father John Power, and Dr Linda Powers, the chiropractor.

And while we're on the phone book in Perth, how many entries do you think there are for the name Weak? There is not one, at least there wasn't in the year I checked.

Note the point, not one, there is no weakling's body shop. You cannot in Perth buy weak beer. And there are plenty of people who don't mind being called Mr or Mrs Power, and naming their company Power something or other, but there is absolutely no one in more than a million or two people who live in Perth who want to call themselves Mr or Mrs Weak.

Now, that's a very interesting survey of a phone book, isn't it? It tells us, I think, something about human nature, doesn't it? It's a revealer of human nature.

[2 : 50] We human beings are in a constant search for power, and we constantly go everywhere to find it. The places where we search for it are constantly on display.

They range from things like bodybuilding to amassing financial wealth to accruing weapons of mass destruction. You see, no matter what shape it takes, power gives us security, doesn't it?

It gives us recognition. If we have power, we have a place in the world, and we show ourselves to be people of influence. So, friends, I start tonight's talk this way, because the chapters that we look at tonight are going to address this issue.

They are going to raise the issue of power and of might. And in these passages, God is going to give us some salutary advice about the pursuit of power and of our human reliance upon power and upon might.

So, come with me as we turn to see what God has to teach us from his word tonight. Right. Now, I need to tell you that we're going to do a lot of work tonight. We've got a lot of chapters to cover, and I'm even going to start well before Samuel, start at the beginning of the Bible.

[4 : 03] I want to introduce you to the whole concept of kingship. And in order to understand kingship in the Bible, we need to start right back at the beginning. And the first few pages of the Bible set the scene for us.

For we see, in chapter 1, God creating. We see God, a benevolent, just and righteous king who creates a world full of bountiful goodness.

He creates humans to live before him in that world. And humans, though, doubt that he's actually the good God that he makes himself out to be. And they replace his kingship with their own.

They say, in effect, we think we can rule our own lives our own way better than you. And God judges them. But God, even in his judgment in Genesis 2, in Genesis 3, shows mercy and promises them a future.

Let me show you. Turn in your Bibles, if you could, to Genesis chapter 3. And I want you to look at the words to the serpent from God in verses 14 and 15.

[5 : 06] So Genesis chapter 3, verses 14 and 15, particularly 15. For in verse 15, there is a hint of a promise. Look at it. Look at what it says.

God says to the serpent, I will put enmity between you and the woman. Between your offspring and hers, he will strike your head and you will strike his heel.

The word here for offspring represents a Hebrew word, which is literally seed. God promises that the enemy of humanity will one day be crushed.

And the agent of the crushing of his head will be a human being. And that human being will be the seed of a woman. Now, I need to tell you that the rest of the book of Genesis is in some senses an exploration of the word seed, because the writer keeps coming back to this word.

And in some ways you can understand the book of Genesis by understanding the references to seed or offspring. Let me show you with just a few references. You're in Genesis 3. Turn to chapter 4, verse 25.

[6 : 12] In chapter 4, verse 25, we're told of the birth of Seth, the son through whom God's promise will flow. Now, Eve calls Seth her seed, her offspring.

Then God calls Abraham in Genesis 12. So flip through to chapter 12. And you might remember that God promises Abraham three great things. He says, I'll give you a land.

I'll make you a great nation. And I'll bless you and make you a blessing to the whole world. But look at chapter 12, verse 7. For again, God uses the word seed.

And he says, this land that I'm going to give you, Abraham, will be given to your seed. And then flip over to chapter 13, verse 15. He says, it will be given to your seed forever.

Now turn to Genesis 17. Sorry for all this Bible flipping, but you'll see it's very important as we go on. So Genesis 17. Here what is happening is God is ratifying a covenant made between himself and Abraham.

[7 : 18] And I want you to look at some key verses in this chapter. First, look at verse 6. Using the language of Genesis 1, God tells Abraham that he'll make him into a great nation.

He'll make him into nations. But you'll see he's added an element. Can you see it there in verse 6? Look at verse 6 and see if you can spot it. Do you see the new element? The new element is kings. Kings. God is talking about kings coming from Abraham. The same thing is said again in verse 16. And it's said again in chapter 35, verses 11 and 12.

Have a look at that. So I'll give you a moment. Flip over to Genesis chapter 35, 11 and 12. Do you remember the creation mandate in Genesis 1?

God said to human beings, be fruitful, fill the earth. Now here in verses 11 and 12, he links being fruitful to kings. And he then links it to seed or offsprings.

[8 : 18] And he then links it to the land. Can you see what is happening here? God is saying the goal of human fruitfulness, which I gave in Genesis 1, has a focus. And that focus is on kings that come.

In other words, it is on kingship. So by the end of the book of Genesis, what are we looking for? We are looking for a number of things. We're looking for Abraham to become a great nation.

We're looking for his descendants to occupy the land God promised. And we are anticipating a time when kings will come from them. And we know that God's purposes for his world will be tied up with those kings.

Well, in the book of Exodus, God rescues his people from Egypt. In Deuteronomy, they stand right on the edge of the promised land, ready to go in. And God gives them directions as to how they should live before him when they get into the land.

And he includes some instructions and some guidelines on what kings should do when finally they come. In chapter 17, that happens of Deuteronomy. And then finally, of course, in the book of

Joshua, they enter the promised land under the leadership of Joshua.

[9 : 26] And finally, we get to the book of Samuel, which is where we're going to spend the rest of our time this evening. And when we do, you know the strange thing about Samuel? We all know what Samuel's about.

We know it's all about kingship. But when we get into the book of Samuel, who do we meet? Do we meet kings? No, not immediately. The first thing that confronts us is a woman under enormous stress because of her childlessness.

And her story and her prayer sets the scene for kingship. The story is a story of a helpless woman who puts her hope in God. She trusts in God to deliver her from her enemies.

And she depends upon God to give her this child, which is what she desperately needs. You see, Hannah is a woman who models what all human beings should be like and what Israel should be like.

She models what Israel should be like, but was not. She models what Israel's future kings should be like. Hannah's story and Hannah's actions provide a model for everyone who follows her in this book.

[10 : 30] You see, I think the story of Hannah sets the theological ground for the rest of the book. If you understand her story and her prayer, you will understand the rest of the book and everything that happens in it.

So turn quickly with me. And by the way, you'll also be able to weigh up the people you meet through the books of Samuel if you understand Hannah and Hannah's song. So turn with me quickly to her prayer in 1 Samuel chapter 2.

Look at it with me. In verses 1 to 2, we're introduced to Hannah's incomparable God. There is none like him, she says. In verses 3 to 8, she praises the God who takes human power structures and turns them on their head.

The great and the mighty, she says, are brought down. At the same time, he lifts up the weak and the insignificant. Hannah's God, you see, has no respect for human power structures.

He loves turning them on their heads and he can do this because he's the creator. That's what verse 8 says. But the key thing to look for for our purposes tonight are the final few verses.

[11 : 32] In verse 9, Hannah talks about the godly and the wicked. God, you see, guards the feet of the faithful, that is the godly. And it doesn't matter how strong you are, and he cuts off the wicked.

And it doesn't matter how strong you are. It doesn't matter who you are. You will not prevail because of might. No, you will prevail because you trust in God.

And that applies to all human beings. But particularly, it applies to kings. Look at verse 10. See what Hannah says. Hannah promises that the Lord will shatter his adversaries.

He will thunder against those who oppose him. He will be the judge of the ends of the earth. But then she turns to talk about kings and anointed ones. And the word for anointed ones is the word messiahs.

She talks about them. And can you see what she is saying? She says that God's king, God's messiah, will not survive by his own might or power.

[12 : 36] These kings will not be judged on how mighty or how powerful they are or how many armies they have or how great the arsenal of those armies is. No, their future and their power will depend upon them trusting God, on God giving them strength, on God exalting them and their horn.

That is their power. In other words, the future king of Israel that we have been waiting for since the book of Genesis should learn from Hannah's behavior and Hannah's theology. These kings that come should depend on God to deliver them from their enemies just like Hannah did.

They should trust on God to give them their needs just like Hannah did. And they should look to God to give them power and strength just as Hannah had prophesied they ought to.

In other words, they should be dependent and faithful ones. And only in this way will they prevail. Because it is not by might that one prevails. In the words of Isaiah, it is in quietness and trust that shall be shall be your strength.

It is in your trust upon God. So that background, you might remember those of you who were here Sunday night. God, you see, had planned kingship right from the very beginning. God had.

[13 : 54] But when Israel asked for a king in chapter eight, they were not being like Hannah, were they? You see, what they did is they were yearning for being independent from God. They didn't want God to lead them.

They didn't want God to be their king. Instead, they wanted to be like everyone else, all the other nations. They wanted a human king who would give them their place in the world. And when we saw God, but we saw, didn't we, that God granted their request anyway.

They requested a king and God said, OK, Samuel, give them one. Remember three times he said, listen to what they say and give them a king. And at the end of chapter eight, everyone goes home and we wonder, where is this king?

And we wondered, what would happen next? Would God give them a king? What sort of king would he be? Well, that brings us to chapter nine. So we're going to fly through nine to 15 tonight.

Brings us to the story of the kingship of Saul. Now, we don't have time to go through the details.

What I want to do is give you a bird's eye picture of it. And as we do that, you'll see how it fits together.

[14:55] And you might like to go home later on and read the story again. I'll give you an overview. First section is chapter nine, verse one through to 10, 16, which we could call the anointing of Saul.

You might remember the story. It's one of those magic stories of the books of Samuel. We're introduced to a man called Kish. Now, Kish has a son. That son is called Saul.

And Saul is not like me, a short man. He is a tall man, a handsome man, a big man, an impressive young man. Anyway, Kish has lost some donkeys and he sends his big, impressive son on a quest to find the donkeys.

And in verse 15, we're told that at the same time, God's at work somewhere else over here with Samuel. And he sends Samuel on a quest to find an anoint Saul as king.

So we've got two people coming from two different directions. And eventually they meet. In chapter 10, verse one, Samuel anoints this impressive young man, Saul.

[15:56] And he gives him some instructions to follow. And one of those instructions is this one. He says, you will come as you go home upon a Philistine. You'll see a Philistine garrison.

Then the spirit's going to come on you when this happens. And you are to do whatever you see fit when this occurs. Now, I don't know about you, but if you read the book of Judges, what happens when the spirit of the Lord comes upon you and you see some Philistines?

You engage them in battle, don't you? That's what the spirit does in the book of Judges. And we're sort of in that part of the world. And so when he does that, and he's then to go to Gilgal and wait seven days until Samuel comes.

And when Samuel does come, he'll offer sacrifices, give further instructions. Do you know what happens? The spirit does come upon Saul just as Samuel had prophesied. And does he attack the garrison?

No. He simply prophesies. Does he go to Gilgal? No. He goes home to find the donkeys. Now, friends, the next section of the story is the high point of Saul's career.

[17:04] We're going to come back to the thing I've just told you because it's very important. In verses 17 to 27, Saul is publicly announced as king. Then in chapter 11, the king of the Ammonites gravely threatens a group of Israelites.

He threatens to take out their eyes if they do not accede to his rule. Saul hears of it. And the spirit comes upon him. And he dramatically leads the people in victory.

And it is a marvelous victory. And that brings us to the third section of Saul's story. Because Samuel gathers the people together. And with a king in place, he tells God's people, this is how you live with kings without jeopardizing God's kingship.

Now, there are a number of things to notice. And I want you to turn with me to chapter 12. I want you to have a look at verses 13 to 15. For Samuel says this. So chapter 12, 13 to 15.

See, here is the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked. See, the Lord has set a king over you. Now, if you will fear the Lord and serve him and heed his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well.

[18:24] But if you do not heed the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king. And then in verse 23, he indicates that God's prophet will help them in this task.

He will intercede for them. He will instruct them. Friends, I wonder if you can hear what Samuel's saying. He's saying that having a king has changed nothing in the way God governs his people.

Having a king has changed nothing. He is still their God. They are still his people. And both kings and people must live under God's word.

They must still hear his voice. And if God's people live under God's word, there'll be covenant blessings come. But if they don't, there'll be covenant curses come.

That has not changed from Deuteronomy. It is not changed since Exodus. It is still the same. You can add a king into the equation. It doesn't change anything. That brings us to our fourth section about Saul.

[19 : 31] I wonder if you can remember, just two or three minutes back, I guess now, what Saul was meant to do after his anointing. He should have attacked a Philistine garrison. And then he should have waited seven days for Samuel.

Well, take a look at verse 3 of chapter 13. Because we meet a Philistine garrison again. And who attacks it? Jonathan, Saul's son.

He attacks the garrison. And the Philistines hear of it. And they gather in force. And Saul does as Samuel directed. He waits seven days. But when Saul sees the people drifting away, he panics. And he doesn't wait for Samuel. And instead he sacrifices offerings himself. And finally Samuel does appear. And rebukes him. Look at what he says, verses 13 and 14 of chapter 13.

You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God which he commanded you. By the way, friends, here's something to notice when you read through your Bibles.

[20 : 35] Often after some great act has been done by God, some great deliverance or some great promise, it takes about a chapter or two before you are shown some great sin. Have you noticed that?

It happens so often in the Bible. Here's another case. Covenant blessings handed out. Within a chapter or two, you've got Saul sinning. Anyway, let's read on.

The Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. Now your kingdom will not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. And the Lord has appointed him as a ruler over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

In chapter 12, Samuel had made things crystal clear. God's king must keep God's commandments. God's king must listen to God's prophets.

Saul has not done this. Therefore, the kingdom will be taken away from him. Now the rest of this section, which goes right through to the end of chapter 14, shows up Saul as a failed king.

[21 : 39] Where Saul fails, his son Jonathan acts like Hannah said kings should act. Jonathan's a hero in this book like Hannah. He depends upon God for victory.

And God gives him an enormous victory in chapter 14. But Saul acts foolishly and causes his men to sin. And that brings us to our final section, which is chapter 15.

You see, God had, remember as Israel was coming up out of Egypt and entering into the promised land, the Amalekites harassed them and didn't allow them to go to certain places and so on.

And God said, someday the day will come for the Amalekites when I'll repay them for what they did to my people. Well, Samuel tells Saul, now's the day. Do it.

Samuel says, be the agent of God's judgment. Carry out holy war. And Saul acts, but he does not follow Samuel's instructions to the letter. This is chapter 15. He acts independently.

[22 : 38] He spares Agag, the king of the Amalekites. And so God speaks to Samuel in verse 10. He tells Samuel that he has regrets about making Saul king. Saul, you see, he says, has not carried out the commands.

He's not kept the demands of kingship. He has not subjected his kingship to God's word and to God's prophet. His kingship will end. In chapter 13, God had said that he'd found a person after his own heart.

In verse 28 of chapter 15, he declares he's found someone better. Saul's kingship is finished as far as God is concerned.

It'll take another 15 chapters before he disappears off the scene. But Saul's kingship is finished. Friends, I just want to reflect for a moment on Saul. You see, in many ways, he's a rather tragic figure, isn't he?

I don't know, but you feel for Saul at times. After all, the actual deeds he has done don't look that bad compared to some that David does and some that other kings do.

[23 : 41] However, the point that the writer wants to make is that it's not so much the individual deeds, but the heart behind it that matters. And Saul was not a man who had God at the heart of his existence.

He did not respect God. He did not respect God's word. He did not respect God's prophet. He had his eye on the people rather than on God. He had his eye on his own reputation rather than God's reputation.

He therefore was a bad king. Friends, Hannah has already given us the measure by which to measure Saul. He did not look to God for help as he ought to have, except for the one point in his life when he got it right.

He was not thoroughly dependent upon God. Therefore, he could not rule God's people. Hannah's model, Hannah's prayer and Hannah's son Samuel has taught us what to look for in a king. Saul's failure has taught us what God does not want. And God has told us that he's got a better option waiting around the corner. So let me show you. Him reveal what that option looks like.

[24 : 51] Let's turn to chapter 16. We finally got there. Now, chapter 16 begins with God's command to Samuel. He's to anoint again.

There's a difference this time. When God commanded him to anoint last time, God said these words. It's in chapter 8, verse 22. Appoint for them a king.

Now listen to that carefully. Appoint for them a king. Already, you see. But now look at verse 1 here. God says to Samuel, I have provided for myself a king.

Already we are being told there's something very different going on here from last time. And so a few verses later, Samuel arrives at the household of Jesse. And he sees the first son.

And he looks impressive. He is another big man. But God catches Samuel as he's about to anoint this man.

[25 : 55] He says that Eliab is impressive like Saul. He's tall like Saul, but he's rejected like Saul. And God utters those crucial words. They're incredible words, aren't they? The Lord does not see as mortals see.

They look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. And with that perspective, each of the sons are brought before Samuel.

And none are the Lord's choice. Samuel finds then that there's another one somewhere out there that they hadn't even thought fit to bring in. And he's an absent son.

And the Hebrew word used to describe David is a word that means little or young. And I think it has both connotations here.

He is the little one. Probably he was smaller in stature. He is the little one. He is the youngest one. And he's sent for.

[26 : 55] And he's anointed. And finally God endorses his appointment because the spirit of God comes on this young man. And finally, it's intriguing, isn't it? He's not been named till this point.

Finally, in verse 13, he is named. This is David. God's king. God's king for himself.

Let's move to chapter 17, that grand chapter. Israel, you might remember, is trembling before the giant Philistine called Goliath. Goliath is speaking out arrogantly and proudly, just like imagined by Hannah.

Israel is not being like Hannah. They don't look to the Lord to break the bows of warriors or to cause those armed with strength to stumble. They're not trusting that God will deliver them.

Nor are they expecting that those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. No, they're trembling in their boots. And then this young man, David, appears. And he's got all the marks of the good and the godly.

[28 : 00] He's affronted by this Philistine's rank arrogance and the disgrace it brings on Israel and on God. He's not fearful of the might and power of this giant. He's deeply reliant on God and confident that God's going to do something.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? And he throws aside all man-made armour and replaces it with God-made stones. And he tells this Philistine what he can expect and why he can expect it.

Look at it. Verses 45 to 47 of chapter 17. It's got all the language and theology of Hannah and it's full of her confidence. You come to me with sword and javelin and spear.

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. And I will strike you down and cut off your head.

[29 : 08] And I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth. So that all the earth might know that there's a God in Israel.

And that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword or spear. For the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand.

Now if we've read Hannah's song, we rejoice to see this young man. I mean we love him, don't we, like everyone else. We love this man. He's just what we've been waiting for. And we know, don't we, what God's going to do.

For Hannah has taught us. He will guard the feet of his saints. He will silence the wicked. He will give strength to his king. He'll exalt the horn of his Messiah.

And so David hurls stones against this arrogant blasphemer of God. And he falls flat on his face before David. Just as that Philistine deity had fallen flat on his face before the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel 5.

[30 : 22] And he loses his head just as his God was beheaded before a real God in 1 Samuel 5 in the temple of the Philistines. Friends, chapter 17 is rightly one of the great stories of world literature.

However, let me tell you, it is a profound piece of theological reflection. And the author has left us with some significant hints or telltale signs as to how he wants this story to be read.

And the first has to do with the notion of power which we started with. With the idea that big is better. Both Israel and the Philistines are agreed on this.

The Philistines rely on their giant. The Israelites shrink back because they fear giants. And David and God are not convinced, are they? Chapter 16 told us that the God of Israel is not impressed by external standards and by external might.

You see, he looks at the heart. And here in this chapter, we see what he saw. He saw a man who's little in his family.

[31 : 30] Little in stature. Little in position. But a man whose heart was stout. The David of this chapter comes on the scene sort of like a mere pup tantalized by everything, doesn't he?

He seems so innocent. So strikingly unembarrassed to ask the spiritual question. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? He appears to be the only person in Israel who is concerned with God rather than might and power.

The only one who thinks that the God of Hannah might be here and on hand. He's so convinced that he walks out onto that battlefield with no armour and not a symbol of power in his hand.

All he needs is faith in a mighty and powerful God. And that's what we heard in verses 46 and 47.

That's why David's going to make such a great king. That is why he's a model for us to follow. He is not fixated on power and might. He's fixated on God.

[32 : 40] And he knows who God is and he's going to bank on him. The second hint about this chapter comes from the constant references to defying, mocking and taunting.

David will have none of this giant's mocking. For him, you see, to mock Israel is to mock Israel's God. And David will not have that.

And he will put his life at risk to stop it. David will do battle for God's glory and God's name. He will stone this uncircumcised Philistine.

Because that's what you get for blasphemy in the Old Testament, isn't it? In the books of the law. What's the punishment for blasphemy? It's stoning. And so David goes out and stones this blasphemer.

That is why David will make a great king. Why? Because he lives for the honour and glory of God. And that is why he's a model for us to follow. He is fixated on God and his glory.

[33 : 44] The third thing to notice about this chapter is found in the references to beasts. If you read it through, you'll find all these references to beasts and animals. When David is before Saul, he points out that Goliath is just like a bear or a lion threatening the flock.

Goliath, you see, when David looks on Goliath, he doesn't see a symbol of might and power. Now, when he looks on Goliath, he simply sees a threat to sheep. And shepherds have an answer to threats to sheep.

Shepherds of God's sheep have an answer for a beast who threatens God's people. And that is why David will make a great king. That is why he's a model for all of us. You see, he's a shepherd of the people of God.

He loves the people of God and he will protect them at all cost. He will do anything in order to care for God's people. And so in Ezekiel, you might have looked at this passage last year, chapter 34. How do you know a good shepherd? He's a shepherd who cares for the sheep and goes out after them. Just as the Lord Jesus will go out searching for them as well.

[34 : 52] Friends, let's see if we can tie all of this together and then see what it means for us. You see, I think the author of this story is telling us one simple thing. Saying, in the eyes, the eyes of this young man look out on the world and they see it the way God sees it.

This man, David, has God's eyes. He sees as God sees. He has eyes like God's eyes.

And in that sense, he foreshadows the greater son, Jesus Christ, his descendant. You see, Jesus came into the world, didn't he? Where Jews were weary of being under overlords.

They looked for might and power. They lusted after a military savior who would come and rescue them from the Romans. And Jesus came on the scene and he saw what the real situation was.

He saw things as God saw them. And he knew that the great enemy was not beastly Roman rule, but human sinfulness and the devil. And it was against those enemies that he waged war, armed with nothing but the word of God and the cross.

[36 : 01] He allowed the enemies of God to take him, to crucify him. And in doing so, he made a public spectacle of them in the language of Colossians 2 verse 15. And you see a similar mindset in the in the Apostle Paul.

The Corinthian Christians are overawed by the impressive rhetorical skills of some of their teachers. They think Saul's somewhat pathetic as a teacher and preacher. However, Saul sees things, Paul sees things with true spiritual eyes.

And he knows that what matters is not how well you speak, but what you say. He knows that the rhetorical skills of humans are pathetic match for the power of the gospel, for the word of the cross.

And for this reason, he tells the Corinthians, when I came among you, I was determined to know nothing among you but Christ and him crucified, the power of God and Christ, the wisdom of God.

The weapon which will demolish the strongholds of the enemy are not the words of humans, but the word of God, the gospel. Friends, the history of Christian mission is laden with people who have eyes like this.

[37 : 14] The youthful, bold, somewhat careless faith of David is reminiscent in my mind of so many missionaries throughout history who have gone onto the mission field confident that God would supply their needs and look after them.

We people who look for might and power, who have to have everything tied down before we do anything, often disdain such people. We think they're a little naive or foolish or foolhardy.

I wonder though, you know, whether perhaps they see things as God sees them. Perhaps they see that there's a world out there that needs to be reached for the Lord Jesus Christ and that they can line up with this God.

Or they see the evil one active in closing the minds of unbelievers and they can't wait to get out there into the fray. Or they're affronted by the lack of gospel preachers and they've simply got to get out there and so they put their confidence in God and they get on with the work.

Friends, there's a place for caution and planning, isn't there? Friends, I want you to look on this young lad.

[38 : 36] Look upon this, his descendant Jesus and be determined that you'll educate your heart to be like God's heart. That you'll educate your eyes to see the world as God sees it and to see everything out there as God sees it.

Educate and train your eyes through God's word to see things as God sees them and then follow your heart and your eyes.

Step boldly into the fray and do it with God by your side. For wherever you do that, he will be there.

For he loves it when there are people who have his heart and his eyes and he's with them and he'll never leave them or forsake them.

Let's pray together. Father God, we love this story of David.

We love it particularly as it's cast against the background of Saul. We see in him just a little glimpse of his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[39 : 58] We see in him some of the things that we see so boldly painted in Jesus. We thank you that through Jesus you have won salvation for us because he was determined to go where you wanted him to go, to see things as you saw them.

Thank you that he died on the cross to make an end of the great enemy, the evil one. Father, we pray that we might step in the steps of David and of the Lord Jesus.
Father, please give us hearts like theirs and eyes like theirs that we might see rightly and act rightly.
And we pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen. Amen. Amen.