

ONCE UPON A THRONE “Looking for Leaders.”

Today we begin a new sermon series: “Once Upon a Throne.” This series plays upon long term interest in royalty and in their lives. Israel wanted a king. The people wanted to be like all the other nations, rather than to stand apart as a people chosen by God to live by faith. The stories of our biblical rulers are filled with redemption and loss, rebellion, and faithfulness. The “players” include kings and queens, priests and prophets and the people longing for a better life. While in our American culture we don’t have royalty, we have the same need to idolize and worship our leaders as the “fix” or “solution.” The gift of our Hebrew scripture is that it always shows the people of God in all their “glory” good and evil, faithful, and unfaithful. Over the next few weeks, the readings themselves will be lengthy as we try and cover a great deal of the stories within 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles. In the midst of ALL scripture God’s faithfulness and invitation to live as the beloved children is always present. May we seek God in all we say and do as we are living into the beloved community offered us in Christ. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: “Looking for Leaders.”

Daily Prayer

Healing, sovereign God, overmatch our resistant ears, with your transforming speech. Penetrate our jadedness and fatigue. Touch our yearnings by your words. Through your out-loudness, draw us closer to you. We are ready to listen. Amen.
(taken from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*, by Walter Brueggemann)

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <https://boxcast.tv/channel/f9yfyjzko2esfwfc5vkn>

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, June 7, 2021 1 Samuel 1: 1-26, 2: 1-11

In order to understand why Israel wanted a king, it is important to see how what had worked, was no longer working. This beautiful example of Hannah and her prayers is echoed in both Elizabeth's story and Mary's. Her praise of God puts God's firmly on "the throne" of her life and heart. As we will see over the next two days, the priests are looking to their own needs and wants and places them before their service of God. Pray Hannah's song today, pray for the leadership in our church and nation. On another note, today VBS begins. *Pray for the teachers, students, helpers, and all those who will be graced with God's presence both in person and virtually.*

Tuesday June 8, 2021 1 Samuel 2: 12-26, 3: 1-21

The priesthood had become corrupt. Children were not following the ways of their elders. This wonderful story of Samuel begins with a call by God. Now the call was a gift, but also pointed to Eli's sons and their sins. The downfall of the spiritual leaders is being pointed out. The consequences in Hebrew scripture are harsh. Yet, we know there are consequences when laws and rules are disobeyed. Samuel is called "was trustworthy." *Pray today for the leadership of VBS and other leaders. Pray for strength for them to do what is right and good and just.*

Wednesday June 9, 2021 1 Samuel 8: 1-9

Like Eli before him, Samuel's sons also turn away. The people are tired. They are weary of never knowing who will be trustworthy and who will not. They want to be like everyone else. We know that never goes well, not for individuals, not for nations and not for churches. Israel was called to stand as a beacon to God, as a light to the nations. Sometimes we want to hide our light and just fit in. God saw that not as a rejection of Samuel's leadership, but the people turning from God. *How do you see that working in your life? In the life of the community around you? Continue to pray for VBS and the leaders in our church, nation, and world.*

Thursday June 10, 2021 1 Samuel 8: 10-22

Samuel tried to warn the people what they will lose once a king is chosen. They will lose autonomy; they will lose the ability to choose what their sons and daughters will go and do as the king will have the rule and use them as he will. The people have no idea how harsh that will be for them and their families. Over the next few weeks, we will learn more about the good kings with faults and feelings and some of the bad kings as well. *Can you think of a time in your life you gave over authority in your life to someone or something? Today pray for God's leadership in your life and spirit. Please continue to pray for our VBS and the leaders in our church, nation, and world.*

Friday June 11, 2021 Psalm 61

This psalm of David was one of many when he was concerned. Saul's anxiety would often drive David into hiding. David, as evidenced by this psalm still prayed for Saul and for Saul's leadership. Next week our focus will be on the first King of Israel. *Today, use this Psalm to pray for the leaders in our church and nation and world. Pray for this last day of VBS as well.*