

Today's Quick Word 1 Samuel 9:15-16

By Bruce Christian

1 SAMUEL 9:15-16 *Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel: "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me."*

I never cease to be amazed at how our sovereign Lord works out his divine purposes in human history - and therefore in every detail of our own lives!

The Covenant LORD of Israel wanted them to look to him alone as their trusted King ... but, No!, they wanted a human king - one that could be seen, like the kings of all the other nations around them (1 Samuel 8:1-10). So the LORD consented to their request, but did so in such a way as to teach them a very important lesson.

He first gave them a king (Saul) who would fit in with THEIR agenda - a tall, impressive, self-possessed warrior/leader, but with a low priority on spiritual 'gifts' like humility, obedience, or a feeling of dependence on the LORD for strength and wisdom. Unsurprisingly, Saul turned out to be a man who, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, wanted to make his own decisions, to run his own life HIS OWN way, rather than acknowledging, submitting to, and pointing to God as the rightful King of his

life!

So, when this first choice inevitably ended in disaster, the LORD led Samuel to David, who was, in every way, the opposite to Saul. As Saul was a clone of the First Adam, so David was a foreshadowing of the 'Second Adam', the Lord Jesus Christ. God used Israel's desire for a king as a powerful object lesson of 'two ways to live': with the 'crown' on our own heads, or with the crown in its rightful place - on Jesus' head!

And let us take note of the Apostle Paul's summary of all this: "as in Adam all [without exception] die, so, in Christ, shall all [without distinction] be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22). "O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came. O wisest love! - that flesh and blood which did, in Adam, fail, should strive afresh against the foe; should strive and should prevail." (J.H.Newman).

In the light of all this, I need to ask myself, "Am I willing to submit to Jesus as the rightful King of my life, and to let him work out his sovereign purposes in every little detail my life - even in the things that I find, at the time, perplexing (like why the LORD brought Samuel and Saul together through providential, 'run-of-the-mill', circumstances and told Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first King)?

Today's Quick Word Romans 8:22-25

By Bruce Christian

ROMANS 8:22-25 *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

What Paul writes here in Chapter 8 helps us to understand what he has been grappling with in Chapter 7.

When Jesus declared from the Cross, "It is finished", he was announcing that everything necessary for the full salvation of all God's 'Elect' was now completed - all their sins were atoned for by his suffering and death in their place as their Substitute. The Redemption of all those chosen by God the Father was now achieved by God the Son and would be effectively applied by irresistible grace through the work of God the Holy Spirit - the whole Trinity working together in perfect harmony!

"O happy day that fixed my choice on thee, my Saviour and my God! Well may this glowing heart rejoice, and tell its raptures all abroad. Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away! He taught me how to watch and pray, and live rejoicing every day; happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away! 'Tis done - the great transaction's done; I am my Lord's, and he is mine; he drew me and I followed on, rejoiced to own

the call divine." (Philip Doddridge).

But, as Paul says here in Romans 8, we 'have been saved', but there is still the future 'hope' that we do not yet have, but 'wait for patiently'. We have the 'firstfruits of the Spirit', but there is the ongoing sanctifying work of the Spirit to be done in us as we live out our days in a broken world with all its temptations and pressures upon us. As he said in Chapter 7, "So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." (verses 21-25).

And, thanks be to God for the Reformed doctrine of 'The Perseverance of the Saints', that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6), which is the firm basis of our confidence and hope in the midst of the struggle. "I've wrestled on towards heaven, 'gainst storm and wind and tide, till like a weary traveller that leans upon his guide, amid the shades of evening, while sinks life's lingering sand, I hail the glory dawning in Immanuel's land." (Anne Ross Cousin).

Today's Quick Word Psalm 27:7-9

By Bruce Christian

PSALM 27:7-9 *Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Saviour.*

It is comforting to read David's psalms and realise that we are not alone when we feel a bit discouraged because of times when our experience of life does not match up with our proven theological understanding. Today's verses were written at such a time for David.

In his heart of hearts David KNEW for certain that the only safe and reliable thing to do at a time of anxiety and fear was to seek the presence of his Sovereign LORD, to come face-to-face before him. It's what had served him well on many previous occasions, and the LORD's unfailing faithfulness was the king's rock-solid confidence - always.

But, on this occasion, for some inexplicable reason, something seemed wrong! The LORD seemed to be HIDING his face!? Was he ANGRY with his servant? Was he REJECTING and/ or FORSAKING the one with whom he had entered into a

COVENANT relationship and to whom he had BOUND HIMSELF with unbreakable promises? How could it be? David needed rescuing, and the LORD alone was his 'helper', his SAVIOUR!

Does David's cry of confusion sound familiar? Do you struggle with God's perplexing providence in your life, or in the lives of friends and family? I do. But, thankfully, I can learn a valuable lesson from the godly King of Israel at such times. David persisted in prayer. He wasn't going to give up on his God just because things weren't working out as he'd hoped, or even expected, given God's known-and-proven character.

David's earnest prayer here was anticipating what Jesus taught when he "told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up". (Luke 18:1-8). The parable Jesus told was the familiar one about the persistent (badgering? nagging?) widow who kept on and on at the indifferent judge till she got justice! Isn't it true that our prayer life is much more genuine, real and meaningful when things AREN'T going so well than when they ARE?