

What is Saul to Us?

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[0:01] Today we're in 1 Samuel. We'll be covering chapters 8-31 this morning as we do one quick sermon on the person of Saul.

And the question we're asking, and I think this is sometimes a helpful thing to ask, is like, why did God do this? Why did he write in the ink of reality the story of Saul for us?

And then why did he present the story of Saul to us, preserving it in his sacred word? What is Saul about? Well, if you were here last week, you know that there was a lot made of this idea of problem solving and how in chapter 8 of 1 Samuel, the problems are not solved well.

They're solved in panic. They forget who God is. They forget who they are supposed to be before God. And they insist to Samuel that he give us a king like all the other nations.

And I mentioned that there's a kind of a joke in 1 Samuel 8 because Samuel's name means God is heard. And the whole story of Samuel is that God will provide for us when we ask him in his way, in his way is best.

[1:11] Well, the joke continues because Samuel goes to the Lord and says, what should I do? They're demanding a king. And the Lord says, you know, they're not just rejecting you. They're fundamentally rejecting me.

And he warned them what it means to have a king like all the other nations. And so Samuel does that and they say, no, we want a king. And so the king that arrives is named Saul and his name means you asked for it.

That's really what his name means. You asked for it. and that is really kind of the big pivot, the big joke of 1 Samuel is you had a God who will hear you and who will answer your needs if you ask humbly and give you another Samuel, but if you insist, you asked for it, here is Saul, and he is indeed a king like all the other nations.

I would say that the thing that is most true when you hear king like all the other nations is that every other king treated their gods, their local deities, Baal, Asherah, Dagon, whatever, in a transactional way.

Every other king in that region, in the world at the time, was a religious king, but not a relationship with their god kind of king.

[2:37] No one sings back in this period. At the time, no one's singing, I got the joy, joy, joy of Baal down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart. Like, these are just transactional gods.

You need grain, here's the god for grain. You need fertility, here's the god for fertility, so forth. And that's how every other king would interact with the gods in their world.

And when they get Saul, he is just like that. But he is like that with Yahweh. But he is a transactional religious pragmatist.

He is in it for what it benefits him. But initially, we can't tell that. I just spoiled the plot. Like, that's the way the story ends.

We know that by the end. But initially, it's not clear at all that he isn't just, honestly, just like us.

Person following God, and so on and so forth.

[3:36] And that is an interesting theme to touch on because I think, as you know, that's a dominant theme by the time we get to the New Testament where Jesus talks about saying, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

And I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me. Or we're going to touch on a passage that I get questions about, you know, a few times every year from people.

And that's Hebrews chapter 6, verses 4 through 6 that talks about tasting of the spirit and then falling away and so forth. We're going to talk about that. But there are these categories that appear in the New Testament of someone who appeared to be a Christian but turns out not to have been a

Christian.

In fact, Jesus predicts this. He says that he tells a couple parables about this. And one of them is that a farmer goes and he sows really good wheat into his field. But then his enemy comes at night and also sows weeds into the field.

And Jesus is sort of preparing us for the reality that insofar as we experience, the local church in particular will just be in a kind of mixed multitude environment, not intentionally, but it'll just be that way, where some who appear to be with the Lord are not.

[4:51] And it will turn out that they are not. And that's where Saul fits in in at least one way we can use him and understand him is Saul's one of those people who started off looking like, well, maybe they are.

And then by the end, it's like, well, actually, there's really no doubt that Saul was not a follower of the Lord. But again, that's a helpful thing for us to think about because that's a reality that we would have to think about with our own life and our own faith.

Are we really actually saved? Are we really actually his? And then that's also a reality we need to be prepared for as we just do life with other people in a local church.

And there are some bigger, more institutional implications we'll get to that have to do with the book of Isaiah toward the end of the sermon. But let's just start with kind of a quick-paced briefing of Saul's life.

Look at chapter 1, verse 9. I'm sorry, chapter 9, verse 1 of the book of 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel 9, verse 1. There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeor, the son of Bechoroth, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a man of wealth.

[6:03] And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward, he was taller than any of the people.

Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul, his son, take one of the young men with you, arise and go look for the donkeys. So that's verses 1 through 3 of 1 Samuel 9. This is when we're introduced to Saul. Saul, his dad has some donkeys that are missing, and he sends his son on a donkey hunt. Saul's not having great luck, and he's wandering all around. And at verse 5, you can read verse 5 with me here. When they came to the land of Zoph, Saul said to his servant, who was with him, Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us.

But he, the servant, verse 6, said to him, Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held at high honor, and all that he says come true.

[7:08] Now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go. So then Saul said to his servant, But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there's no present to bring to the man of God.

What do we have? We get a little hint of a transactional attitude toward God here, but definitely nothing we would be able to rule on yet, right? This is just a tiny little bit of evidence.

Maybe we wouldn't even notice it if we didn't know how the story ends. But he says, Well, I don't have anything to bring this person that I'm going to ask to tell me where the donkeys are. And the servant answered, Saul, here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.

So that's where Saul meets Samuel. Saul meets Samuel because he's looking for a seer, a prophet, to tell him where his father's donkeys are. Have you ever prayed that God would help you find your car keys?

I feel like the whole vibes of this section remind me of how I act. And I wish that there was a seer in my neighborhood.

[8:15] He'd be like, okay, where are my car keys? Anyway, so that's the first encounter that Saul has with Samuel. He's looking for the donkeys. He treats Samuel as a sort of seer of the supernatural.

He engages in a kind of religious wing, I guess you could say, of Judaism. Prophets see things. Let's go ask this prophet whether he knows where the donkeys are.

Well, as that is taking place, God actually is going to tell Samuel some stuff. So look at, again, chapter 9, verse 15.

Now, the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel, Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel.

He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have seen my people because their cry has come to me. So I just wanted to point out that God is actually pushing a season of discipline on Israel.

[9:18] He is giving them the king that they've asked for. They're going to have a not great life for the next 40 years. But even still, God's providing a kind and compassionate hand in using this tool, who will ultimately be forsaken, Saul, to actually give his people something they need, and that is freedom from the Philistines.

And so it's just one of those things where God, when he works with his people, his grace is always there somewhere. Even when he's allowing us to go through something hard, he is paying attention, he still loves us, and he's still ministering his grace to us, even in those times when we're being absolute dupes.

Now, things get stranger. I'd say a lot of the strangest texts in the Old Testament are tied to this guy Saul, and they get stranger in chapter 10. Samuel meets Saul and says, you're going to be king, and here's the three signs that you're going to be king.

I want you to go on this little quest, and three things are going to happen to you. And so Saul obeys, and in chapter 10, verse 6, Samuel's saying, after that you shall come to Gibeah Elohim, where there is a garrison of Philistines, and there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them prophesying, then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

So now we have evidence in the column of, Saul's a real Christian. He's a real, he has a real experience with God here, right? The Spirit rushes on him. He becomes a new man or another man.

[11:01] And then in verse 9, not only does the Spirit rush upon him, but look at verse 9 of chapter 10, and when he turned his back to leave, Samuel, God gave him another heart, and all these signs came to pass that day.

When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. Okay. If you're an outside observer right now, you're definitely, you've definitely got Saul in the category of he's a legit follower of God.

He is doing things for God. He's freeing people from the Philistines. He's having religious experiences. You know, IHOP would love this kind of thing.

This would, you know, like this would be like gold. Like you're definitely in, you know. All these things are sort of, all the checks are in the column of, this is real. His faith is real.

He's really a God person. And then it just starts to go downhill almost right away. In chapter 13, sorry, in chapter 11, the Spirit of God rushes on him again.

[12:07] So he has had multiple experiences like that. And then in chapter 13, Saul is preparing to fight the Philistines, and he's supposed to wait until Samuel gets there because Samuel said, I'll offer a sacrifice and pray for your army.

Just wait for me. Samuel's late in arriving, and the army begins to sort of diffuse and start to maybe wander away. And Saul panics, and he offers the sacrifice himself.

He doesn't wait for Samuel. He does something he's not allowed to do. One of the things we'll see in Isaiah is a lot of that church state stuff will come up. Like, a king can be a God follower, but also step into the lane of the priest.

And there's some stuff that we'll uncover there, and this is the first sign of that. Here, the king Saul is stepping into the priest lane, if you will, or the prophet lane. And that's a big no-no.

God always punishes this. Uzziah and Isaiah is going to have leprosy because of this very thing. This is a big deal to God. If he wants you as the king, he wants you as the king. That has some religious implications, but you can't just give yourself total privileges.

[13:16] There's lanes for this kind of stuff. Anyway, so Saul panics because he's losing the crowd, and he goes ahead, and he offers a sacrifice. Verse 11 of 1 Samuel 13, Samuel said, What have you done?

And Saul said, When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord, so I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.

And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

So just as it gets started, it's over. Just right away, Saul is faced with a relatively simple ask, Just wait until the right guy appears to do the job.

[14 : 27] And he fails the test. In chapter 15, that continues. God calls them to sacrifice, to kill everything that they capture.

He keeps certain things aside. And by chapter 18, he is experiencing the success of David. Goliath has been killed. David's in his court, so on and so forth.

And by chapter 15, he's throwing spears at David. David's in his court, and you probably know the rest of the story. This just continues for the whole life of Saul. It just gets worse and worse and worse.

So that in chapter 28, we have this interesting bookend. He really wants to know what he should do. And so he consults another seer. He goes to a witch in Endor.

He feels surrounded, outnumbered, outmanned. And he goes to a witch, and he asks the witch for guidance. And instead of the witch manifests, Samuel comes up somehow, appears, and tells Saul, you really are a loser, you know.

[15 : 31] And essentially says, you're absolutely forsaken by God. This is absolutely, completely inappropriate. So Saul's life ends, well, he spends his last night in a witch's house in Endor.

He's flat on the floor. He's too sick to eat. And in the morning, he walks out to die on Mount Gilboa. By afternoon, Jonathan and two more of his sons lay dead.

The archers found him. And his own armor bearer was afraid to finish the job. And so the first king of Israel fell on his own sword.

Afterward, the Philistines cut off his head, sent his armor around to their temples as offerings to their gods, nailed his body to a wall for the crows to eat.

That's how Saul's life ended. All of that is like maximum biblical connection to, this was a cursed man. This was a cursed person.

[16 : 34] The way that he dies, the whole thing, it's all just like the banner is forsaken by God. So he starts off in this category that appears to be, well, he's doing good things, he's having spiritual experiences, and then he ends where he ends.

And obviously, if you think about it for a minute, like his whole life is bookended by trying to use God to get what he wants or try to use the supernatural to get what he wants. The story of Saul begins with him consulting the seer, and it ends with him consulting a seer.

The pragmatic relationship with God is like really obvious. He's just in this religion because of what it does for him. Now, here's the problem with what I just said.

I don't think there's anybody in this room who is not at least partially motivated to obey God because of the blessings that he promises. I don't think any, I hope that there's nobody.

I hope that we're all biblical in that sense. God issues promises to encourage us to obey. And so we wind up, and I hope you'll feel the tension of this, as the sermon won't be very good to you if it's not.

[17 : 45] Like, this is the key point. We wind up in this really difficult tension. On the one hand, we do see some people use God to get what they want, and we know that's bad.

And that that ends in death. But on the other hand, kind of like a key part of how God calls us to himself is, if you obey, you will be blessed, and be blessed in various ways.

And so there's a tension there. David did things so that God would bless him. How do we know where we stand? And what makes the difference between those two people?

Like, that's the fundamental question that I think Saul provokes in us, is how do you know when you're the kind of person who looks like you are doing the right stuff, but you're doing it just so that God will bless you, and that you're really using God as a tool to blessings?

How do you know you're doing that? And one answer that we see here is that it's, here's one thing we know that it's not. It's not spiritual experiences.

[18:59] All right? We can say it's not good works, and it's not spiritual experiences. Because Saul had both of those things. Now, related to this spiritual experiences thing, I think, I told you I'd mentioned Hebrews 6, 4.

If you'll look at this text with me, it's on the screen. There's a lot that goes into this. I'm not going to explain this whole text here, but it's relevant for this case that spiritual experiences are not a guarantee of authentic faith.

Hebrews 6, 4. In other words, you have a group of people described in Hebrews that had spiritual experiences, but were never fully and are going to wind up in the dustbin of apostasy or however you wanted to talk about that.

There's people here in this passage who have had spiritual experiences, and they are done for. Like Saul. Well, here's how John Calvin talks about this passage.

He says, God indeed favors none but the elect alone with the spirit of regeneration, and by this they are distinguished from the reprobate. But I cannot admit that all this is any reason why he should not grant the reprobate also some taste of his grace, why he should not irradiate their minds with some sparks of his light, and why he should not give them some perception of his goodness, and in some sort engrave his word on their hearts.

[20:46] There is therefore some knowledge, even in the reprobate, which afterwards vanishes away, either because it did not strike roots sufficiently deep, or because it withers being choked up.

John Owen on this passage says, The Holy Ghost is present with many as unto powerful operations with whom he is not present as to gracious inhabitation.

In other words, there is this thing where the spirit can work on someone to accomplish the will that the spirit has for that person without ever having given that person salvation or regeneration.

So the category that we're dealing with here is what Jesus talks about with the parable of the sowers, and he's like, you know, a lot of things will take initial root and look like they're healthy and alive and growing, but in the end they won't endure.

So I won't go too deep into that, just to say that if you're trying to figure out, am I real or am I not real? Now, you can't use, do you seek God for things?

[21:48] Because we all do that. You can't use, do you do good works? Because, I mean, the example of Saul is there, and the people who said, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and so forth?

That's there. And you can't even use, like, spiritual experiences as your guide. So what's the, what do we use?

How do we figure this out? And we go back to the story of Saul, and we realize that, oh, okay, trials are God's gift to show us the veracity, the realness or falseness of our faith.

Because when did Saul actually start tripping up? It was when his expectations were not met. It was when he was in a fork in the road, and he had to either follow God and do what God said, even though it made no sense to him, or do it his way.

So good works doesn't really give you the assurance you need. And, you know, spiritual experiences don't really give you the assurance you need. What does?

[23:04] 1 Peter 1, 6-7. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Your trials test the genuineness of your faith. How you respond when things don't seem to be going right according to you, that's where the genuineness of your faith gets tested.

All the other things we would want to use can be helpful in subordinating that or supplementing, but really, guys, trials are the thing.

And as soon as Saul started facing them, it was over. He folded like a cheap suit. I think I've told this story before about this guy I used to wait tables on when I worked at Golden Corral.

It's kind of the vocational high point of my life, really. And he was too young to go to World War II, but he was like a teenager, young teenager during World War II, during all the rations and everything, and he really wanted to impress this girl that he had asked out for a date, and his car had a big dent in it, and he couldn't get any steel.

[24:23] He couldn't get a replacement because of the rations. And so he spent a whole day paper-macheing this huge dent and then color-matching it with paint so that when he picked her up, he would have this really fancy car.

And he is driving to her, and he's careful not to go too fast because he's not sure how well that stuff stuck onto the car and everything, and he is just feeling so good about himself. And he looks, and his hair is perfectly dippity-dooded.

You know, the whole thing is lined up, and then lightning. And it's just an absolute downpour. And so he pulls into this girl's, you know, house with, you know, like half the car, like falling off, you know.

Anyway, that's Saul. Like, and honestly, that's false belief in a time of trial. That's religious pragmatism when things are not going right.

Now, there's a few ways to think about this, and one of them is, I need some of you to, you know I'm a big self-esteem guy, but I do want some of you to pat yourself on the back in the sense of, God has done something for me, and it's pretty great.

[25:39] And that's this. I don't want you to cheat yourself out of real assurance that is available to you, because the reality is, is that many of you have been in situations where the easiest thing to do would be to cut and run, or go the world's way, or just shell up and be, you know, the carnal version of you, and you didn't do it.

The thunder came, and you didn't have any papier-mâché, you know. And I don't want you to, there are moments where you need to have that ballast in your ship.

I want you to have that ballast in your ship. If you can see a time where God dropped something on me, I did not like the way that he did that. I was in a situation I did not feel comfortable in.

I was tempted to panic. I was tempted to bail. I was tempted to act in my flesh, or as the world would have me act. And, you know, I didn't do that. You know, I probably panicked to begin with, but when you look back, when I look back at that season, I kept walking with God.

For some of us, it's as simple as a surprise baby coming when we thought we were done or close to done. For some of us, it's no baby when we have eagerly awaited.

[27:00] For some of us, it's a sickness that seems totally unfair at a particularly important time in life. And, you know, for some of us, it's...

I didn't realize it was this hard to be a dad and a husband and a churchman, and I'm exhausted.

And I just want to say that those trials are doing something for you that almost nothing else in your faith experience can do.

it's showing the reality that you're not just in this for the gifts, that you are in this for the giver, that you do love him and that he does love you and that he is working in you to will and work his purpose.

In some ways, you need a guy like Saul to make these sorts of things simple and plain. And the answer is, how do I know I'm real or not? How do I know? Well, how do you act when God doesn't give you your way?

How do you act when he calls you to walk in an area of obedience that makes no sense to you and it feels very foreign and uncomfortable? And if the answer is something like, well, first I freak out and feel sorry for myself, but eventually I get my legs underneath me and God helps me to start following him.

[28:16] Well, congratulations, friends. God has just given you an incredible gift and that gift is assurance. He's shown you the tested genuineness of your faith. So when trials come, like the trial that came last week in 1 Samuel 8, the people had a trial.

They didn't have the God that they, or didn't have the setup, the leadership setup that they wanted and it was a real problem. The tested genuineness of their faith in that moment was what?

Will I trust the Lord or will I freak out and make up my own plan? And unfortunately, they freaked out and made up their own plan. So I want you to feel, many of you I know and I've seen you do this and I want you to feel that for a minute.

God is working in you. You faced hard things. There was a total, obvious, worldly way to flake out. God helped you not do that. Praise God.

That's a huge deal. And if you're here and you're like, well, I don't know if I've had one of those things. Well, first of all, I bet you, you know, you probably have. But secondly, let's stop being so afraid of the hard crisis moments when those are actually the things that give us the most data

about God and about us.

[29 : 32] Let's stop trying to build like our lives so that they're so perfectly free of hard things when in reality the hard things are uniquely valuable. Now, I brought all this in, you know, I brought this all before you this morning because I want you to understand that by the time we get to Isaiah, Israel as a people, they are Saul.

They are Saul. Like, institutionally, they are Saul. What I mean by that is they are people who have religious appearance but are really only in it for what it gets them and there is no actual heart for God behind their religiosity anymore.

That thing that Saul is becomes institutionalized and the whole nation takes the shape of that thing. So, I call, I was talking to Dove and I were having lunch this week, I said, this is like the haunted house in my conception.

It structurally looks like a house but inside it was maybe empty for too long and spirits came and occupied it. Like, there's this vibe of Israel in Isaiah that is, you have all of the structure of being a religious thing and you're just empty inside and of course you know that that's exactly how Jesus talks to the Pharisees in the Gospels, right?

Let me wrap up by showing you one more thing I think that means something to our question. What is Saul for? What is Saul to us? There is a Saul in the New Testament or at least there was a Saul in the New Testament and he was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee of the Pharisees and he was Saul.

[31 : 15] He was a religious form with a dark spirit inside and he was actively trying to kill the seed of David. That's the Saul of the New Testament is the Saul of the Old Testament.

Exact same problems, religious form, religious zeal but really fundamentally for himself and he is trying to kill David. Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Jesus, the son of David, says. So you have a New Testament Saul and the great glory is that that New Testament Saul gets saved and he becomes Paul and so there's just great hope in this room right now that even if you are an empty suit spiritually, you don't have to stay that way.

You can say today, Lord, I don't want to be an empty shell. I don't want to be a whitewashed tomb. I don't want to be a haunted house. I don't want to merely be about this so that I get what I want from you.

I want to actually love you. I don't want to be a Saul and God's grace is so great that he will make you into a Paul. You simply have to ask the Lord to do that for you and believe that he is so inclined and trust me, friends, he is so inclined.

[32 : 37] Paul, the apostle, formerly Saul, in 1 Timothy chapter 1 talks about this very thing. He says, I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus, our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service.

Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent, but I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

The call to worship this morning was simply this. You know, in the world, it's the worst thing in the world to be a hypocrite. In the church, it's just the next step before you make Jesus your Lord and he saves you and he fills you with the Holy Spirit.

There's great hope for hypocrites through the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's great hope for people who are empty shells of religiosity. There's great hope for people who right now fold every time God sends them through a test.

And that hope is demonstrated in the New Testament, Saul. Verse 15 of 1 Timothy 1. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost.

[33 : 56] But I receive mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

To the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. So what is Saul for?

For the one who can look back and say, God, you have allowed me to endure trials and tests of faith and I praise you for that. Saul for you is a way for you to feel grateful for the assurance that he's offering you.

For those of you who maybe don't feel that way or don't know that you can feel that way, Saul for you is to point you to the overwhelming grace of God. He is eager to help you turn something that is external and a form of something.

He's eager to fill your house with the actual spirit of God, with the actual love of God. He's eager to give you life and you can call upon him and be saved. So if you're here today and you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you are encouraged by this message today, you are encouraged to see that God has been working in you and for you, then the Lord's table is presented to you as an opportunity for you to double down, double click on that assurance and say, yes indeed, the Lord Jesus has provided everything I need for life and godliness through his great and precious promises and I am so grateful to be his.

[35 : 31] So if you're a follower of Jesus today and this message was sort of assuring, come, partake at the table, celebrate the fact that Jesus has done that for you. But if you're here and you're thinking, I do not know which of these things I am, am I the category that looks okay but I'm not or am I the category that actually is okay?

If you don't know that, listen friend, just stay in your seat and just pray to the Lord and ask him to change your life. Ask him to change your life. Ask him to make this real for you and we trust that God will do that for you.

So let me pray for us and then you come. Father God, we do pray that you would give us faith to partake in this table in the way that we should where we are with you.

Father, I thank you for so many saints in this room who I've seen look at hard things and, you know, buckle for a second and then get their legs underneath them through your spirit and follow you.

We praise your name for that God. We praise you that there really is nothing like a trial to show the tested genuineness of our faith. So God, thank you. And Lord, we pray that we would have a better attitude about trials and understand that they are actually a gift.

[36 : 45] Father, I pray for those who are here who might honestly be wondering if they are actually real, really yours. I think everybody in this room has felt that way and I think that God, ultimately, you have to do a work in them to help them.

But the great thing, God, is that we don't have to go back and ask, did I get saved back then or did I get saved back then or did I get saved? We can just call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

And if we are doubting, we can just call upon you and say, you are a good God who offered your perfect son as sacrifice for our sin and I want to be in you. I want to be saved by you.

And we can be confident that you will hear our prayer. God, please do your work through your spirit this morning as we partake in this time of communion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.