

**“As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges in Israel...<sup>3</sup>But they were not like their father, for they were greedy. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.” (1 Sam. 8:1, 3)**

**1 Sam. 8:4-20** *“<sup>4</sup>Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. <sup>5</sup>‘Look,’ they told him, ‘You are now old and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.”* (1 Sam. 8:4-55) The tribal elders cite Samuel’s age and his son’s misconduct as reasons to demand a king. For several hundred years, Israel had been ruled by prophets who received their guidance directly from God. Israel was a theocracy. The nation had been ruled by God, but they wanted a king. They wanted to be like the rest of the people of the world. When Israel was established by God, it was to set the nation apart and be an example to the other nations. Their demand is an illustration of human nature. They just wanted to be “Like everyone else.” It is very difficult to stand out as an example of goodness when you are surrounded by evil. Samuel reminded the people that their request would have long-term reckoning to face. It is better to live under the guidance of the Lord than take our chances with humans and their frailties.

**Ps. 138** *“<sup>4</sup>Every king in all the earth will thank You, Lord, for all of them will hear Your words. <sup>5</sup>Yes, they will sing about the Lord’s ways, for the glory of the Lord is great.”* (Ps. 138:4-5) This psalm is credited to King David, Israel’s second king. He was greatly devoted to following God’s guidance. The nation’s first king, Saul, was incompetent; not really the leader God had expected. David’s reign was an extension of the years under the prophets. He consulted God in all decisions, especially concerning warfare and tactics against Israel’s enemies. David was anointed by Samuel after following God’s explicit instructions. (Read about it in 1 Samuel, chapter 16.) David proved to be a very good choice who followed God closely. This pleased the Lord and Israel became a world power. David expresses his philosophy that whenever kings listen to the words of the Lord, those kings will enjoy successes. *“<sup>5</sup>Yes, they will sing about the Lord’s ways, for the glory of the Lord is great.”* Indeed, David was among the greatest leaders that ever walked the earth.

**Mark 3:20-35** Jesus said: *“<sup>27</sup>Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger – someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.”* (Mark 3:27) When the Jewish hierarchy challenged Jesus about casting out demons from people’s lives, they accused Him of being an agent from the devil. He replied that His mission was to destroy the work of the devil. In order to win in battle against Satan, it will require one who is stronger than Satan. Tradition tells us that in the 3 days from Jesus’ death until resurrection, He was spending in Hell preaching to the lost souls entrapped there. Jesus was truly plundering Satan’s domain. John gives witness to show who is really in control over the events of the earth. *“<sup>1</sup>Then I saw an angel coming down from Heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a huge chain. <sup>2</sup>He seized the dragon, the old snake, who is the devil, Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”* (Rev. 20:1-2) The Scriptures promise that Satan and all his demons will be overthrown and bound to become harmless. The destructive influence of the evil prince of darkness will be removed. All God’s people will be blessed and Satan’s people will be condemned for eternity. It can’t happen too soon.

**2 Cor. 4:13-5:1** *“<sup>18</sup>So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”* (2 Cor. 4:18) Paul had been facing angry mobsters, much like those who attacked Jesus. His life was constantly in danger. Even so, Paul did not back away from preaching the Gospel message. He knew that the problems he faced today are going to be gone tomorrow. The message of the Gospel is eternal. *“For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”* Paul expresses a sentiment quite different to that stated by the Jewish leaders toward Jesus. Paul knew that the Lord was his King; he needed no other. Any other allegiance will cause the wrong effect on our eternity!

**“<sup>15</sup> All of this is for our benefit. And as God’s grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God (the King) will receive more and more glory.”** (2 Cor. 4:15)

Next week’s lectionary (June 16): 1 Sam. 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20;

Mark 4:26-34; 2 Cor. 5:6-10, 14-17