

Series: Defining Moments

VBC

Pastor John Johnson

January 11-12, 2014

1 Samuel 9:1-10:10

“When God Comes Upon a Person”

Danny Miles, Oregon Tech's basketball coach, is about to enter an exclusive club—the “One Thousand Wins” club—making him only the second coach to win the honor at a four year school

- as he put it in an interview this week, it is all because of a DEFINING MOMENT
- it was Christmas break—Miles was attending OSU on a baseball scholarship
- but a toboggan accident put him in a leg brace—that led to his transfer to Southern Oregon
- that led to a shift from baseball to basketball

“I always thought the toboggan accident is the biggest thing that happened to me. If I stay at Oregon State, I probably would have been a baseball coach only,” Miles said. “Life always has different forks in the road.”

Just about all of us can point to a defining moment

- something that changed our course forever
- life can be summarized around five or six of these
- a moment filled with opportunity—maybe even pregnant with eternal significance
- a moment that stands as a turning point—one that opened the door and let the future in
- a moment someone came and challenged you to give your life to God
- a decision that changed the direction of your career
- a moment that led to the choosing of your mate, moving to another place
- a decision (or an incident) that changed the trajectory of life (AFA)

- we see this in Scripture
- Israel has a moment when it must choose to step out in God's wide adventure or live in the wilderness
- Moses struck the rock—and it changed everything for him
- Ruth decided to stay with Naomi—and she ended up part of the lineage of Jesus
- Jeremiah decided to run with the horses
- Paul responded to his Macedonian call

- every leader in Israel—in particular the kings—had defining moments—many of them the same ones we have
- this series will attempt to unpack them—look for clues so that we don't miss what God is up to
- look for lessons on how to maximize them
- these men will be our working material—beginning with Saul (turn to I Samuel 9)

BACKGROUND

- in chapter 8, Israel was at a turning point—the people wanted a change
- it had been a long run—but the role of the judge had run its course
- Israel made its preferences clear—it wanted a different kind of leader for its future
- Samuel attempted to maintain the role and appointed his sons—but they were worthless men—and so Israel said NO!
- Israel was tired of being Israel**
- it wanted to be like the world—wanted to trade in a theocracy for a monarchy
- they wanted their own king in the flesh—a warrior king
- a king who will “judge us and go out before us and fight our battles”—8:20
- a king who would impress the world in war and at G-8 summits

-all of this sets the stage for a defining moment story—9:1-2

THE STORY

- the story teller begins with—And there was a man
- setting up expectation—God is about to do something
- but in typical fashion—He will act in ways we do not anticipate
- He is after a man in a place one would not choose
- a rather nondescript part of Israel—(MAP)
- Benjamin was the smallest tribe** living in the center
- a tribe that had been decimated by internal rivalries and fratricidal wars—brothers killing brothers (modern day Syria)
- but out of this no name place was a family with some influence
- led by a father who was “mighty of capacity”—i.e. a powerful man
- who had a son whose stature was equally compelling
- Saul** was distinguished from all others—head and shoulders above everyone else
- as if to say—he looked like a king—tall and handsome
- a man with a commanding presence—had the capability to fulfill earthly kingly roles
- lead an army or lead a procession
- but Saul was not looking to become a king—he was looking for donkeys—read verse 3
- this is the irony—
 - the God of the universe is in search of a king
 - and Saul can't even find lost jackasses
- it all seems fruitless until Saul's servant decides it was time to include God in the search—read verse 6
- Saul SEEKS to be a man devoid of spiritual sensitivity**
- he didn't think to seek God on his own
- seemed clueless that this man of God even existed
- unaware that in the neighborhood was Israel's most famous and honored spiritual leader since Moses—SAMUEL!!*
- and yet—God has His eyes on Saul
- for this is not some chance encounter

- this was all part of providence—God was setting all the pieces in place—as He does in our lives
- our defining moments are a mix of human freedom and divine sovereignty converging in the middle
- God is leading Saul to find Samuel—and Samuel to find Saul—read 9:14-17
- everything hinges on this encounter with God
- God “uncovered Samuel’s ear”—informed His prophet that His ear is uncovered—He hears when people cry out
- His primary mission is to save His people
- and He has chosen Israel’s king—read 9:18-20
- it has to be a heady moment when someone unsuspecting and uncomprehending is told that you are the “audacious hope”—God’s answer to the affliction of a nation
- it will take time to sink in—so they meet over dinner—and everything begins to move everything is now upwards for Saul
- up to the city, up to the high place, up to the head of the table
- and then—next day—out to the edge where Samuel anointed Saul—read 10:1
- in this intimate moment—Samuel set Saul apart and conferred divine authority on him
- calling him to keep God’s people lit “within their boundaries”
- Saul has God’s stamp of ownership—he is the symbol of God’s choice—a special status even David must respect when he has the chance to kill Saul
- from someone living in the outskirts—on the other side of the tracks—Saul was now thrust into the center
- it would require confirmation—so Samuel outlined how God would do this
 - two men will tell you the donkeys have been found—verse 2
 - three men will give you a meal of consecration—verse 3
 - you will meet up with the prophets—verse 5
 - and then the Spirit will confirm your anointing by rushing upon you—read 10:6
- there will be this explosive surge of strength*
- and in this moment God moment—you will become another man
- there will be a complete turnaround (as a chariot in battle)
- life will be lived at another level
- God will be with you
- and YOU WILL BE CALLED TO DO WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE
- when God changes a man—he must do what must be done!
- according to the strength of the Spirit poured on him
- and then it happened—as Samuel declared
- God changed Saul—turned his heart into another heart—read 10:9-10
- it was a defining moment—*it was Saul’s moment to have God be God—and follow His call*

This is a story about GOD MOMENTS—and here's what it teaches us—

1. GOD MOMENTS OFTEN COME IN THE MUNDANE

- when we are in the midst of life's demands—when we are chasing after donkeys
 - in the humdrum, “*the miraculous awaits to be unwrapped*”—McManus
 - sometimes in our seeking after other things—it turns out that the far bigger story is that God is seeking after us
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- Moses is chasing after sheep—and meets a burning bush
 - Gideon is threshing wheat, and an angel shows up to call him to something greater
 - Nehemiah is checking out the Merlot, when God steps into his life and calls him to build a wall
 - Esther is simply trying to keep a king happy—until Mordecai speaks
 - Amos was breeding sheep, Levi was working the books, Peter was casting a net—and then God showed up

ALL OF WHICH DEMANDS THAT OUR EYES AND EARS MUST STAY WIDE OPEN

2. GOD MOMENTS INTEND TO BRING US INTO THE CENTRAL PURPOSE OF OUR LIVES

- shift us from living for ourselves
- elevate our lives beyond looking for jackasses
- to live for God and His purposes
- TO DO WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE!!
- to seize our moment and do what must be done

3. GOD MOMENTS ARE ALL ABOUT RADICAL CHANGE

- it's necessary in order to do what is required
- when God calls a person—He changes him/her into a different person—HE MUST
- we are called to envision a different world that requires a different life
- what God did in the life of Saul—He does in deeper ways with us

-this is the essence of salvation—God changes us into a new creation—the old things have passed away—and all things have become new—2 Corinthians 5:17
-we are given a new heart—our old self is crucified—to live a kingdom life

CONCLUSION

This week I read the story of Nabeel Qureshi—he shared it in the latest Christianity Today

- Nabeel grew up a devout Muslim—part of a family that “stood sentinel” over Islamic tradition
 - his grandparents were Muslim missionaries
 - by 15—he had committed most of the Qur'an to memory
 - his Muslim faith gave him discipline, values, life direction
 - he could easily challenge Christians—finding that in most conversations—their failure to know their faith only bolstered his own convictions
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- until he met David Wood in college—a Christian
 - who was every bit as devoted and committed

-and over the years of challenging and debating—it became clear to Nabeel that while Mohammed was not the man he thought

-and Jesus turned out to be far more than he assumed

-and in a defining moment—he woke one morning aware that God was calling him to walk through the narrow gate—and give His life to Christ

-it was his GOD MOMENT—God changed his heart

-he became a different man

-his old life was shattered—his relationships with family broken

-but he has found to follow Jesus is “worth giving up everything to do what the circumstances require”

Prayer

-can you describe your God moment?

-a moment God stepped into your life and placed His call upon your life?

-if not—ask Him—let Him

-if so—what are doing with that moment?