

## Series: Life's Defining Moments

VBC

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1 Samuel 11

### “Stepping into the Moment that Legitimizes Us”

One of the books I use in my leadership class is Michael Useem's Leadership Moment

- in it he describes nine real—life examples of people facing their "moments of truth"
- each one has a critical decision he/she has to make
- a president confronted with ending a civil war
- a CEO faced with a decision whether he will risk the profits of an organization to prevent a people from going blind
- a mountain guide who must suddenly determine who climbs and who doesn't climb a Himalayan summit
- a flight director—with no time to spare—must bring a crippled Apollo 13 back to earth
- a smokejumper by the name of Wagner Dodge must quickly lead his team out of an inferno that is about to overtake them

- in 1 Samuel 11, Saul faced his "moment of truth"
- the course of a nation would turn on what he chose to do*
- it would be Saul's second defining moment
- the first one took place in chapter 10—Saul had just been anointed—this was his "God moment"

- out of his anointing, Saul was summoned by God—and the people—to a high and holy hill called Mizpah
- here Israel came to meet God
  - to make oaths for battle
  - to get right when things with God went wrong
  - and now—it served as the place to coronate a KING
- this was a very big deal—this was holy ground
- collectively— the people shouted—LET THE KING LIVE!—10:24
- and then Samuel prepared the legal document—all were read the rights of kingship
- and it was all placed before the presence of the Lord—10:25

- Saul was now Israel's king—
- but in some respects—Saul really wasn't the king—*at least not yet*
- he had been proclaimed king—but it was a king in name only
- Saul had yet to establish himself as a king

- this would require a LEADERSHIP MOMENT
- a moment that would authenticate, legitimize Saul's role

APPLICATION—through the course of our lives we all face defining moments

- our lives could be summarized around five or six

-and one of them may be a leadership moment

-God may summon us to take a stand, lead a group of people, lead our kids, lead from a second chair

-and if we are not careful—if we are not listening—we can miss the moments—for they come and go

-like we see in Jeremiah 46:17—“*Pharaoh king of Egypt was all noise—he let the opportune moment pass*”

-he failed to exploit his leadership moment for godly purposes—failed to notice when it came

-how do we know—what should we be looking for?

-for many of us can choose to live lives that do not set us up to pay attention—notice when these moments come—

### 1. GOD ALLOWS A CIRCUMSTANCE THAT WILL TEST US

-it usually happens near the beginning

-right after gaining a new position

-illustration—happened to me in Holland—within 3 months the circumstances forced me to ask the question—am I a pastor? Am I a pastor to this people? Am I justifiable?

-one put it this way—

“Leaders are summoned. They are called into existence by circumstances. Those who rise to the occasion are leaders”

-it happened to David—who after he was anointed (chapter 16) immediately faced Goliath (chapter 17)

-Nehemiah faced Sanballat; Daniel faced the lion’s den

-Jesus faced the wilderness and the devil

-all *after* they were anointed to lead

-it happened to Saul—read verse 1

-right after the coronation of Saul—there is something ominous in these words—“then Nahash came up and besieged”

-we should not overlook that Nahash means serpent

-like the Garden of Genesis 2, this God anointed king was about to face his own snake

-behind every story—there is a darkness also at work—the serpent is always strategizing

-in this case—it took the form of a king and his army

-this was not new to Israel

-for several years the nation had been threatened by numerous enemies—

-on the west were the Philistines

-on the east were the Ammonites—both longtime nemeses

-who probably worked together to squeeze out Israel

-and now decided to wreak havoc with the eastern tribes

-their “camping against” amounted to siege warfare—and the people realized they had one of two options—

- 1) wait and be annihilated by superior force
- 2) surrender and pay tribute and serve the Ammonites
  - sadly—without consulting God—seeking His help—they capitulated and agreed to subservience—anything for a quiet life

-but this was not enough for Nahash—there would have to be a visible token of shame and humiliation and degradation

-the Ammonites were good at this—shaving the beards and cutting off their clothes of David's men to expose their bodies and publically humiliate

-so the serpent insisted on more than surrender—read verses 2-3

-fighting men held the shield with their left hand that covered their left sight— taking out the right eye meant going into battle without any field of vision

-meant that the men were rendered useless for battle

-but had enough sight to work the fields and pay the Ammonites tribute

-it all set up messengers led to come the 42 miles south to Gilead—to Saul's hometown

-and because there were long term ties—there were tears

-but that was all—everyone was consigned to helplessness

-and hopelessness—for there had been long term hostility between the rest of Israel and those in Jabesh Gilead—there was no chance anyone would rise to help

-this would soon be Saul's test—Saul's leadership moment that would determine if he truly is a king

Illustration—a survey of most leaders and you find they are able to point to an intense, often traumatic—always unplanned, experience—an “Ammonite test” that amount to a leadership moment that forced them to question who they were—and what mattered

- pressed them to examine their values, their assumptions

-here's the second thing to look for—

## 2. GOD CONFRONTS US WITH A CHOICE THAT WILL DEFINE US

-in this moment—Saul was faced with a decision—read verse 5

-here was the anointed and inaugurated king working the fields—clearly Saul had yet to step into his role

-he was at a fork in the road—one path will authenticate who he claims to be—the other will render Saul inauthentic

-will he step up to the challenge—become a leader?

-will he rise to the need—to the unfamiliar, the untried, the unknown—or find refuge back on familiar ground, tied to what is safe, known, comfortable?

-will he revert to his old life and follow the herd?

-or will he crush the head of the serpent?

WILL HE DO WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE?

-what will we do—when our leadership moment comes?

-when we are called to rise to the occasion—stand up to the test?  
-you are young in your faith—and everyone knows you are a Christian—and now God has created a moment that will validate whether or not your faith is real  
-*every follower of Christ has the mission of representing Jesus—that is its own leadership*

-you are in a new position—but you haven't established that you should really be there—until this moment

-many of us will be confronted with a choice that will define us—one that will validate or invalidate who we say we are

-churches have their leadership moment as well—will they stand up and be the light and salt—influence the culture?

-divine leadership moments require we look for this—

### 3. GOD PROVIDES A POWER THAT WILL ENABLE US

-in this moment—in the hearing of the need

-in the moment he must have found himself asking—“God what is to be done here?”

-“Is this why You have called me to be a king?”

-God answered—read verses 6-7

-something of God came over Saul—a fresh influx of the Spirit

-the same Spirit that rushed upon him and led him to be *prophetic*

-now rushed upon him and led him to be *passionate*

-Saul found his voice—a holy anger took charge

-we expect this—GOD HATES INJUSTICE!

-there was outrage and resentment—the sort necessary to move a man into the fight  
-*the sort that sends to flight fear and intimidation*

-this happened to others in Scripture—

-the Spirit clothed Gideon—and he outwitted the Midianites

-the Spirit rushed upon Samson—and he tore apart a lion

-the Spirit came upon Jesus—and thrust Him into the wilderness to face the devil

-and eventually led Him to the cross—to pay the price for our failures

-the Spirit came upon the church at Pentecost—and came to indwell—and the church was pushed out to do battle

-and whether we realize it or not—the conditions are there for the indwelling Spirit to come upon us in a leadership moment

-when you move with God, He always shows up

-somewhere in this moment with God's Spirit—Saul perceived a summons to action and a power to carry it out

-and so Saul appealed to national solidarity in ways primitive and graphic

-this was no Evite via the internet

-urgency and circumstances required Saul to give a conditional curse

-those who do not respond will suffer loss

-Saul set in motion the power of God—this was his leadership moment

-he was the king they were looking for!!

-and so they responded as one—there was an immense muster of people

-Saul led his nation into war—and routed the Ammonites—read verse 11 (NOTE MAP)

-as a result—Saul was again confirmed as king—only this time it was real—read verses 14-15

## CONCLUSION

Someone put it this way—

*“Sometimes life summons “players” to be “leaders”. It may happen only once or twice in life. Sometimes life takes shape in such a way that a player is like the missing piece of a puzzle: the exact fit for the situation. Up to that point, the jagged pieces of your life don’t seem to fit into any significant pattern. But then life calls you out and summons you forth. A player in life becomes a leader.”—Leonard Sweet, Summoned to Lead*

-ARE WE LOOKING FOR THIS—PRAYING FOR THIS?

## Life Group QUESTIONS

- 1) Can you point to a leadership moment?
- 2) Why did Saul go back to the fields? What does this say about him?
- 3) Should we expect the Spirit to occasionally rush upon us?
- 4) Why did the people re-coronate Saul?
- 5) How does this chapter speak into your life?