This Is My Year 2022

## (1 Samuel 10:1-11)

Happy New Year to all of you, welcome to Christ’s Community Church. It’s so exciting to be gathering together to worship, seeking the Lord on this first Sunday of the New Year. I just love this time of year because it’s a time of reflection and an opportunity to get a fresh new start. And so, I hope that many of you have made New Year’s resolutions, some goal that you are seeking, something that you are striving to do differently this year.

Well, today’s message is entitled “This Is My Year” and my prayer is that we would be able to refocus and reprioritize our goals, because it seems as if most New Year’s resolutions are very self-centered. Now, that is not always a bad thing, because it’s good to try to eat better, exercise more, or quit some bad habits. But the problem is that so much of our life can become like this when it comes to God because it’s more about us than it is about him.

And so, our relationship with God becomes a very self-centered thing, more about what God can do for us, rather than trying to figure out what we can do for him. In other words, many of us have this mindset that God exists for us, praying God bless me, help me to be happier, give me what I want; and like New Year’s resolutions we’re so intent on obtaining our goals, building our kingdom, and increasing our portfolio that we’ve lost focus on what is important. As we’ve crossed the threshold into the New Year we think “This Is My Year” because we’ve forgotten that we exist to serve and honor God, and that we were created to glorify him as we are building his kingdom.

Today as we step into this New Year with all of these dreams and aspirations, my goal is to shift your focus, because for many of us we have lost sight of our purpose. And so, yes, we want to experience change, we want to be better, becoming different people, but it’s not our kingdom that we’re building. In fact, Jesus said,

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

And so, if we genuinely want to follow Jesus, being a part of his kingdom, this year is going to be less about us and more about him. If we want to be his disciples our goal must be to become selfless because Jesus said,

“Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

Therefore, I want to encourage you to make this New Year more about him, not praying bless me, do what I want, or make my life bigger and better, but here am I, send me, use me to build your kingdom.

You see, this is important because our God is a king, and so he thinks like a king. In other words, he thinks about ruling and reigning, he thinks about the kingdom. In fact, the meaning behind the word kingdom is that it is the King’s domain. And so, our God thinks about kingdoms, territory, and dominion, and when he created the first man, he created him in his likeness, and he gave him dominion telling Adam,

"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28).

In other words, God created Adam to rule under him, to be subject to him, and to have dominion over the territory that he had given to him.

From the beginning of time God has thought according to kings and thrones, he has given us power and authority, and the Bible tells us that he is…

“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16).

And so, he is large and in charge, seated on a throne high above the circle of the earth. In fact, he said,

“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isaiah 66:1).

And so, while we’re struggling to figure out who God is and who we are, trying to understand how to rule over our domain, he is very clear on who he is. “I am God, and there is no other,” he says.

“I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

And so, we can understand that the Lord is God, he is the King of kings, but we struggle to see ourselves in the light of who we were created to be.

This was a struggle that began with Adam, continuing through Moses as he struggled to convey the concept of a kingdom to the children of Israel. He brought them out of Egypt and up to Mount Sinai where he gave them rules and regulations, giving them their constitution, clearly defining how it was going to be in his kingdom. He said,

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:4-6).

And so, God was trying to get them to understand who they were because they had been slaves for 400 years. He gives them the 10 Commandments and tells them that they will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, but even after 40 years in the wilderness they still could not grasp the concept of the kingdom.

God gave them judges, magistrates, and principalities that ruled under his sovereign hand, but they said, “We want to be like the other nations,” because they still had a tribal mindset. God saw himself as their King, he had a theocratic kingdom mentality, but the Israelites wanted to be like the people around them and so they kept saying,

"Give us a king to lead us” (1 Samuel 8:6).

God was their King, but the people kept saying we want a man as our king, and so God graciously bows out, giving into their request. He is their King, but he won’t rule over them like a dictator, he won’t take away the free will that he gave them. And so, what began in the garden with Adam losing his dominion, continues through the wilderness and into the promised land, because the people struggled to see themselves as God saw them and therefore rejected him as their King.

God gives in to their request, he says, “Okay, if you want a man as king, I will give you a king.” But as we find ourselves in the book of first Samuel, I don’t want to give you the impression that God was taken by surprise by their request. Not only did God know that they were going to ask for a king, but he told Abraham and Sarah that kings would come from their lineage. And so, even before there were 12 tribes from the 12 sons of Jacob, God told him that his son Judah would be the royal tribe, because God knew it was going to happen.

However, none of this could happen without God first transferring his power and authority which is where we pick up in first Samuel. It was in those days that God was preparing to grant their request that the Bible says,

“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 21:25).

In other words, it’s a chaotic time, because any time everybody does whatever is right in their own eyes, it’s going to be chaotic. You know, when everything is okay, when you can do whatever you want to do, believe whatever you want to believe, and say whatever you want to say, it’s the sign of a culture that has lost its moral compass.

In those days, God was preparing to do something in Israel that would make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle, and that is why he delayed the opening of Hannah’s womb. You see, it was just at the right time, out of Hannah’s barren womb that God was going to do something new. Hannah knew it and she prophesied over her son saying,

"He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed" (1 Samuel 2:10).

And so, God was working because you can’t just make anyone king if they don’t have any power. And Samuel would be born into the priesthood, he was anointed as God’s prophet for this cause, and it would be Samuel who anoints the new king of Israel.

In the text before us in first Samuel chapter 10, Israel is about to be birthed into a new future, their trajectory is about to change, and it’s all about to happen, not because of the date on the calendar, but because of the things that God has prepared for them in this moment. There is the transitory nature to this text, everything is moving, because everything is about to change. The Lord said to Samuel,

“Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you” (1 Samuel 8:7-8).

The prophet Samuel is walking among a people who have lost their sense of identity, their sense of who they are, and he’s about to bring the kingdom within their grasp. But he’s bringing the anointing for a change, the shift from a theocracy, government by divine guidance, to a monarchy, government led by a person.

As we come to chapter ten, God is preparing to make a shift in dominion, changing leadership in Israel, and so the prophet Samuel comes to anoint the new king. In the Bible days, when they anointed you with oil, they didn’t do it like we do it today. It wasn’t just a drop of oil, making a little sign of the cross on your forehead. In the Old Testament, when they anointed you with oil, they poured the whole vial of oil on your head because it was symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and you were getting it all.

This is what we see as we read from first Samuel, chapter 10, verse one. The word of God says,

“Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance?” (1 Samuel 10:1).

And so, Samuel pours the oil from the flask onto the head of Saul, the oil is running down his hair, through his beard, running down on his clothes. He was saturated, it was dripping down over him, you could see it, you could feel it, and there was no way to keep this anointing a secret. Saul was covered with the oil of the Holy Spirit and then Samuel kissed him as a sign of authority because both God and the prophet are in agreement.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

In that moment, Israel is changed from trying to understand themselves as twelve tribes under a theocracy, to a sudden divine shift were now they have a king, a monarch, but they’re still thinking with a tribal mentality.

Samuel now tells Saul, he says I’m going to give you three signs confirming my authenticity, confirming the anointing. He says, “When you leave me today,” the first sign is in verse two,

“You will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you” (1 Samuel 10:2).

Now, to understand this we must consider the context. When we’re first introduced to Saul in chapter 9 the Bible tells us that there was a man whose name was Kish who had a son named Saul. Verse 2 says,

“He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites — a head taller than any of the others. Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys” (1 Samuel 9:2-3).

And Saul and the servant had been searching but they could not find the donkeys and so the servant suggested that they go to the prophet Samuel and ask him which way to take. And so, at this point Saul already knew that the animals have been found, but these two men were going to assure him, confirming that God can in fact solve his problems.

This is important, because you shouldn’t receive a word that is unconfirmed, just because somebody says God said it, if there is no confirmation of authority or authenticity, there really shouldn’t be any application. That’s why the Bible says,

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

And so, Samuel gives Saul a sign to confirm his authority and I want you to notice not only how he confirmed it, but where he confirmed it. He said, “You will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb” and so Samuel confirmed the word of the Lord at Rachel’s tomb. In other words, here’s the application, Saul is a descendent of Benjamin, Benjamin is the son of her sorrows, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin, and now Samuel sends Saul there to meet two men near Rachel’s tomb symbolizing that all she suffered was not in vain. This would be a testimony that God is bringing success out of her sorrow, promise out of her pain, and the prophecy was right, he was bringing his words to pass, he is making it happen.

And then, as we turn to verse 3, Samuel said there will be a second sign, "Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor.” When you get to the crossroads on the way up to Bethel, the house of God, he said, you’re going to meet some men heading up to Bethel to worship.

"One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them” (1 Samuel 10:3-4).

These three men are going to worship, they have their offering, three young goats and three loaves of bread plus a drink offering. Samuel tells Saul, they’re going to give you two loaves which I believe is prophetic of Israel being split into two kingdoms. But Samuel says, they’re going to give you two loaves because you’re going to reign over both Judah and Israel.

And so, there are 2 men and then there are 3 men because God is authenticating Samuel as his prophet as the Bible says,

"Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (2 Corinthians 13:1).

And then Samuel says, there will be a third sign, because God is not worried about the situation in Israel, he is concerned with changing Saul. So, he tells Saul to go by Rachel’s grave because her pain was really his purpose. He says, go up to Bethel where Jacob had an encounter with me, because there you are going to meet some men going up to worship. In that place I am going to share my offering with you, legitimizing my relationship with you as King, confirming your anointing to rule over what I have given you dominion over.

“After that,” verse 5 says, “You will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost.” He says, when you come to this next place,

"As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place…” (1 Samuel 10:5).

In other words, they are coming down from having been in the presence of God, they have been in the glory of God, and Samuel says, you’re going to see the prophets coming out of my glory,

“Coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them” (1 Samuel 10:5).

This is why worship is so important, if you want to change your circumstances, you’ve got to change the atmosphere, you’ve got to change your house, you need to turn on some praise music. And Saul walked right into it, Samuel said when you get there, they’re already going to be playing, the atmosphere of worship is waiting on you…

“…and they will be prophesying” (1 Samuel 10:5).

He said, they are going to be waiting on you, you’re going to meet them, you’re going to step into the glory, and the anointing that was on you, that was poured on your head, that is dripping down your beard and on your clothes is going to get on the inside of you. He said,

"The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person” (1 Samuel 10:6).

Samuel tells Saul, when these three signs have been fulfilled, meeting those two men down by Rachel’s tomb who tell you the donkeys have been found, meeting the three men on the way up to Bethel who share their offering, and then meeting the procession of prophets singing and worshiping as they came out of the glory. He says once you have seen that, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will be changed into a different person as you experience the glory of God. And so, verse 7 says,

“Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. "Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do" (1 Samuel 10:7-8).

Now, we need to remember that Saul has just been anointed, the oil is still dripping from his beard, it’s all over his clothes, and water may dry up, but the oil is going to stay with him, you can’t get away from God’s anointing. And so, Samuel says, “God is with you, do whatever your hand finds to do.” In other words, “move like you’ve got to move, walk where you’ve got to walk, and talk like you’ve got to talk, because you’re anointed and God is about to do something.”

“As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day” (1 Samuel 10:9).

Saul turned and stepped into the presence of God’s glory, he stepped into what was around him, and God changed his heart. As Saul stepped out in obedience the Bible says, “all these signs were fulfilled that day.”

“When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power” (1 Samuel 10:10).

You see, Saul didn’t know what he could do, he didn’t know how he could be used by God, but when he got around people that were being used by God, he became like that which he was around.

Some of you need to change your circle of influence, those people you’ve been hanging around with, because the atmosphere of unbelief has been holding you back, and it has been hindering the work of God in your life. You’ve got to get around different people so that you can find out what you can do, because if you would change your circle of friends, changing who you hang around with, you would change the trajectory of your year. When Saul got around the company of prophets, he started to change,

“The Spirit of God came upon him in power and he joined in their prophesying” (1 Samuel 10:10).

He started to talk like them, he started to think like them, he started to feel like them, and he started to move in the prophetic like them. When he opened his mouth to speak, he sounded just like them, because God turned him into a different person. Saul was not a prophet, but when he got around the prophets, he joined in their prophesying.

“When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:11).

God turned him into a different person, it looks like Saul, but it’s not going to be Saul. He’s going to have on Saul’s garments, walking around in Saul’s sandals, but it’s not going to be Saul because God turned him into a different person.

Some of you are excited because it’s a new year, but God is excited because he’s looking for the new you. It’s not just because you’ve changed the calendar, but when you step into God’s presence, when you do what God tells you to do, you will be turned into another person. I want to encourage you not to go back for what you left behind in 2021, the donkeys have been found, you just need to step into who you’re going to be in 2022. The Bible says,

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

When Saul got around better, he did better, and he turned into a different person.

There are those of you here, those of you listening, and you just need to step into it, doing what God tells you to do, because you’re going to become a different person. You will look down and see that it is you, you will recognize that you are the same, but that you are not the same. Because now you can move better, you can walk better, talk better, think better, and you feel the change. This is your year, and so I want to encourage you to keep stepping out in faith, keep stepping into the new you, the different person, recognizing that it wasn’t just the calendar that changed but that it was you.

You may have been waiting on the new year, but God was waiting on the new you. Some people may laugh, some people may not believe it, but you’re not the person you were last year, you’ve turned into somebody different. You see, this is your year, your 2022, a brand-new year, but it belongs to God, and he is still advancing his kingdom purpose in our lives. “He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5).

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