

Making Space for God

Opening Prayer

O Lord, I have heard a good word inviting me to look away to Thee and be satisfied. My heart longs to respond, but sin has clouded my vision till I see Thee but dimly. Be pleased to cleanse me in Thine own precious blood, and make me inwardly pure, so that I may with unveiled eyes gaze upon Thee all the days of my earthly pilgrimage. Then shall I be prepared to behold Thee in full splendor in the day when Thou shalt appear to be glorified in Thy saints and admired in all them that believe. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

From the Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozar



Anointing of Saul, Linoleum Block Print and Watercolor by Steven Stuckey 2013

Reflection- Looking Back

Take some times to settle yourself. Review your calendar and think back over where you have been this summer and focus on answering this one question: **How has the Lord been present to you?** In the events of your life; in your joys and fears; in what has occupied your mind and heart; in what you dream about or long for; in what you are thankful for. Journal these thoughts and offer them to the Lord.

Scripture Study—1 Samuel 10:9-27 Saul Made King

Samuel anoints Saul privately and then sent him home to his family but not without a spiritual encounter along the way. Saul must have found the experience eye opening. Then came the day of coronation. Samuel couldn't help but remind the crowds that their request for a king meant their rejection of God as their king. Who could follow that introduction holding their head high? So Saul did what any socially aware person might do; he hid with the baggage. Eventually he was found and crowned, but not without a few naysayers. Read the passage a couple of times and put yourself into the story. Reflection questions follow.

Reading for Reflection

I have a dogmatic certainty: God is in every person's life. God is in everyone's life. Even if the life of a person has been a disaster, even if it is destroyed by vices, drugs, or anything else—God is in this person's life. You can, you must try to seek God in every human life. Although the life of a person is a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God.

From and Interview with Pope Francis

Depending on our upbringing and religious education, we each have varying images of God. We may think of God as someone who is waiting to catch us when we get things wrong or as someone who disciplines us and makes us go back to the beginning and start again when we mess up. I don't like or trust those images, because they don't resonate with my own experience, and over time, I am coming to see God rather differently. Suppose God is continually striving to draw the more life-giving outcome from whatever we present? Suppose God, who is Life and Love itself, longs for nothing more than our coming to the fullness of who we can be, and will start over with us whatever happens, from exactly where we are, and lead us forward into the next stage of our

growth? And, by the way, wouldn't this be what most parents want for their children, and isn't this the way most parents encourage their children—not by censuring them over and over, but by being with them where they are, whatever the mess, and helping them move forward from that point?

The Other Side of Chaos: Breaking Through When Life Is Breaking Down by Margaret Silf

Certain vocations, such as raising children, offer a perfect setting for living a contemplative life. They provide a desert for reflection, a real monastery. The mother who stays home with small children experiences a very real withdrawal from the world. Her existence is certainly monastic. Her tasks and preoccupations remove her from the centers of social life and from the centers of important power. She feels removed. Moreover, her constant contact with young children gives her a privileged opportunity to learn empathy and unselfishness. Perhaps more so that even the monk or the minister of the Gospel, she is forced, almost against her will, to mature. For years while she is raising small children, her time is not her own, her needs have to be put in second place, and every time she turns around some hand is reaching out demanding something. Years of this will mature most anyone.

Ronald Rolheiser in Prayer, Our Deepest Longing

Prayer is only easy for beginners and for those who are already saints. During all the long years in between, it is difficult. Why? Because prayer has the same inner dynamic as love, and love is sweet only in its initial stage, when we first fall in love, and again in its final mature stage. In between, love is hard work, dogged fidelity, and needs willful commitment beyond what is normally provided by our emotions and our imaginations.

Ronald Rolheiser in Prayer, Our Deepest Longing

If we need encouragement to grasp at transformation rather than relying merely on rescue, we might take on board this wisdom that my daughter came home with recently: "Life is not about descending steadily into the grave with our bodies in a carefully preserved state, but about flopping in at the last minute, thoroughly exhausted, and exclaiming, 'Wow! What a ride!'"

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"The word 'prayer' has often been trivialized by making it a way of getting what you want....It is not a technique for getting things, a pious exercise that somehow makes God happy, or a requirement for entry into heaven. It is much more like practicing heaven now."

G. K. Chesterton

The Benediction

Take Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. All is yours. Dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me only your love and grace. That is enough for me.

Ignatius of Loyola

Reflection Questions for 1 Samuel 10:9-27

1. The king represents the people's rejection of God's leadership yet God honor's their request. What feelings might that generate in Saul?
2. Why did Saul hide among the baggage? What might that reveal about him?
3. Samuel's job was to anoint the first king of Israel. What steps does he take to do that?
4. What evidence is there that the appointment of Saul was God's initiative? What evidence do you point to in your own life that helps reassure you that God is with you?
5. Some people initially oppose Saul and his role as king? How does he handle that? What application do you see for your own life?
6. How might being king over Israel be different that the role of a king in other nations? See verse 10:25