

# Losing a Donkey and Finding a Kingdom

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Preacher: Andy Ritson

[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're going to turn to our Bible reading now. Andy Ritson, one of our ministers in training, will be continuing his series on 1 Samuel. And so we're going to read this evening 1 Samuel chapter 9 from verse 1 all the way through to chapter 10 verse 16. That's page 231 if you're using one of the visitor's Bibles. 1 Samuel 9 through to 10 verse 16.

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becherath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people. Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost.

So Kish said to Saul his son, take one of the young men with you and arise, go and look for the donkeys. And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shalim, but they were not there.

Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them. When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us. But he said to him, behold, there is a man of God in this city and he is a man who is held in honor. All that he says comes true. Soon I let us go there.

Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go. Then Saul said to his servant, but if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone and there's no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have? The servant answered Saul again, here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way. Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, come, let us go to the seer for today's prophet was formerly called a seer. And Saul said to his servants, well said, come, let us go. So they went to the city where the man of God was. As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, is the seer here? They answered, he is. Behold, he's just ahead of you.

[ 3 : 0 4 ] Hurry. He has come just now to the city because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat.

For the people will not eat till he comes since he must bless the sacrifice. Afterward, those who are invited will eat. Now go up for you will meet him immediately. So they went up to the city.

As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place. Now, the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel tomorrow, about this time, I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people, Israel. He shall see of my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people because their cry has come to me. When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, here is the man of whom I spoke to you. He it is who shall restrain my people. Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, tell me where is the house of the seer? Samuel answered Saul, I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place. For today you shall eat with me. And in the morning, I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not my clan?

Sorry. Is it not for you and for all your father's house? Saul answered, am I not a Benjaminite from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way? Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about 30 persons. And Samuel said to the cook, bring the portion I gave you of which I said to you, put it aside. So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, see what was kept is set before you. Eat because it was kept for you until they are appointed that you might eat with the guests. So Saul ate with Samuel that day. And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof and he lay down to sleep. Then at the break of dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof up that I may send you on your way. So Saul arose and both he and Samuel went out into the street. As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, tell the servant to pass on before us. And when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while that I may make, that I may make known to you the word of God. Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people, Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. And they will say to you, the donkeys that you went to seek are found. And now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you saying, what shall I do about my son? Then you shall go on from their father and come to the Oak of

Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hands. After that, you shall come to Gibeath Elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. Then the spirit of the Lord will rush upon you and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Now, when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do. When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met them and the spirit of God rushed upon him and he prophesied among them. And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, what has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And a man of the place answered, and who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets? When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, where did you go? And he said, to seek the donkeys. And when he saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, please tell me what Samuel said to you. And Saul said to his uncle, he told us plainly that the donkeys had been found. But about the matter of the kingdom of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything. Well, amen. And this is God's word.

[ 9 : 52 ] Well, please do have 1 Samuel chapters 9 and 10 in front of you. It was a long reading, wasn't it? Well done, everyone, for keeping up. I'm sorry if it was such a long reading, but it really does have to go together. And to understand this week, we also need to remember what happened last week. So if you weren't here, let me just jog your memories. Last week, God's people rejected God as their king and demanded another king in his place. They didn't want to have to rely on God coming good for them anymore. They wanted to take matters into their own hands. The life of faith just seemed too uncertain and demanding for them. Who, after all, wants their success to be dependent on their obedience to an unseen God? Who wants to have to wait to see if that God will come through for them in battle when you can have more tangible, more visible securities? A visible earthly king, like all the other nations, was a far more attractive offer for the people of God. For one, you could see him with your very own eyes, and that's very assuring, isn't it? And secondly, they thought that with a king on their side, he would fight their battles for them. Military might would succeed, rather than having to depend on God, or at least so they thought. So they rejected God and asked for a substitute king, despite all the warnings that God spoke to them.

Now, if I was God, and yes, that's a very scary prospect, I think I would be done with my people at this point. They've burnt their bridges, they don't want me, so why on earth should I help them any longer? If they want another king, well, they're on their own, they can provide a king for themselves.

But the amazing thing about tonight's passage is that God doesn't react that way at all, rather quite the contrary. So let's see how he reacts. Our first point for tonight is this, God's providence is greater than his people's sin. Verses one and two introduce us to a new character to the story, Saul, Saul, the son of Kish. He's wealthy, he's handsome, and he's literally head and shoulders above everyone else in Israel. He would put Josh Johnson and Alec White to shame. He is so tall, not the handsome bit. If there was a Mr. Israel pageant, then Saul would be the winner, hands down.

He was very impressive indeed. And interestingly, his name, Saul, in Hebrew sounds exactly like the words for asked for. This man turns up on the scene and is literally the man asked for. As a reader, we're supposed to make the connection to last week. Last week in the last chapter, Israel asked for a king like all the other nations. And here we have a man named asked for, take center stage.

And he's just what you would naturally ask for in a king. Outwardly impressive, wealthy, and if he's caught in a tight spot, then I'm sure he can look after himself. He's massive.

[ 13 : 47 ] The only problem is that Saul lives in somewhat obscurity. He's a farmer boy from the backwaters of Benjamin. So how on earth would God's people get the king that they asked for? Would they put on their own version of Israel's got talent? So on earth, such a gem of a candidate? No. Surprisingly, that isn't what happens. Instead, we get this rather curious tale of some lost donkeys.

On the surface, this just looks like another eventful day on the farm. Verse three, some of Kish's donkeys go missing. So he sends Saul after them along with one of his servants.

They pass through all these lands with unpronounceable names and through Benjamin. And it just so happens that they don't manage to find these pesky, elusive donkeys. So by verse five, Saul's ready to give up.

He says, let's go back to my dad. He's going to be worried about me. But his servant, well, he has a bit more sticking power about him and he twists Saul's arm. But he just so happens to know that there's a man in the near city who's a man of God. And perhaps he can tell them where the whereabouts of the donkeys is. It's very bizarre, isn't it? This story starts to take a slightly unusual turn. The pair go on despite Saul's reservations and the servant with Saul just so happens to have some silver in his pocket to pay for the seer in verse eight. And in verse 11, they just so happen to come across a group of women at a well who knew the man of God and where he was.

And the women tell them to go ahead for the prophet just so happens to be nearby. And they just so happen to bump into him. Samuel, that is, on his way up to make sacrifice and to feast at the high place. Now, those words just so happened don't actually appear in the passage, but the sentiment of them is there. The trip from the farm in Benjamin all the way to Samuel at the city, could have collapsed at any moment. Saul could have taken a different servant on the journey with him, one who didn't know about Samuel, one who didn't have silver in his pocket to pay for the seer, in which case they wouldn't have gone up to the city. They could have found the donkeys just five minutes down the road. Saul could have turned back because he was worried that his dad was getting anxious about him. They might have come across a very different group of women at the well who didn't know Samuel. And Samuel, well, he might have been out of town altogether rather than just ahead of them. But none of these things happen. It doesn't collapse. Why? Because this wasn't all just a matter of coincidence. God was at work. God was at work providing his sinful people who had just rejected him with the king that they had substituted him for. Isn't that remarkable? He didn't leave his people to appoint the king that they sinfully desired on their own, like they deserved, like I would do.

[ 17 : 40 ] But he kindly made it happen for them. Behind seeming coincidences, and these just so happened, was God's providence at work. And we see that in verses 15 to 17. Read along with me.

Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel, Tomorrow, about this time, I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people because their cry has come to me.

When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, Here is the man of whom I spoke to you. He it is who shall restrain my people. God had revealed to Samuel that he would bring Saul to him. Though God's people had rebelled against him, he still heard their cries. He still remembered his covenant with them, and he still longed for their welfare and for their good. He wanted to deliver them from their enemies who were oppressing them, and he wanted to restrain their wickedness. And although he knew that a king of his own choosing would do that best, he didn't steamroller his people to impose his perfect will on them. Rather, he worked through their sinful ways and mercifully accommodated to them in order to help them. I think that is just astonishing. He's somewhat like a parent, isn't he? I think most parents will have this experience. You cook your kids a roast dinner. You slave away in the kitchen for hours.

And when he finally plonks for dinner on the table in front of your kids, they say, I'm not hungry. That's not what I want. And as time goes on, you realize they are quite hungry, but actually all they want is chips and ketchup. That's all they want. Now, a parent in that situation, I presume, could force feed their children that roast dinner, although that would seem somewhat abusive to me.

But what normally happens is the parents don't give the kids that nutritional meal they've offered them. They don't give them what's best, but they accommodate to their sinfulness. They give them something else, maybe not the chips they asked for, but they make sure they don't go to bed with an empty stomach. Something in their stomach is better than nothing. And that's somewhat like what God is doing here. God is constantly in the process of accommodating to our frailty and our sinfulness, like a parent does to their ungrateful children. He mercifully makes concessions for us all the time.

[ 20 : 56 ] Now, we'll apply that to ourselves in a minute, but we'll do so after we look at our second point, because they kind of tie together. Our second point for this evening is this. God's equipping is also greater than what his people deserve. After the donkey hunt and this meeting with Samuel, feasting at the high place and a quick stopover in the city too, Samuel ensures that he gets some alone time with Saul in verse 27. He sends Saul seventh away for he has a word of God to pass on to Saul.

Samuel shares with Saul all that the Lord had revealed to him and then acts upon it by taking a flask of oil and pouring it over Saul's head in chapter 10 verse 1, anointing Saul as king of the people of Israel. Now, in a moment, we will see how different God is to us. I mean, if I had been spurned by my people and had made concessions for them, which they were utterly undeserving of, then I'd wager that I'd want to ensure that when I gave them what they actually wanted, that it was bound to fail. So that they would come to me with a tail between their legs, egg on their face and say, we got it wrong. You were right. Now, don't look at me like that. I know you in this congregation too, and I know you have that temptation too. So don't look at me like that. But God isn't like me, is he?

God doesn't do that. He's warned them that his king will disappoint them in comparison to the king that he would have for them. But he doesn't set Saul up to fail. In fact, he is incredibly gracious to him. He gives Saul every chance to succeed, even though he's a man that Israel would substitute him for.

He not only provides the king, but then assures him of his kingship and generously equips him for the task set before him. He goes above and beyond. Notice that Saul, that God gives Saul a sign to assure him in chapter 10, verse 1.

And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over my heritage. No doubt, Saul was somewhat taken aback at what had happened to him over the last 24 hours or so.

[ 23 : 45 ] The day before, he'd just set off looking for his father's donkeys. And yet now, he stands face to face in front of Samuel, the man of God, who's just poured some oil over his head and declared him king of Israel.

I'm sure he was somewhat confused. Things had escalated fast. And I'm sure he was left thinking, is this for real? Have I just dreamt this up? Is this really happening?

So God gives him three signs to assure him that he genuinely has been anointed king and will rule his people. And these signs are remarkably precise and specific. The first one comes in verse 2.

Saul would meet two men at Rachel's tomb, who will tell them that the donkeys they seek are found, and that Saul's father is now anxious about Saul and that he should return.

Sign number 2 comes in verse 3. He shall meet three men at the oak of Tabor, who are on their way to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine.

[ 25 : 06 ] Very specific. Sign number 3 comes in verse 5.

Those signs get increasingly more specific, don't they?

And it's the specificity and the uniqueness of those signs that would have assured Saul that he genuinely had been anointed king. But God doesn't just provide assurance for Saul.

He equips him for the task of being king too. Notice that the spirit of the Lord rushes upon him and then makes him a new man, verse 6.

And then we're told in verse 9 that he was given a new heart. What kindness of the Lord!

[ 26 : 33 ] God doesn't anoint Saul and wait for him to fail that he might be vindicated in front of all his people. Rather, he gives Saul absolutely everything he needs in order to lead his people well.

He's empowered by the very spirit of God and given a new heart that can please God. God couldn't have done any more than that, surely, could he?

Now, this idea of the spirit falling upon people is not new to Saul. It does happen in other places in the Old Testament, most notably in the book of Judges.

God sends his spirit down on certain people at certain moments to deliver his people from their enemies. And most notable of those would be Samson, which most of us would be aware of.

The spirit of God comes down on Samson and then immediately he goes out and destroys the Philistines. But at no point when the spirit came down upon the judges were they ever described as being given a new heart or becoming new men.

[ 27 : 44 ] This is something that is new, a new level of generosity, far above what has been seen before. And yet, it comes at a moment in Israel's history when they're possibly the most callous and rebellious against God, wanting to substitute him for another.

God's merciful equipping is far greater than what his people deserve. Saul was equipped in such a way that he had a better chance than any of the judges before him to obey God and lead God's people well.

Now, before we move on to our last point, let's look at how this applies to us. As I've been studying this passage this week, I have been utterly taken aback by God's mercy towards his people.

I can't get over how accommodating he is in response to his people's sin. It's remarkable that he's willing to equip and assure Saul, though he was not the king of his choosing.

In fact, the king whose people had lined up to replace him. But the more I thought about it, the more I came to the realization that I shouldn't be surprised at this at all.

[ 29 : 11 ] Yes, I should be amazed, amazed at God's kindness and his mercy. But not surprised. For he accommodates for our sin and rebellion every second of the day, doesn't he?

Yes, this is most notable when we see examples like Saul, who God uses for a time, but then has a massive downfall. Or in the lives of other big leaders, Christian leaders, perhaps, who God uses mightily for a time and then have a big fall from grace.

We see that mercy and kindness in their lives most notably. I was chatting to someone this week who was filling me in on the ministry of a guy down in England in the 1980s who had a major impact for the gospel.

I was told that he could just read a passage in such a way that you'd find yourself nodding along going, oh, that finally makes sense. He didn't even have to explain the passage.

Such was the giftings that the Lord had given him. And yet it transpired that he was secretly living in sin.

[ 30 : 21 ] And eventually a time came when he left his wife and ran off with another man and his ministry was over. But yet through those years of his ministry, God provided his people with someone able to teach the gospel and to teach it in a way that nobody else really around could.

He was incredibly kind. He was incredibly kind. God provided a Bible teacher who could help his people understand the Bible like few others. And mercifully did that even though that person was unrepentant and living in sin.

And the same could be said of other church leaders, prominent people in history. And to some degree, it happens to every single person who steps into this pulpit.

We are all sinners. We may not be living in unrepentant sin, but we are all sinners. And yet each week, God is so kind and merciful to us that he is willing to speak his words through frail and sinful people like us.

He's incredibly kind. And this isn't just true for Christian leaders. It applies to every Christian. It is amazing and staggering that God saves anyone through the words that you speak to them because we're all so sinful.

[ 31 : 51 ] It's remarkable that the words we speak to one another over coffee after this actually build one another up rather than tear each other down. So tainted are we by sin.

God's mercy and his kindness are greater than our sin and far greater than we deserve. I wonder if you've ever had that moment when you go to Bible study or to church in the evening and you're going along with possibly the worst attitude you've ever had.

You're only there because you know you have to be there. And yet it's on that evening that you have the most remarkable and helpful conversation with someone.

Has that ever happened to you? Happens to me all the time. And here's a story for you. And students, before I shared a story, do as I say, not as I do.

I do. I remember when I was a student, not going along to release the word one night for rather pathetic reasons. It was very cold outside and miserable.

[ 32 : 57 ] And I didn't want to trudge 40 minutes across the city to go. But on that evening, I had one of the most incredible conversations with a girl who lives down the hall from me in student halls.

She wasn't a Christian. And yet a few months later, she became a Christian through that interaction and subsequent other actions. That's not to say what I did was right.

It was wrong students. I should have gone to release the word. My laziness was utter sin. But God worked through my sinfulness.

He's always accommodating for our sin and providentially bringing about good through our bad situations. God is mercifully at work every second of the day, caring for us, his sinful people, and working out our salvation, though we don't deserve it.

Just like he was doing here in Saul's day. And that is wonderful news indeed. It raises the question, doesn't it? How do we remember this tomorrow?

[ 34 : 04 ] Or Wednesday or Friday? If you're anything like me, your brain is a leaky sieve and it doesn't hold much for very long. Well, I wonder if this is helpful.

This is what I've been doing over the last few days as I've been preparing this sermon. Every morning when my alarm goes off, that is Simeon, my youngest child. I just lie in my bed that little bit longer and shut my eyes.

My wife thinks I'm not going to get up, but I'm not. I'm praying. And this is what I say. Just something very simple to help me remember God's mercies. I say, Lord, today is a new day.

And I'm thankful that your mercies are new every morning. Today, I will sin profoundly in ways that I do not even realize. And I know that sin is deserving of death.

And yet, you continue to allow me to take another breath. Today, I will make decisions that leave me in positions where you wouldn't want me to be, which are second best.

[ 35 : 08 ] I'll waste time. I'll procrastinate. I'll speak unkind words. And I might even undermine my witness to you. But that doesn't mean that you're finished with me.

And I thank you for that. Thank you that you still work through me and my sinful circumstances. It takes me no more than 20 seconds.

But I found it just so incredibly helpful in helping me not to overlook God's discreet kindnesses in my life. His providence in my life. And I'm sure you could do that, too.

Well, finally, our last point for this evening. God's king is greater than the king his people asked for. Despite the Lord's amazing provision and equipping of Saul, the truth is he still fails.

In his first battle he fights in chapter 11, things start off pretty well. But then things spiral and spiral and get worse and worse. And here in our passage tonight, there are warning signs that that is going to happen.

[ 36 : 21 ] God has brought this impressive man out of obscurity to be Israel's king. A man who's literally head and shoulders above everyone else. A man who seems pretty humble, too.

If you look at chapter 9, verse 21, he says, Am I not a Benjaminite from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?

Why then have you spoken to me in this way? He seems pretty humble. And he's empowered by the Holy Spirit. He's become a new man. He's been given a new heart so he can please God.

And yet, there are signs that things still aren't going to go well. Notice, right from the off, Saul seems somewhat of a hesitant character.

Perhaps I'm being a little bit harsh on him, but I think the points will appear legitimate as we build up the picture. He's somewhat hesitant, isn't he, to keep on with the search for his father's donkeys.

[ 37 : 23 ] He's quite happy to return. And when his servant also urges him to seek out Samuel's help, well, he says, oh, well, we haven't got anything to pay him with.

That could potentially be a bit of reluctance, too, a way out. And what we've seen as humility in verse 21 actually might be reluctance to lead. But the real clinchers for the argument come later after Saul's anointing in chapter 10, when the spirit of the Lord falls on him in chapter 10, verse 6, and Saul is told to do what his hand finds to do.

I think the Lord generally expects him to do something. And yet once he finishes prophesying, what does he do? He just goes home.



And keeps the fact that he's been an anointed king over Israel a secret. He's reluctant to take up the task. And more than that, what could Saul's hand have found to do at Gibeath Elohim, the hill of God?

What else was there? What else are we told was there? Answer, the Philistine garrison on top of the hill of God. What an abomination.

[ 38 : 43 ] And all through the book of Judges, when people have the spirit of God come upon them, what do they do immediately? They go out and bring salvation and deliverance to God's people.

They beat God's enemies. But not Saul. He goes home for a meal with his daddy. He doesn't go anywhere near the Philistine garrison.

He was filled with the very power of God and given a heart that could please him and do what is right. And yet he still failed. The ask for king fails despite his inherent impressiveness and the Lord's equipping.

In fact, next week, we'll find him cowardly in the luggage rather than setting himself forward for the task of being king. Now, I think this account would have been an important reminder to the first receivers of this book, who were wanting a king who would bring lasting blessing and success to them, and who were very disenchanted with the kings that they had in the Davidic line.

Many of them, I'm sure, would have been very tempted to put another king on the throne. Perhaps the son of Saul. After all, he was the first king.

[ 40 : 02 ] The original. Perhaps he could do better. And yes, he was the first king. But he wasn't first choice. He wasn't God's choice.

And any good that he did manage to do, and he did manage to do some good, was only because of the Lord's kind equipping. And even with that equipping and with that provision, he still made a pig's ear of it.

He was a coward and was reluctant to fight God's enemies. And that truth about him will run all the way through the narrative. The message is loud and clear to God's people.

God's people need a king of God's choosing, not a king of their asking, even when God kindly provides and equips them. But the wonderful news is that God's mercy stretches even further than the provision and equipping of these lesser kings.

More than that, despite his people's rebellion and their stubbornness, God would eventually grant them the king of his choosing, though they never asked for him and never wanted him.

[ 41 : 17 ] He would grant them a king who, when the spirit fell upon him at his baptism, would immediately go out and confront Israel's greatest enemy, the devil in the wilderness.

He would grant them a king who wouldn't be hesitant to fight in their place and defeat their enemies for them, who wasn't reluctant to stand in harm's way. He would grant them a king who was willing to be nailed to a cross and give up everything for them in order to deliver his people from their enemies.

That is God's greatest provision. That is his greatest mercy and his greatest accommodation for sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ, our king, who will never disappoint. What a wonderful king we have. Let's pray.

Father God, we do thank you that even though we are dust, you still care for us.

[ 42 : 27 ] Even though we are sinful, you still work your purposes through us and you are not finished with your kingdom. Our sinfulness will never, never derail what you have planned.

Thank you, Lord, that you're in control. Thank you for your providence. And thank you that in good time, you sent the Lord Jesus to be the king that we so desperately need. And we pray these things in his strong name.

Amen. Amen.