Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

King Saul: A Driven Leader

Opening Prayer

Introduction

In his book, *Ordering Your Private World*, Gordon MacDonald tells the story of a nineteenth-century explorer who had hired a group of African villagers to provide support for his exploration of a portion of unmapped Africa. On the first three days of their trek, they achieved an unexpected rate of speed, which put them ahead of schedule. However, on the fourth day things changed. When he got up and looked around he noticed no one was moving. He was told that the African support team intended to stay where they were for the entire day. When he asked why they told him that the first three days they moved entirely too fast and that it was now time to stop and ***let their souls catch up with their bodies***. (page 32)

It is a problem that leaders still face today. They are moving forward with such speed that their bodies get way ahead of their souls. It can happen in any number of ways.

1. Leaders can be so intent on what needs to be done that they neglect that which really matters. It is a focus issue. Read Luke 10:38-41 and discuss the "one thing that is needed" for every leader.

2. Leaders may be involved in so many things (family, job, community, and church) that they take little or no time to read and reflect on God's Word. It is a busyness issue.

3. Leaders can become so caught up in their own importance that they have little or no use for others advice, suggestions, or opinions – including God's. It is an ego issue.

- What are some other ways leaders can get ahead of their souls?

- What are the dangers of getting ahead of your soul?

MacDonald calls these kinds of leaders who get way ahead of their souls ***driven***. "Driven people," he suggests, "are not necessarily bad folk, although the consequences of their drivenness may produce unfortunate results. In fact, driven people often make great contributions. They start organizations; they provide jobs and opportunities; they are often very bright and offer ways and means of doing things that benefit many other people. Nevertheless they are driven, and one worries about their ability to sustain the pace without danger to themselves." (page 32)

Symptoms of a Person Who is Driven

1. A driven person is most often gratified only by accomplishments.
2. A driven person is preoccupied with the symbols of accomplishment.
3. A driven person is usually caught in the uncontrolled pursuit of expansion.
4. Driven people tend to have a limited regard for integrity.
5. Driven people are not likely to bother themselves with the honing of people skills.
6. Driven people tend to be highly competitive.
7. Driven people often possess a volcanic force of anger.
8. Driven people are usually abnormally busy, are averse to play, and usually avoid spiritual worship.

--Gordon MacDonald

MacDonald suggests that Saul, the first king of Israel, is an example of a driven leader.

Read **1 Samuel 9:1-2**.

- What were some God given characteristics of Saul? List at least three below:

  _____

  _____

  _____

- Describe how each characteristic could be an asset or a liability.

Read **1 Samuel 9:21; 10:26-27; 11:12-13**

- What other characteristics did Saul display?

Read **1 Samuel 13:7-14**

- What serious mistake did Saul make?
- What were the consequences of his mistake?

Read **1 Samuel 15**

- What serious mistake did Saul make?
- What were the consequences of his mistake?

Which of the symptoms of a driven leader did King Saul have?

MacDonald concludes, "By the end of his life, he was a man out of control, seeing enemies behind every bush. Why? Because from the very beginning Saul had been a driven man…Saul never came to grips with his drivenness…His own compulsions were far too strong. That which had driven him to grasp power and not let go, that which had caused him to turn on his closest supporters, and that which caused him to make a successive series of unwise decisions finally led him to a humiliating death. He was the classic driven man." (page 44)

Action Item: Of what symptom of drivenness do I need to repent? (1 John 1:8-9)

Closing Prayer

Adoration…
Confession…
Thanksgiving…
Supplication….

Praise…
Remember…
Ask…
Yield…

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
District and Congregational Services
Stewardship Ministry
Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff, Director
stewardship@lcms.org