



Glyfada Christian Center



30/03/2025

Preacher Gail Stathis; Helen Mavrogiannakis

Series Gifted – King Saul

Service Sunday Service

Passages Isaiah 61:1-4; 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Samuel 8: 6-7; Hebrews 12:1;
John 11:43; Isaiah 43:7; 1 Samuel 31:1

Gifted – King Saul

Pastor Gail – Welcome

1. This is Eva-Lena. OK, and where are you from? OK, and you my dear? I've been to Serbia for a woman's conference. So good to have you here today. And why are you here? Well, we're so glad you're here today. Usually by now we would have been started, but this is good, we all get to meet you and know why you're here. Are you going back to Lavrio, or are you leaving Greece? Ok, well good, anytime you're here in this area we'd love to have you. I'm glad you found us. Our services are very bilingual.

2. And you ladies are friends of Artemis? We're glad to have us with us today. You'll notice that we're kind of casual, because we the family of God. So, we're waiting to start. That's one of the things. Even when I feel like if we were 5000, and Lord, let it be, we never want to lose that feeling, of being the family of God. We never want to lose it, Amen.

3. Are we ready Brian? Would you stand with me as we read the Word today. Isaiah 61. And there are Bibles around the room in case. And we welcome you online. And once again, we continue to stress, we feel like, with all of the media, with all the social media and with all the things on our iPhones, often, we just pick up our phone and we don't really see what's on a whole page in the Bible and the story around it. So, we're encouraging the reading of a paper Bible.

4. Isaiah 61:1-4. "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy

instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor."

5. Feel free to pray with me. Father, we thank You this wonderful morning, we that You for the beauty of the sun. We thank You for Your promises, God, because they are all true, oh Lord. Your Word stands, Lord. So, we thank You as we gather together in Your name today, that those, lord, who have come downhearted, those who are sorrowful today, God, those who have lost their passion for You, Lord, those who feel lost, that today, they will sense Your favor, Your favor, Lord, and Your love, that knows no limits. We love You Lord. In the name of Jesus. How lovely, oh Lord, how lovely.

Pastor Gail Announcements

6. You may be seated. We have the wonderful privilege of giving our tithe and our offerings to the Lord today. He gives us so much. He overwhelmingly He overflows into our lives, and we don't always recognize it. So, let's pray for our offering this morning. Could I ask us to pray together. Just to pray out loud, 'Lord, I'm going to give my offering to You today. I will give my tithe to You Lord. Thank You. Will you just pray with me, and let's bless Him, in your own way, however you want to say it. Father, we just thank You for the privilege today, to be able to give to You an offering, Lord. You give, and You give, and You give, and You give so much to me Lord. Oh Lord, how rich I am because I know You Lord. God, it's not about wealth or riches, but it's about You. You make me rich, Your mercy and Your grace, Lord, Your forgiveness and Your presence. So, thank You that I can give an offering or my tithe to You today, in obedience, Lord. You said, If we give, oh Lord, the blessings will be even greater. We thank You in the name of Jesus.

7. So, we want to make a few announcements this morning. I believe, they're all here and we'll look at them all really quickly. For membership for those interested in joining the local church, please remain upstairs, we'll meet upstairs for about 20 minutes, just after service. And if you haven't spoken to me, or pastor Brian or Leto yet, you can join today in our lessons, Amen.

8. Next on our schedule, is every Friday, we don't want you to forget that our young men are meeting, and for our young ladies, I have a wonderful announcement. Artemis, will you

wave your hand – that’s Artemis, actually, Artemis, would you mind standing. This is Artemis, and this Friday, the young ladies are going to be meeting with Artemis. Yay! Praise God, we’re so excited. I believe it’s the same time, and you can please see Artemis, and she speaks Greek and English, and German and Spanish. She speaks 4 languages. So, it will be great. Please see Artemis before you leave today and she will give you the details, but we will be posting them in the WhatsApp group.

9. I just want to remind, some people feel like you want to take communion and we don’t offer it up front every Sunday. But we always have it at the back of the church. You can stop and ask Leto, if you would like to have Holy Communion. Next Sunday, we will have communion.

10. I want to remind you that our theme this year is, ‘This is the year of prayer.’ If you have a prayer request, you can send it out prayer@glyfadacc.org. There are our regular studies on Wednesdays.

For more announcements, please watch the video.

Pastor Gail – Main Message

1. We’re so glad that you are here with us today. We’re excited for what’s going to happen for our young girls now. Amen. And I actually know that our young girls can do push-ups too. I’m thankful that you are here this morning. Louka and Artemis had a conversation with me most of the week, because they knew I was preaching today and I don’t like the topic. It’s not something I wanted to preach about.

2. And so, I kind of worked on and worked on, and worked on, and this season we’re talking about people that are gifted, in the Old Testament. People that are gifted and filled with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. I’ll just tell you ahead of time, the reason why I didn’t want to preach this sermon, it really doesn’t have a happy ending.

3. Not for Saul. I’m going to be speaking about Saul today. And I want to thank Helen Mavrogiannakis. You do not know her. She is here giving Stavro and Leto a little break with me today. Helen is family for us. Did you get saved here? Helen came to know the Lord in this church, yeah! Praise God. She was here many years, met her husband, she’s family, so, be sure and visit with her, alright.

4. I want to talk about, I want to catch you up today. I won’t preach like I normally do; I want to walk you through some of the things about Saul, and Israel. You probably know that Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, after they escaped from Egypt. Moses led them. They crossed into the Promised Land. Joshua became their leader, and there was an anointing of the Holy Spirit on Joshua. And he warned the people right before he died, ‘If you do not obey the Lord, there will be some punishment.’

5. Time went on and the people became more divided, and they would have Judges over different sections in different tribes. And actually, the Judges were quite often not perfect people. Most of the time, they were not.

6. Even as we come to the life of Saul today, we will find that Samuel, who was the last great Judge of Israel, he had appointed his 2 sons to be Judges. But to make a long story short, they slept with women. There’s even a part that says that they would stick a fork in the pots

with the offerings, the meat offerings. They would take out of there what they wanted for themselves. They were very vile and immoral people.

7. The people of Israel, decided, 'We need a king. We want to be like everybody else.' And I think it's a problem sometimes with people who follow Jesus in some churches today, 'We want to look nice and orderly. We want to look like other churches, how they do it.' But where the presence of the Holy Spirit is, when we allow Him to be in control, He'll tell us what He wants. And often, it is not what we see around us.

8. But the people of Israel said, we want a king to lead us, we don't like these judges. God had said, 'You're my chosen people.' And just to tell you, in 2 Peter 2:9 in the New Testament, God also says, "You are a chosen people." We're not supposed to look like the world. They were not to be like other nations. And God had told them, 'If you get a king there will be difficulties.' How quickly they had forgotten what God had done for them through the years.

9. In 1 Samuel 8: 6-7, "But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: "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." The important thing as we begin to look at the story of Saul, when they said they want a king, they were saying, 'We don't want God to lead us anymore. We want a king.' It was a rejection of God.

10. And this happens to us too, doesn't it? Things get hard and tough, and we try to do things, so often in a worldly point of view. And God has never promised us that things will always be lovely singing beautiful songs, and eating chocolate bon-bons. Never. But when we choose God to lead us, we begin to understand, when we obey Him for everything, when we exalt Him, when we keep Him in the highest place in our hearts, we can say, 'It is well. I may not see it right now, but it is well with my soul.' Saul did not ultimately have trust and faith in God. And neither did the people of Israel.

11. Just a few points before we look at the Scripture. In the beginning, we can understand that Saul had no desire for political power. It doesn't even seem like he had any interest in spiritual power, or the position of Samuel. But his dad lost his donkeys, and that's what he was worried about. When we look at the stories of Saul, he was worried about his dad's donkeys. And I think that's so interesting, because in the beginning we see that he's just a guy like you and I. If you tell me that 24/7 you're thinking about God, we'll have prayer meeting right now. We are always thinking about God every moment of the day. If I lost my dog, I'd be on the streets looking for my dog.

12. So, he was concerned about his father's donkeys. And he couldn't find the donkeys. And finally, he remembers, 'I know Samuel. I've heard about him. He has visions. He can make predictions. He gives prophecies. Because he has the Holy Spirit. He can tell me where the donkeys are.' So, he goes to Samuel to find the donkeys. I kind of like this part of the story, don't you? Have you ever gone to someone and asked, 'Pray for me, my dog's lost?' I would do that.

13. I like seeing just the humanness of the story here. Sometimes, we make people in the Bible, larger than life. But they are just like you and I, and that's what the Lord wants us to know, He wants to gift us with the presence of the Holy Spirit. He will be with us.

14. Well Samuel tells him where the donkeys are. It's a long story. You should read it. We don't have time today. But Samuel also tells him something else. He whispers to him, or he tells him privately. 'Guess what, God told me something else besides the donkeys. You're going to be the king.' Can you imagine? Well, we have to understand, the Scriptures are saying that Saul was head and shoulders above everybody else. Really tall. And not only that, but he was very good looking. I didn't say that, the Bible did. And so, he fits a perfect picture, oh a king, tall and good looking and strong, wow. We want him to be king.

15. So, after he became king, he did amazing things for Israel. He fought many battles. Now, I want us to go to the Scripture today. 1 Samuel 10: 6-10, This is important, because in this section, we will read that there will be a special power from the Lord come on Saul. "The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. 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. As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying."

16. When I thought about Saul, there's so much to bring about in his life. Because it looks like at the beginning, he was going to serve the Lord. It looked like he was going to obey. But as we look at his life, and we'll just take a brief look at his life this morning, it is a warning to each one of us, that we might start well, we might start so that everything looks good, but it is how we finish.

17. That's why the New Testament talks about, "Let us run the race." (Hebrews 12:1) We run to the finish line, that's where you win. But Saul, the further and further we go into his story, we begin to see, him instead of giving to God things in his character that needed to be changed, he made excuses for them.

18. And I want to touch on that for a second because I think we can get that way too. Proud. I don't want to admit that there is something wrong with me. Proud – too proud to ask someone else to pray for us. And those weaknesses of character remain in our life, to where we begin to make excuses for the wrongs we do. I didn't hear that. You didn't say that. I know what I heard. We will begin to cover up errors, that we call them. But actually, it's a sin of pride.

19. There are two that we are going to touch on very quickly. I won't keep you real long today, I promise. The worst one I think perhaps, well I don't know if there is a worst one. There are so many bad mistakes, sins he makes. But as Saul is getting ready to lead the army of Israel to war, but before they engaged the enemy, Samuel is going to come and they're going to offer a sacrifice to God. So that the blessing of God would be on them. They wanted to look to our Father for His blessings and anointings.

20. But he got impatient. Do you ever get impatient? God doesn't answer you quickly enough. So, I'll do it my way. God will bless it. Maybe I just didn't hear Him. I've asked Him. I don't know why He didn't answer, maybe He answered and I missed it. I'm sure if I do something, God will bless it. Because He likes it when we're active for Him.

21. One of my favorite songs we never sing anymore, is, 'Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know, that I am God. Be still and know, that I am God.' We like to sing those words. We like to even say that. But I think in this world we live in today, there's a growing problem on patience. Why hasn't God answered? I asked and asked and asked. But you notice the word, 'I asked and I asked'.

22. I think one of the most powerful things the Lord taught me about that, was I prayed for 50 years for my mother to get saved, and I'm only 39, I don't know how that came about, but I prayed and six months before she died, she gave her heart to the Lord. And for six months, every single day, someone came to visit my mother, that she had invited, because she had been a very wicked and mean person and she wanted to ask them to forgive her. The Lord taught me to pray all those years, so that all the people she had hurt, she could ask them to forgive her. They would learn about My forgiveness, yes. At my mother's funeral, eight people gave their heart to the Lord. That's pretty awesome. That's pretty amazing.

23. But if He had answered when I wanted Him to, maybe none of them would have heard the message of the love of God, that forgives and is always there, Amen. But a better example, is, remember Mary, Martha and Lazarus? Lazarus dies, and what does Martha do when Jesus finally gets there, three days late, three days late! Martha said, 'Jesus, if You had been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died. Can you hear her saying this now? I would have probably done the same, wouldn't you? You're late, You're late. We think that a lot about the Lord.

24. But do you know what happened in those three days? Because Jesus waited, a crowd begin to grow. More and more people begin to come. If Jesus had come when He first heard, who would have known, that He is the resurrection and the life. Mary, Martha and Lazarus, but because He waited, the crowd saw Jesus, call Lazarus, 'Come forth,' (John11:43) and Lazarus stepped out of the grave, Hallelujah.

25. But we're impatient with God. And it's hard not to be in this world we live in today, because there are so many horrible things happening. And people are going to ask us more and more, 'Why doesn't Jesus help in Sudan? Why doesn't the Holy Spirit do something about the war in Gaza and Israel? And we need to pray and talk together, because too often, we just say, 'I don't know.'

26. But we do know. God has it all in control. God has it all in control. He's doing something bigger than we understand. He wants us to have a Holy Spirit answer, in that moment. So, Saul, oh my goodness, he gave the offering himself, because he was too impatient to wait for Samuel. And the Lord then withdrew the anointing from Saul.

27. We live in New Testament times now, and we know the great freedom of forgiveness, we don't have to offer sacrifices, because Jesus paid it all. He made all the sacrifices; He is the great sacrifice. Now, You and I, we can blow it; we can be a big mess all week long. We can be like Saul, and take things in our hands, and we can then fall on our knees, and say to

Him, 'Father, forgive me. I did it my way. Forgive me.' And the amazing thing about God, He will say, 'The minute you asked I already did.'

28. It's such a sad life, though. Saul, the longer his life goes on, we'll even see that he goes into a madness; he has demonic spirits that come upon him. He was so afraid, that he went and saw a witch to bring up the spirit of Samuel. Now, some of you may think I'm not going to touch this, but I'll touch it really quickly.

29. I know a lot of people, in Greece, in America, all over the world, I've been to a lot of places, that you know more about what your Zodiac sign is and what it says today, you read your astrological sign, before you read your Bible. I see your head shaking. The things of the enemy are nothing for us to play with. And the spirit of the enemy, is roaming to take the peace of God from our lives. He wants us to be impatient with God.

30. Saul, actually got jealous of king David, and David honored him as long as Saul was alive. Even after. Do you know that king David even wrote a psalm about Saul and Jonathan, his son, I miss them. I regret they're gone. I love them so much. David honored Saul.

31. So many areas of our life, that if you read just a little bit in Saul's life, you can see and ask yourself, 'Do I have that problem? Am I listening to spirits of the world today? Am I reading and trusting the news, more than I'm trusting the report of heaven?' Let me ask you a question. I'm not judging. But do you watch 4 or 5 hours of news today and maybe spend 15 minutes reading your Bible and praying?

32. We can know all that's happening in the world, but not know, how to react, how to give an answer, that brings the peace of God. There's a disease that we call in English, 'Hardening of the arteries.' But instead of this hardening of the arteries, often, we have hardening of the attitudes. I'm OK; I don't need to change. Why do you always get blessed. I should get the blessing, not you, I've done so much more than you. Why are they talking to you instead of me? Don't they know that I have better answers than you. We get jealous, we get insecure, we get fearful. Instead of saying, 'Oh Lord, I need You. My attitudes are getting hard and my heart. I'm making it about me.' It's never about you. I'm sorry but it's not. It is about Him. It's all about Him.

33. The Word of God says, 'We were created to give Him glory.' (Isaiah 43:7) Our lives are supposed to be living expressions of praise and adoration and love. You don't believe me; I'll give you the Scriptures later. We were created to honor Him, with all that we are.

34. I have eight more pages, but we're not going to do eight more pages today. God's timing is always the best. Saul would not submit to God. Really, he had no personal relationship with God. And you might say, 'Well that's the Old Testament.' But what about David? What an example.

35. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to run in the high places. He is my fortress. He is my shield. He is my rock. It's all about Him. Even in the Old Testament, there could be a relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit.

36. Do you know how Saul died? He was in the middle of a battle, up on the side of a mountain. The Scriptures say, 'He took his sword, and fell on his own sword.' (1 Samuel 31:1). Saul killed himself. Saul committed suicide.

37. This last week, pastor Brian and I, learned of a good friend that committed suicide, and all I could think about through the week, was she alone, was she alone? Did somebody help her, but the Lord was there. I know, even in those last minutes, we trust that the Lord speaks, Amen. He makes a way where God makes things that we cannot understand.

38. The Holy Spirit, at the beginning of Saul's reign, it said that he got a new heart. But he didn't guard his heart. We have to guard our hearts. Always, always. Because our heart is the target of the enemy. The Lord is calling us to finish well. Guess what He calls you? You are not just a conqueror. You are more than a conqueror; we're more than conquerors. But every single day, it is a choice, to choose, to live for God. All to Jesus. I want to surrender, and why wouldn't I want to surrender to Him?

39. I know that you guys love me, those of you that know me, but none of you have that reckless, overwhelming, never ending, love. When was the last time you chased somebody down, to tell them, 'I'm running after you to tell you that I love you.' Oh, the overwhelming, never ending, reckless love of God.

40. I don't think it's neat and tidy, I don't think it's wrapped up in a pretty little bowl, but I think the love of God, the Spirit of the Living God, the Holy Spirit, He finds us where we're at and says, 'I'm trying to get you. To choose God today. To choose His way. His presence. Choose His forgiveness. Choose His power. Choose His amazing overwhelming, never ending love.'

41. As a close today, I want us to sing, about the overwhelming love of God. We've all been disobedient. I remember when I first came to Greece, I didn't know what the 'na' meant, Greeks, do you know what I'm talking about? It's not a nice sign that you do with your hand. It's like telling people to die, go to hell and stay there, you know never rise up again. So, I'd see other people do it, and when men tried to drive me off the road, because I was a female driver. This was a long time ago. So, I was doing it all the time. I couldn't figure out why men got madder. When I realized it, see it was a sin I didn't know about, and when I did, I asked the Lord to forgive me. See, we don't always know our sins. That's why we pray. Father, forgive me for I don't always know what I do.

42. Would you stand with me. If you're here today and you don't know Jesus. If you're here today and you want to pray with someone else, take the hand of someone standing by you. And say, 'It's too much about me. I want it to be about Him. All my life. Pray with someone today.'