

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023

## Found

**"When found, make a note of."**

Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Captain Cuttle)

Hidden away in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bible's First Book of Samuel, there's a fascinating little story. It recounts the first appearance of Saul, and his anointing, as a young boy, by the Prophet Samuel.

In the tribe of Benjamin, there was an important man by the name of Kish who had carelessly lost his donkeys. So he instructs his son, Saul ("as handsome a man as could be found anywhere in Israel," we're told, "a head taller than everyone else.") to take one of his servants and go to look for the donkeys. They travel far and wide, but there is no sign of the donkeys anywhere. Eventually, they arrive at a place called Zuph, and Saul is getting worried. "We should go back," he says to the servant, "and give up the search. By now my father will be less worried about the donkeys and more concerned about what's happened to us."

But the servant wants to give it another go. "Look," he says. "In this very town there a man of God. *He'll* know what we should do. We can even pay for his advice." In time, they find Samuel, the man of God, at his devotions. And, lo and behold, the servant is quite right. Samuel gives them the reassurance they seek. The donkeys, lost for three days, are safe. But what Saul doesn't know is that Samuel had been guided by God to seek a leader for His people. And, in his conversations with Saul, Samuel realises that this is the one. So, to Saul's disbelief, Samuel tells him he has been chosen by God for a special task. And the story concludes with Samuel's verbal anointing of Saul: "Get ready, for I will send you on your way. And I will give you a message from God."

Yesterday, my metaphor for my searching faith was looking for a lost sheep. Today, my metaphor is looking for lost donkeys. For me, that has occasionally been frantic, and – like Saul – there have been times when I've wondered whether it's worth it and if I wouldn't be better just giving up and going home. And then ... I bump into someone or something who has a message from God, and I find a new way to go on.

The donkeys are safe, *and* I have a new way to travel. I may not have found a kingdom, but I have enough to be going on with, thank you.

### A prayer for today

*So much out there, waiting to be found. Thank you. Amen*