

Sunday, June 14, 2020 – 1 Samuel 16:1-13

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

² But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵ Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

This is the word of God for the people of God and all God's people said, Amen.

Well, we find ourselves in situations where life is different and we're all still called. We're all still called to make a difference in our world. We're all still called to reach out to people. And trust me, if you're anything like me when I first realized that I was called to do anything my response was, oh I can't do that. I think that Jamie would be much better at that, Jamie was a friend from school. And it turns out he was called to. Oh, I can't speak before people, that would be something Jamie would be better at. Oh, I can't leave the ladies group. Actually, that would be something that Ellen would be better at. Oh, I can't teach, that would be something that Lois would be better at. Sunday school? Oh no, Becky, Becky would be better at that than I. Lord you've just got it all wrong. We do that though, don't we? Because when God calls us, we look ourselves in the mirror, and we say, No, God's got it all wrong. I'm not good enough to do that.

And the truth is, none of us are good enough to do all of that. But we don't realize that when God calls it's because he sees something that we don't see. We look at everything on the outside. Well, she doesn't look like a preacher. Well, she's not a great mathematician so she probably won't be good at administration. Well, he's awfully shy, so probably won't be a good preacher. Well...and we come up with a list of things because we look at outward appearance. Because we look at brain power. Because we look at LSAT scores. Because we look at personality traits. Because we've looked at family history.

We look at all those outward appearances. But God. God looks at the heart. And that's the important thing.

So, in this scripture, Samuel has been instructed by the Lord to go out and anoint a new King. Saul has done everything he can to truly make a mess of nation of Israel. Saul is wicked. And Saul is crooked. And Saul doesn't have a really good personality and he tends to take things out on people. Everything that you would not want your king to be, or your president to be, or your prime minister to be, Saul is.

And the Lord has looked at Saul and he's watched what's going on, and he has rejected him as King. Now that doesn't mean he's removing him at this point. But it does mean that he's not going to bless his leadership. Instead, he is looking for someone to take Saul's place and it's not going to be a child that belongs to Saul. It's going to be someone from a completely different family because God needs to break that Reign of Terror. And so, he sends Samuel out, and he tells him to go to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse. God said to Samuel, I've rejected him and all your tears, and mourning will not change it. Now, get over it and go and do what I tell you to do.

Well Samuel didn't want to go on this mission. He didn't want to anoint another king mostly because he feared what Saul's reaction would be if he heard about it. And so, God provides for Samuel, go and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Take a heifer with you so that you can sacrifice. It is safe to go and sacrifice. So, when the people thought that Samuel was coming, being a prophet. All the people thought that he was bringing bad news. Scripture says they trembled. But he assured them he wasn't there with bad news. He'd only come to celebrate, and to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.

So, the people had no idea that Samuel was looking for the Lord to point out the person who was going to be anointed King. The people only knew that he planned to worship. When the oldest of Jesse's sons came out, he looked as if he would be the right one. He was good looking, not that that means that is a prerequisite for leadership. But he was good looking. And he looked as if he would really be right. He was dark, handsome. And he looked like he could fill that king's role perfectly. You know what we picture a King as. Right?

So, Samuel said yep, he must be the one. Because again, Samuel was looking at outward appearance. And the Lord is teaching Samuel, Lord says don't look on his outward appearance. I see differently than men see. I look at the heart. Eliab was not the one. Neither was Abinadab. Neither was the next one, or the next one, or the next one. And you can almost imagine what Samuel was feeling as he watched the line of young men in front of him dwindled down till he was down to the last two. And on the outward appearance, every single one of them look like an excellent, excellent candidate for the next King. And not one of them was chosen by God.

Seven sons walked by and not one was the one God would have chosen. Almost makes you wonder, doesn't it, what they were thinking. What poor Samuel was thinking, as he watched this and Jesse wondering what on earth was going to happen. So, Jesse was asked if he had any more sons. Well yes, there's one out feeding the sheep in the field. He's the youngest one, obviously Jesse would not have considered him for the job and certainly Samuel would not have considered him for the job. He is too young. He didn't have a lot of experience in the ways in the world. But they sent for him, and David came in. And the Lord spoke to Samuel and said, He's the one. Anoint him.

On the surface, David didn't look like the best choice. Come on, he was a little boy. The others were older, they had more qualifications. But God saw his choice in a different way from what we see things. It didn't mean that all of the older brothers weren't good people, they were good people. They were just not chosen and called for this particular job. So, what does that scripture say to us today. It points out several things that applied to David, that also apply to us.

First of all, the Lord knows where you are. We often wonder, especially in situations like we're living through right now, do you even know where I live? Lord, do you know what I'm about? Lord, do you know where I am? You see my struggles; you see my concerns. Do you hear me when I pray? Are you concerned about my job and my family? It doesn't take much to discourage us. At times I feel that we really wonder if God knows where we are at all. Especially during times when we go through pain or trouble or confusion. And we might be tempted to doubt. And I think that's more common than we want to admit as Christians. Has the Lord abandoned me? Does he really care?

This account points out to us that the Lord knew where to find David. He was out on the hillside somewhere attending sheep. We don't know what his goals for his life were or what his aspirations were. We don't know at what point exactly he actually came to revere God. There are a lot of clues given throughout Scripture concerning David's character. Acts chapter 13:22 gives us one major key. When he had removed Saul, God raised up David to be their king, and he said I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will fulfill my will.

Is God looking for anything different now. No, he's looking for a person of any age whose heart is turned toward him. David once said in the Psalm as the heart pants for the water, so my soul pants after thee Oh God. (the heart, it's a deer) So as the deer pants for water so my soul longs for you. Psalm 42. David seem to be always reaching out toward God, even though he made stupid mistakes. Even though he was often depressed, but it always came back to seeking the Lord with his whole heart. And God saw that quality deep down in him and was pleased with his desire to seek Him.

The Lord sees, not as we see, but he looks on the heart and God knew exactly where David's heart was and what he wanted him to be. Does the Lord know where you are? Does he know how to get you to where he wants you to be? Does he know your heart? He does. Because when I was going through the candidacy process, I would say nothing is opening up. And believe in me it was a long candidacy process. The Lord knows where he wants you my husband would say, you'll get there, when he's ready. And of course, I fussed and fumed. Not that I didn't believe it but it just seemed like it was so long coming. And I'd say things like, oh Joel's just trying to make me feel good. Then the pastor of the church around the corner from our home told Joel, I've known Sandy for a long time. God will move. She'll have what she's dreaming of, God sees her heart. I wasn't sure about his take on it either. And I said, oh, I don't know what does he know he's just a pastor like me. Well, he's now the district superintendent so I guess he knew something.

We have to make sure that we don't lose sight of what God is aware of in our situation. He knows our address. He knows how to move us from one place to another, and he knows what we're called to do in spite of the way we look, or sound. Sometimes the Lord gives us little perks to let us know that he's there and he's watching.

You know what I mean by a little perk. When I lived in Ashtabula, my house was broken into when we were going on a weekend trip. And one of the things that came up missing was my grandmother's dishes

that she had given me as a birthday gift. They weren't fancy China, they were Carnival glass from the 30s, and they're called bouquet and lattice, and they have scalloped edges. And if you hold them up to the light, you can see a rose bouquet in the middle. And they come in several different colors, mine happen to be amber, pretty common. But over the years you go through these phases, you see them all over the place. And then the next year you don't see any, and you may not see any for another 10 years and then all of a sudden, they creep up all over the place again. I think it's because the people who own them pass away and they show up in antique stores.

So, I really wanted to replace some of the pieces that were missing to add to the group that I'd already replaced. And one day I was out shopping and I stopped by an antique store in the middle of nowhere, wasn't even really thinking of the dishes, and I walked in and there sat several pieces of bouquets and lattice in amber. Just waiting for me. Little perks in ordinary days, just part of daily life, to help me know that he knows where you are. Any he's thinking about you.

The Lord knows how to transform us. When God said to Samuel, this is the one, anointed him. Samuel took the Horn of oil and anointed him as he stood before his brothers. And at that time, Scripture says, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. And here's the interesting part, when Saul was anointed to be king, Samuel took a vial of oil, indicating that it was kind of scanty and brittle, and he poured it over his head. But with David's anointing, God instructed Samuel to fill a horn. Like a little ram's horn, full of oil. The anointing was more plentiful and in research says that the Spirit was with him from the day he was anointed, forward.

The horn in Greek is Keris. And it's a symbol of strength. It symbolizes the strength of the ministry that is connected with it. The strength of David's life in ministry. Scripture speaks of a horn of salvation, Jesus being the Horn of our salvation, the strength of our salvation. Psalm 18 talks about the LORD is my rock, the horn of my salvation, the strength of my salvation. A first Samuel even says, exalt the Horn of his anointed, the strength of his anointed one which refers to the coming Messiah, as well. And so, when we see that Saul anointed David with a horn, full of oil, representing the Spirit of God, we know that the anointing and that fell upon David was very, very strong.

And the effect of that anointing was that it transformed everything around him. There was going to be strength in his leadership, the anointing ceremony wasn't just an empty ceremony. It was a ceremony that bestowed divine power upon the king. And it was similar to the work of grace that takes place in our own hearts at our baptism. When we begin to experience the prevenient grace of God, leading us closer and closer to God, and the saving grace of God that brings us to faith. And then we experience the perfecting grace of God that leads us onward throughout our life.

David had a heart that was turned toward God but it needed to be equipped for future work. And Matthew Henry says that the qualities that he needed were instilled in him at the time of his anointing. And then they grew. He became more advanced in wisdom; he became more advanced in courage and in the concern for the public. David was not the same person when he went back to the field. When we come to the Lord and we receive salvation and we begin to walk with God, we aren't the same either. We're not intended to be the same. The things that we once loved don't mean as much to us anymore. And the things that we often turned away from are the things that come to mean the most to us. How do we know that? Because Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us if any person is in Christ, he is a new creation. The Old things are passed away, and all things become new.

Keep in mind that although David was anointed the king, he didn't immediately step into that role. He was going to be waiting for quite some time to become king. And he did not use or usurp his authority over Saul. Also, in the candidacy program, a woman in my prayer group said to me, well, if you become a pastor, what's Joel going to be. And I said, he'll be okay as long as he doesn't usurp the authority of the pastor. Now, what I remembered when I got to my first appointment after that was that the spouse of the pastor is automatically the UMW president. And so, Joel became the unofficial UMW president and he actually even has an apron to prove it!

David went through a process of about 10 years before he became king and during that time of preparation, there were gifts and graces constantly being instilled in his life. God moved David into positions of playing the harp to calm Saul's nerves. Here's what people said about David. He knows how to play the harp, he's brave, he's a warrior, he speaks well, he's a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him. David came to Saul and he entered his service and then Saul said, let David stay, because I'm pleased with him.

Sometimes people think, when I graduate from high school, I will have arrived. Or when I graduate from college, I will have arrived. When I get that job, I will have arrived. When I this, when I that, I will have arrived. And then I'll be able to do the things that the Lord has called me to do. Still others say, well, I'm past my prime, and let somebody else do it. Well, both of those sentiments are wrong. Because, as you're preparing to serve the Lord that is when God continues to pour into you those gifts and graces that you need for that ministry. And there is no retirement from that ministry.

You can come into a church and know that, who is the prayer warrior, and who is the worship leader by listening to them, not by seeing them on the platform. You can tell who was gifted to teach and you could tell who has ministries of health. But not any single one person that shares those gifts is called to replace those persons. They're called to augment those persons. We're all called to build together. And so, we can't retreat and retire, because that leaves an empty spot in the army. There's nothing that I want to do. I'm just waiting for the Lord to come. Sometimes we don't know what we want to do. Until we try to do something. But we don't want the Lord to come and find us inactive in his service.

Several years ago, we had a friend who was in his 90s, and he drove this bright red convertible. And he would drive down the street and he drive up to the hospital to visit. And I was there one day with a lady who had just had surgery and he knew I was going to be here. And he came walking in the door with two rolls of life savers, and he passed one to me and he passed one to her and he said, remember who is your LIFE saver. He used to go to nursing homes and pass out lifesavers. Remember your LIFE saver. And he would talk, and he would listen, and he would pray. He didn't want to go to senior citizens because he didn't want people to think he was old. He didn't want to move into a retirement community because he wasn't old enough for that. He was still ministering to people well into his 90s. And the Lord was still working in Him.

God wants us to continue to do our work in our heart in life throughout our entire lifetime. He wants us to be open to going where God calls us to go and doing the things that God calls us to do. And he knows how to transform us as much as he did David. The Lord had David's cooperation and this is where we come in. Because all too often we think that God can just, poof, change anybody who wants to. Well he probably could except that he didn't create robots. In many of the Scriptures, the people that God was trying to get to do things put up a lot of resistance to him. They put up objections, even Samuel. How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he'll kill me.

But you notice that David didn't put up any objection. He was anointed to be king although I really doubt he understood what the full impact of that was going to be on his life. But he didn't argue with God. He didn't try to compromise, well God I'll do this, but I can't do that. And God put his spirit in him and began to transform him and instill qualities in him that he needed for the future. And then God began to position David where he could learn. David cooperated with God, as those things began to unfold. And it wasn't always easy. But he always had the heart for God and that's the important things.

Our lives can be transformed by the power of God to a greater degree than they have been if we continue to turn our hearts toward him, and wait upon his leading. Allowing God's spirit to work in you and through you makes all the difference in the world. So, begin to cooperate, rather than put up objections and resistance. Allow God to call you out and position you for a new work, something that you might not have done before. Or position you to refresh something that you've loved to do for years.

He'll do that for us. Just as much as he did for David. Because remember, God doesn't look at us the way the rest of the world does. He looks at our hearts. And when our hearts are in tune with his, we are in line for his call and his blessing. Give him permission to work. He'll honor that request as you give over your entire heart. Amen