

18. God's Man, But Nobody Noticed

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Outward appearance can be very deceiving. If we go by what we see only, we'd be in a lot of troubles most of our lives.

We are going to find what God sees in us is completely different than what we see from the outside of men and women.

Last four weeks we studied about Saul who was heading for pit day after day. Even though we learn a lot from his mistakes, we can be depressed by our sinful natures that relate with Saul's. We are turning to a rather uplifting direction today.

David. Jesse's youngest son. A shepherd boy of Bethlehem. Giant-slayer. Teenage king-elect. Composer of psalms. Saul's personal musician. Jonathan's closest friend.

He rose from hunted fugitive to king of Israel. And he fell from champion in battle to aged and troubled monarch.

David—a man of glorious triumph, yet great tragedy. Uniquely gifted, but human to the core; strong in battle, but weak at home. Why are we drawn to study his life? Because David isn't a polished-marble personality. He is blood and bone and breath, sharing our struggles of spirit and soul. I believe that we will learn a lot from his life.

A. TIME TO MOVE ON

1 Sam 16:1 Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

As we learned in last study, there is no reason for us to dwell on the past. If something bad happened, let it go. Learn from it, don't let it happen again. If something bad and ugly happened to you beyond your control, it is not your fault. Don't take blame nor feel guilty about it. Let's move on, because God is on the move.

God will never allow His work to die with the death or failure of a man. If it is God's work, it goes beyond any man. Perhaps Samuel was paralyzed with mourning because of Saul's tragic rebellion, but God was not paralyzed.

"For I have provided Myself a king"

This phrase is very emphatical, and implies the difference between this and the former king. Saul was a king of the people's providing, he was the product of their inordinate and sinful desires. God had with him.

1 Sam 16:2-3 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

The Bible is so real that it is scary. I am glad that I didn't live in the period when the Bible was recorded. I don't want people to dissect my life and see how many stupid mistakes I made. The Bible does not hide some bad aspects of great men of God. It shows each man's good and bad points without any hesitation. However this is the

only one negative thing mentioned about Samuel. Samuel was showing fear of Saul even though the Lord was with him. Instead of rebuking Samuel, the merciful Lord graciously accommodated his timidity with a reason to go to Bethlehem.

B. MAN LOOKS, GOD SEES

1 Sam 16:4-5 So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

Samuel's arrival was no small matter to the people of Bethlehem. Considering that Samuel had just hacked the Amalekite king Agag in pieces, it's no wonder the elders of Bethlehem were afraid.

Assuring of his peaceful intentions, Samuel then called together Jesse and his sons to participate in a sacrifice-during which God would reveal His chosen man.

1 Sam 16:6-7 So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Even though Samuel went through a horrendous stuff with the good looking king of Israel, Saul, he was impressed by Eliab's appearance. But the Lord was not impressed with person's appearance nor at his physical stature. Because God is not a respecter of man's outward appearance. But He sees our hearts. God saw the heart of David that is after His own heart.

How much we need to learn from God! Rather than embracing or rejecting others based on their status or lack of it, their wealth or poverty, their beauty or plainness, their cleverness or their gullibility, we should look at their character.

We need to do what Samuel did: look to the Lord for discernment and wait for His choice, whether that's a business partner, a mate, or a leader.

It is not only applying to individual, but also the churches in America. Just because one church is bigger than another church down the street, somehow we tend to think that the pastor of the bigger church is more spiritual than the smaller fellowship pastors. I know many of spiritual giants who pastor small Calvary Chapels in Arizona. They are no less than some mammoth churches around the country. God just chooses to give them different portions of work.

C. MAN FORGETS, GOD REMEMBERS

1 Sam 16:8-10 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these."

The world is full of idolatries, but I doubt that no idolatry has been more extensively practiced than the idolatry of the outward appearance. If you don't agree with me, just look at the fashions that Hollywood brings into our culture. Latest style of eye-glasses, latest style of dresses, suits, goatees, hair styles and let's not forget cars. Somehow the general public thinks that whatever the actors and actresses in

Hollywood do, they have to do. Otherwise, heaven forbids, they would be out of fashion and out of touch. Let's face it, we tend to idolize people more than God.

With the parade of Jesse's sons apparently over, Samuel was puzzled. God had promised to select a king from this family, but where was he?

Eliab and the six other sons of Jesse were good potential kings as far as the flesh is concerned. But God didn't want another king after the flesh. Israel already had one of those! God needed to do more than fix up a fleshly king. God looked for a different kind of king, the one with His own heart.

1 Sam 16:11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."

Jesse's "oh-yeah-I-almost-forget" reply revealed that David had been overlooked. Why wasn't David brought in with the others? He didn't appreciate each of his children equally.

Mom and Dad, unless you want a strife in your home, do not treat your children differently. You may not think it is no big deal, but to them it is. Aren't we glad that God doesn't treat us any different than Billy Graham? Jesus died for all of our sins, not just for Billy Graham. We need to appreciate each of our children equally, even if you have one kid who is like an angel and sitting quietly and polishing his halo, while the other kid sharpening his horns on his head by making a house look right a cyclone just hits.

If Samuel was from North Carolina, he would tell Jesse, "Fetch that boy!"

1 Sam 16:12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"

Jesse didn't think enough about his youngest son David that he didn't bother call him to be in the presence of the prophet. Regardless of Jesse's opinion of David, Samuel insists on seeing the young shepherd boy.

David was the eighth son of Jesse. Number eight signifies the new beginning in Jewish custom.

This is often how God chooses. God often chooses unlikely people to do His work, so that all know the work is God's, not man's.

1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

D. ANOINTING THE GOD'S CHOICE

1 Sam 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Imagine David's surprise. One minute he's swatting flies in the pasture, and the next he's getting oil poured over his head. Jewish historian Josephus tells us in his book "The Antiquities of the Jews" that Samuel whispered in David's ear that God had chosen him to be the next king of Israel.

The real anointing happened when the Holy Spirit came upon David. The oil on the head was just a sign of this inward reality.

1) The symbol of the Holy Spirit coming upon David was the anointing oil on his head.

2) The symbol of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus was the dove that appeared from heaven. - Matt 3:16

3) The symbol of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples was the tongues of fire that appeared over their heads. -Acts 2:3

The Holy Spirit loves to do His work as He wills, in many different ways.

After his anointing, David didn't run out to try on designer crowns or shine up his V-8 chariot and ride through Bethlehem announcing his position of royalty. He didn't even bronze Samuel's horn to hanging his tent. Instead, his humility shone like the sheen of his fleshly anointed head as he, the king-elect, went back to the sheep fields until God's hand moved Him onto the throne.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) God's solutions are often strange and simple. Let's BE OPEN.

Isa 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

2) God's methods for selecting His own people to use in His kingdom is much different than ours. Let's BE AVAILABLE.

God's choice of David shows that we don't have to quit our jobs and enter into full-time ministry to be people after God's own heart. We don't need to be famous or prominent to be people after God's own heart.

3) Just because God is using us, that doesn't mean that we run wild with that new status. Let's BE CALM.

God can use anyone at His will. It is not because we are so special, because He is special. Let's not forget that.