DAVID IS ANOINTED KING

Peter couldn't believe who was next to him in line. *There was his former pastor.* When they made eye contact, the man came right up to him, putting a hand on his shoulder and asking if he could apologize.

A year earlier was when Peter had come to the church office, and he walked into a room where the pastor and two elders were seated. He knew his estranged wife and her family were connected at the church, but he hadn't expected to feel so misjudged. Peter had been the one to suggest couple's therapy and to offer to make changes, and he had moved out of the home only when his wife insisted. That certainly was not the story she had shared.

It took some time to explain this to his church leadership, and he resolved never to go back. He was ready to reconcile with *her*, but why was he the one being asked to defend his actions? He knew that, eventually, the truth would come out. He just didn't expect it to take a year.

But there was his pastor, asking for his forgiveness. Peter didn't realize until that moment how hurt he had been and how much he had needed more support while going through a painful divorce.

"Thanks for taking the time to apologize," he heard himself saying. "I didn't mean to disappear. Actually, now that Priscilla has taken a new job and moved away, I wonder if I'd be welcome back at church?"

1 Why do we pretend that we can know a person's heart and motives?

2 Have your actions ever been misunderstood? How did you respond?

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?
5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.
6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.
7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.
8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.
9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.
10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

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."

Preparing for an Anointing

The time has come to anoint a new king, and God sends Samuel to Bethlehem. This passage starts out when the prophet hears and obeys the word of God. When Samuel arrives, the elders or leaders in that community "trembled" and ask if he comes in peace (v. 4). The people were likely afraid because of the growing tension between

the prophet and the existing king, Saul. Just prior to his arrival, Samuel confronted Saul for his disobedience in his dealings with the Amalekites, and the two had parted ways (1 Sam. 15:34–35). The people of Bethlehem want no part in this conflict.

Samuel reassures them that his purpose is peaceful. His visit is not related to his dealings with King Saul. Rather he has come to worship (1 Sam. 16:5). These intentions are made clear by repeating the words "consecrate" and "sacrifice." Samuel has a religious duty in mind and a desire to offer sacrifices. But unbeknownst to the people, he is also preparing for an anointing. As part of his preparations, Samuel consecrates Jesse and his sons and invites them to the sacrifice—perhaps with some awareness from God to carefully inspect Jesse's sons.

When the family arrives, Samuel looks at them and begins to wonder which of these fine young men will be Israel's next leader. The eldest son, Eliab, appears to be an obvious choice. In these verses there is a contrast between what Samuel can "see" and what God "looks at" (vv. 6–7). The text contrasts the sons Jesse presents first with God's choice for the next king. God and people do not look at the same things. Verse 7 explicitly says, "People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." When selecting a future king, the Lord is looking at the inner desires and inclinations of each person. God is choosing based on characteristics unseen by the human eye.

This passage demonstrates that God's value system is separate and superior to the flawed judgments of the world. We might look at the tall and handsome candidate as being right for the job. Notably, however, tall and handsome was what led people to nominate Saul (1 Sam. 9:2). God has a better approach to offer.

1 What would be wrong with choosing a tall and handsome son of Jesse to be the next king?

2 What differences do you see between Samuel's perspective and God's in this passage?

3 How might it impact the way we make decisions if we could look at others' hearts like God does?

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children?
And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.
And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.
12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to.
And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.
13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

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.

Samuel Anoints David

After rejecting seven of Jesse's sons, the prophet asks, "Are these all the sons you have?" (v. 11). Jesse reports that there is one more tending sheep, and he sends for David. But the first two things said about David are that he is the youngest and he is tending sheep. These descriptions, by human standards, make him unlikely to be chosen as king of Israel. With seven older brothers, David was not in line for any special role. And as a shepherd, David was doing menial work while his brothers had time with the prophet.

But his role as shepherd connects David to royalty. In the surrounding cultures, shepherding was often used as a metaphor for kingship. Shepherds have a protective role, like kings; they care for sheep. In 1 Samuel, David's former job of shepherding comes up three separate times, which suggests this mark of kingship potential (16:19; 17:15, 34–36). David's identity as a shepherd-king also foreshadows the coming of a future shepherd-king, who will rule with authority and care as God does.

The characters seem unaware of David's potential. Jesse did not find it necessary to call his youngest son to meet Samuel, and Samuel does not make any explicit connections between David's role as a shepherd and his future role as king. Samuel simply listens for God's direction as each son passes before him; he waits for God's affirmation.

Samuel requests David be brought, and he declares that they will not sit until he arrives (v. 11). Everyone has to wait until the youngest is in attendance. When David finally arrives, he is described as "glowing with health" and "handsome" (v. 12). His appearance is not a return to selection by physical appearance, but it is a secondary consideration that helps to confirm what Samuel is already hearing.

Upon seeing David, Samuel hears a clear directive: "Rise and anoint him; this is the one" (v. 12). Thus David, a man of God's choosing, is to be a future king. This is signaled by pouring oil on his head, in this private setting. Here before his family, God has made the unlikely choice. He has honored the youngest brother from an average family in a small city.

At the moment of his anointing, the text describes the "Spirit of the LORD" rushing upon David (v. 13). The anointing ritually marks David for kingship, physically and spiritually. He was being empowered for his leadership role. From that moment forward, David was set apart as Israel's rightful king.

1 Based on what we see in these verses, why is David an unlikely choice for king?

2 If physical appearance is not important, why might the author mention David's fine appearance?

3 Can you think of other examples when the Spirit of the Lord came upon someone? What do these passages have in common?

Listening to God's Voice

The story of David's anointing illustrates the need for divine guidance in human decisions. When Samuel first looked at Jesse's sons, human wisdom told him to choose the oldest, who was also handsome. Divine guidance told him the eldest was not the one.

Samuel could have easily trusted his first impression but chose to listen for Gods voice, rejecting seven of Jesse's sons, one by one. Samuel would not perform the act of anointing until he heard God say, "This is the one" (1 Sam. 16:12).

I admire Samuel's patience and humility. It would have been easy for him to trust the systems and the realities that he had known. King Saul had been an attractive man of impressive stature. Eldest sons were typically good leaders. Samuel could have relied on his wisdom and experience to choose the next king, but he didn't. Samuel listened for God's voice and did what the Lord required.

Samuel didn't develop attentiveness to God's voice in an instant. He had cultivated a habit of listening to God from the time he was a young boy. Back when he had been assistant to Eli, the priest, he had learned to respond to God by saying, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." (1 Sam. 3:9–10). I can't help but wonder if he whispered that same prayer as Jesse's sons passed before him.

Today's text emphasizes the differences between our human values and God's. As 1 Samuel 16:7 points out, "The LORD does not look at the things people look at." And Samuel's example demonstrates one way to surrender our human vision and embrace the values of God: listening to God's voice. The key is not to be more clever. The key is to surrender the decision and invite God to speak.

1 What are some decisions you have made by relying on human wisdom?

2 What might it look like to hear God's voice today?

3 What are ways we can practice listening to God's voice?

A Heart Worth Emulating

When you think of a man or woman after God's own heart, who comes to mind? Was there a pastor, small group leader, mentor, or friend whose humble and God-focused life made a particular impact on you? Take some time to thank God for that person's influence. Ask the heavenly Father to build your character in the same ways you observed in that person. If possible, consider reaching out to give a word of encouragement.

Heavenly Father, thank You for seeing to the heart. Give me a heart for Jesus like _____.

Key Text

And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. —1 Samuel 16:12 KJV

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."

—1 Samuel 16:12 NIV

Quiet Hour® and Cross Daily Bible Readings

Week of November 23 through November 28

Mon. Psalm 2—God Defends the Chosen King.
Tue. Acts 13:21–25, 32–39—Heir of God's Promises to David.
Wed. Romans 11:22–32—A Deliverer out of Zion.
Thu. Isaiah 33:15–22—Look upon Zion!
Fri. Psalm 132:8–18—The Lord Has Chosen Zion.
Sat. Luke 24:44–49—From Jerusalem to the Nations.

Next Week: 2 Samuel 5:1–12
What would you call your greatest accomplishment—something that you enjoy sharing with others?