

David, Part 1 10-10-21

After God's Heart

This morning we begin a study of the life of David. David is a man described in Scripture with striking superlatives. Acts 13:22 *He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'* Elsewhere, the Lord is speaking to Jeroboam, the king of Israel and says I Kings 14:8 *you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in My sight.* Wow! You can be sure there is plenty for us to learn from such a man and the Scriptures give us more insight into David's relationship with God than we have about anyone else, excepting Jesus and Paul.

His story begins in the middle of I Samuel 16:1 (NLT) *Now the Lord said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."* The date for this is what? The exodus – 1280. Judges 1220-1050. King Saul – 1048-1010. David 1010-970. 16:1-5 (NLT) *Now the Lord said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."* ²*But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."* *"Take a heifer with you," the Lord replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord.* ³*Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me."* ⁴*So Samuel did as the Lord instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Do you come in peace?"* ⁵*"Yes," Samuel replied. "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice."* Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too. So, meet the family of David, fathered by Jesse. We don't know much about this man. He is apparently a middle-class sheep rancher. David's great grandparents were the famous Boaz and Ruth of Biblical fame. I Chronicles 2:12-16 *Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed became the father of Jesse; ¹³and Jesse became the father of Eliab his firstborn, then Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, ¹⁴Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,*

¹⁵Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; ¹⁶and their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. And the three sons of Zeruiah were Abshai, Joab and Asahel. It is possible that David's mother was named Nahash, but we really are not sure. Twice however, David makes reference to his mother in the Psalms, giving indication that she was a godly woman who loved and served the Lord.

So, we read now what happened when Samuel arrived in Bethlehem at the home of Jesse. I Samuel 16:6-13 (NLT) *When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the Lord's anointed!" ⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* ⁸*Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the Lord has chosen."* ⁹*Next Jesse summoned Shimea, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the Lord has chosen."* ¹⁰*In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these."* ¹¹*Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."* ¹²*So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the Lord said, "This is the one; anoint him."* ¹³*So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on.* Great story - let's talk about the important lessons here. First is that God sovereignly chose and called David. God sovereignly, unilaterally, chose and called David. That could be said of every Biblical leader. No one earned a place as a leader for the Lord. In fact, no one even volunteered. God just looked down and plucked up a man here and a man there, and a woman or two as well, to use for His purposes. It was God who sovereignly called Noah to build an ark. He called Abraham to leave his homeland. He called Moses to deliver the nation. Jeremiah was a boy. God called him. Amos was a fig-nipper; God made him a prophet. God chose and called Saul of Tarsus and Mother Mary. He, in every instance is the Initiator. He is the electing, choosing God. The Jews were called God's chosen people. When I was in college, I heard a fellow-student explain to our class that this title really meant that the Jews chose God, not that God chose the Jews. That turns the language of Scripture and the worldview of Scripture on its head. God is the great chooser. Jesus told His followers in John 15:6a *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you.*

So, God affirms here. He says, *I have selected*. Saul was, in a sense, a king for the Jewish people. David was going to be a king for God. I Samuel 13, the Lord speaks to Saul **14** *But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people*. Notice again the subject of the verbs – *the Lord has sought out*, and *the Lord has appointed*. This brought to my remembrance my own story as a pastor. I have been a lead pastor for over 36 years. Two churches – and in neither case did I apply for the position. I was aware of both openings, but did not volunteer. But, thankfully, the Lord overrules and appoints and calls. Don't you know that is what God had done for you? If you are a child of God, a lover of Christ, it is because God sought you and God appointed you to that exalted place, child of God.

David knew this. He understood it. He could have missed it. He could have come to think that it was his great musical ability that got him noticed. Or, his military prowess, especially in the Goliath incident. Why, if anybody earned his stripes it was David. But this man knew that his position and status among men was by God's choosing and God's doing. That is important to remember if you are in a leadership role. You may come to wonder; *How did I get here?* Others will wonder that for you and question you. It is a comfort and a strength to know that God called you. Do you know the part of David's story – when they brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem, the new capitol, and David went out and danced exuberantly in the parade? Then he goes home and his wife, Michal, who was Saul's daughter, complained to him about the immodesty of his dancing. She said he was not presidential, and he embarrassed himself. Listen to David's reply. II Samuel 6:**21** (NLT) *David retorted to Michal, "I was dancing before the Lord, who chose me above your father and all his family! He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord, so I celebrate before the Lord. And then in II Samuel 7, after hearing from God about the future kingdom of David's sons, he is just blown away and says this 7:**18-21** Then David the king went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? ¹⁹And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord God, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord God. ²⁰Again what more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, O Lord God! ²¹For the sake of Your word, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this.*

David asks, *why me?* Why did God choose David? Who can answer? What is the basis of God's choosing? The Bible offers no answer. Romans 9:15 (NLT) *I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.* Sometimes the Lord seems to go out of His way to choose the weak and the least. Among Jesse's sons He chose the youngest, apparently the last one Jesse thought would be honored. He chose Jacob, the younger brother of Esau. He chose Israel, one of the least of the nations of the earth. I Corinthians 1:26-27 (NLT) *Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you.* ²⁷*Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.* But, but, but – God also chose and used the great, and brilliant and powerful. What is God's basis for His calling and electing? We don't know, and David didn't either. But let no man boast before God. He alone sovereignly calls and sovereignly chooses.

The second thing you may note from I Samuel 16 is the priority of the inward over the outward. This comes up in verses 6 and 7. I Samuel 16:6-7 (NLT) *When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the Lord's anointed!"* ⁷*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* King Saul had beaten everyone in outward impressiveness. He was taller than the rest, but he was a flop in God's eyes. Outward impressiveness, good looks, mean nothing in the eyes of God.

This is not to suggest that David was a puny, ugly squirt. No-no. He was probably fairly short, but he was a looker. Verse 12 tells us that. So, it's okay to be good-looking! Aren't you relieved? I know I am. But truly, David had a lot going for him – good looks, musical skill, physical strength. Still, he is described as a man after God's own heart. He had both the outward and the inward, but what really counted? What mattered before God was his heart and David knew this. Read the Psalms and see what concerned David. It was the concerns of the soul. There are plenty of physically and outwardly impressive athletes and musicians and actors who work to do what they do well. The athlete strives to improve his body and increase his skill, but if he loves Christ his deepest concern is the state of his heart. The preacher wants to do his best in his work. He devises good sermons and makes wise leadership moves, but what matters most again is the state of his heart, that which man may never see, but God sees. And, in truth, who really

knows you? Is it not God alone? All I see is your appearance. Now certainly, there is a connection between the inward and the outward. Sometimes our outer person gives away things about our inner person. Sometimes. But the appearance often fools us. Haven't you been fooled plenty by those who looked good, sounded good, but later proved otherwise? And haven't you thought poorly of people you now admire? We can only know each other so well. God looks on the heart. He is the One who really knows you. And, I don't know about you, but it's His approval that I desire, and God places priority on the inward, not the outward.

What does that mean for your life? What do you give attention to? What do you work on? The outside? The carcass? Our society is fanatical about improving the outward and the physical. We pay out billions for exercise programs and sports equipment and health foods and cosmetics and cosmetics and more cosmetics. Clothes, jewelry, decorations. We desperately want to look good and impress! Impress whom? God doesn't focus on that stuff. I'm not saying God favors the out-of-shape, the unkempt, the unattractive. But let's get our values in line with His. How much time and money do you spend improving the outward you? How much time and money do you spend on the inward you? Matthew 23:27 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.* When you come to church, you take time to put on makeup and fix your hair and dress nice. There is some value to that, but what do you do to prepare your heart for worship? Stephen Charnock, in his quaint puritan way asked, *Is our diligence greater to put our hearts in an adoring posture, than our bodies in decent garb? Or are we content to have a muddy heart, so that we may have a dressed carcass?* What I am saying is put so well in Proverbs 4:23 *Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.* Go ahead and fix your hair, shine your shoes, polish your skills – that things are good in their place. But never forget that the eyes of God see through it all – straight to your heart. David had skill and looks and strength, but what made him great in God's eyes was a heart that longed to walk in the paths of righteousness and live by the commandments of his king. The lesson David learned, Samuel learned, we must learn is the priority of the inward over the outward.

David, of course, is a very flawed representative of the One who will be the Son of David, first century version. The perfect King, the anointed One, and the ultimate and perfect Man after God's heart. Jesus actually said this in John 8:29 *He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that*

are pleasing to Him. This is why the Father said of Jesus, - this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. And since you and I have displeased the Father, have not had a heart fully committed to Him, we be wise to place our faith in the Son of God, with full assurance that our faith-connection with Him, will gain us entrance into the glory and joy of the One who was David's king and ours. Let's pray