

David and Samuel

First in a series, "Touched by David"

August 1, 2021, Aledo UMC

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Dave Schultz

Old Testament Lesson, 1 Samuel 16:1-13 by Pastor Dave

16:1 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.

Sermon, “David and Samuel”

In 1 Samuel 10, the prophet Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul represented Israel's initial foray into a monarchy; it didn't go well. Just seven short chapters later, God rejected Saul as king. It turns out that obedience to God wasn't much of a priority for Saul, so God rejected Saul as king of Israel.

It was Samuel's job to deliver the somber news to King, an act which put Samuel's life in danger, for Saul could've taken Samuel's message as treasonous and called for the executer.

Of course, that does not happen, and chapter 16 opens with Samuel mourning the end of Saul's monarchy. “Like most people, Samuel tried to hold on to the past. He had a hard time abandoning the era of the judges in order to establish the monarchy. Now with Saul's kingship having been rejected by God, he mourns the end of Saul's reign.

However, God reminded Samuel that he needed to accept God's judgment of Saul. “Through the centuries, Christians have often been trapped by their inability to turn loose of those things which no longer serve God's purpose. We grow accustomed to institutions, organizations, programs, ways of thinking and ways of doing things. We develop such an emotional attachment to them that long after their usefulness to God is past, we hold tenaciously to them...We often need help from God to turn loose of what is past and to face the future God has planned for us.”¹

We're certainly experiencing that with the remodeling of our choir loft and chancel. I didn't plan it this way, and it didn't dawn on me until the 10:30 service, but that's when I realized that God is in control of our church. For after 16 months of a pandemic, God gave the chancel choir one last opportunity to sing in the old choir loft on *Christmas in July* before remodeling would begin just eight days later.

The choir loft served us well for a hundred years, but worship styles and the means to connect people to Jesus Christ have changed, and the chancel was no longer able to serve our purposes. And after 15 years of trying to “make do,” it was time to turn loose of what was past and create new space which will give us much more versatility as we move forward.

Likewise, it was time for Samuel—and the nation of Israel—to move on.

Saul had been anointed king because he was the “people's choice.” However, Israel's next king was going to be God's choice. And where do you think God turned to find that king? God turned to a family of shepherders.

God dispatches Samuel to anoint the new king of Israel, just as he had once anointed Saul. This puts Samuel at great risk because the throne is not vacant, and Samuel is the guy who makes or breaks monarchies. “A man of Samuel's power and influence could not make such a

¹ Kenneth Chafin in *The Communicator's Commentary on 1 & 2 Samuel*, pg. 133 (Word, 1989).

trip without someone reading into it political implications.”² If Saul learns what Samuel is up to, Saul could have him killed for treason.

To make matters worse, in order to go to the house of Jesse, Samuel would have to go through Gibeah which was Saul’s home. So Saul was given a cover story. He was to take a heifer with him and make a sacrifice to Yahweh in Bethlehem. This would allow the anointing of a new king to be done without creating unnecessary anxiety.

The men of Bethlehem are troubled when Samuel arrives with his heifer. *Are we going to get caught up in some political intrigue and so incur the wrath of Saul? Or is Samuel coming to deliver a word of judgment?* They didn’t know. Fortunately for them, Samuel assures them that he has come in peace.

The sons of Jesse are consecrated and brought before the prophet that he might discern the will of the Lord. The oldest, Eliab, is brought before him and perhaps like his fellow Israelite Saul, Eliab had the right look to be king. He was tall. He was handsome. But he also set the stage for some of the most familiar words in scripture as God says to Samuel:

“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things human beings look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

Making decisions based on appearance had backfired before. And it has backfires down through the ages. There are still far too many people who judge others based on the color of their skin or based on other factors that are merely skin deep. But God looks beyond the surface and probes the human heart. God sees what is there and God changes our story accordingly.

David was the runt of the litter, an outsider in his own family. Shepherding was just about the lowest job in the economy of the Ancient Near East. And David was a shepherd, sent out to spend his days hanging out with sheep. But just as God lifted Moses from the sheepfolds of Horeb, so God lifted David from his own private drudgery to become king of Israel. Ironically, just as God had demonstrated with Moses, God knew that shepherding sheep was just the right incubator for nurturing godly leaders.

In the process, God changed David’s story. No longer would he be relegated to nothing more than shepherding. Rather, he was anointed king, called to lead a nation as he humbly served and obeyed God.

God is still in the business of changing our stories for the better. That’s because God has a plan for your life; God wants to use you to accomplish his purposes in your church, in your neighborhood, and beyond. And when God begins to use you for his purposes, God begins by changing your story.

² Ibid. Also the next paragraph.

When Lizzie Velasquez was 17, she did something that most ordinary 17-year-olds do: she put off doing her homework by searching for music online. What she found changed her life.

She stumbled across a YouTube video entitled "The World's Ugliest Woman". What she didn't expect was that *she* was the young lady featured in the video. The clip was only eight seconds long, but it had been viewed over four million times.

"I was shocked," Lizzie recalled, "but it wasn't until I started to read the comments that my stomach really sank."

Comments like:

"Why would her parents keep her?" and

"Kill it with fire."

There were thousands of comments. Some said she should commit suicide. Another said people would go blind if they saw her on the street. And Lizzie read every single comment.

"I cried for many nights," she said. "As a teenager I thought my life was over. I couldn't bring myself to talk to anybody about it. I didn't tell any of my friends, I was just so shocked that it had happened."

Lizzie was already used to being bullied daily for her appearance. She was born with two rare conditions: she was born with lipodystrophy, which deformed her face. And this next condition hits a little too close to home because Lizzie was also born with a form of Marfan's Syndrome; our grandson Jack was also born with Marfan's.

Lizzie was born in Austin, Texas, and has been in and out of hospitals with a number of health issues throughout her life. She is unable to gain weight, no matter how much she eats.

Today Lizzie is 32 years old. She's 5' 2" and has never weighed more than 64 lbs. in her life. She is totally blind in her right eye and visually impaired in the other.³ (That's why our grandson had preventative eye surgery last month).

Today Lizzie is also a motivational speaker, author, and YouTuber. She especially enjoys sharing her stories with teenagers, helping them "to discover what truly makes us beautiful" and teaching them to recognize their unique gifts and blessings." She talks about how she has learned the importance of choosing to be happy when it's all too easy to give up."⁴ Lizzie's faith in God is strong, and she uses that faith to inspire teens, and help them to see themselves as God sees them. And her encouraging and optimistic YouTube videos have received over 54 million views.

God is using Lizzie in a most unique way. And she will tell you that it all began when she stumbled on that YouTube video. In fact, if she ever has the chance, Lizzie has said she would like to thank the cyber-bully who posted that video⁵ because it led her to question who she really is and she began to see herself as God sees her.

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-ouch-30948179>

⁴ Wikipedia.org.

⁵ <https://www.yahoo.com/health/to-the-person-who-called-me-the-worlds-ugliest-203403966.html>

But that's what God does. God chooses us, not as others might choose us. God knows our hearts. God knows what's inside us. When we feel as though we are unlovable, God shows us that he loves us.

When we feel as though we're nothing but a failure, God gives us purpose in life and leads us into success.

When we feel as though we're irrelevant, God reminds us that we have a critical role in the kingdom of God.

And if all else fails, Jesus reminds us that he was hated and rejected by his own people. They crucified him. He was buried, but he conquered the grave and shares that conquest with us today so that one day, we might dwell with him in eternity.

Thanks be to God.