

LIFE LESSONS – 1 SAMUEL: Seeing as God Sees¹

1 Samuel 16

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you here this morning. If you are a guest with us, thanks for joining us on this Lord's Day. We would love the opportunity to get to know you more. You can help us connect with you by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me, and I look forward to following up with you.

Or feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area. There we have a gift we would love to put in your hands as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. We are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

EASTER 2023:

Before we jump into our study in 1 Samuel, I want to let you know how excited I am getting for Easter here at Trinity. Easter is just 2 weeks away! We are going to have 4 services this year. Saturday, April 8 at 5pm. That will be for the entire family. Sunday, April 9 we will have services at 8, 9:30 and 11am. Each of the Sunday morning services will have activities for kids birth through 6th grade.

We need volunteers to help with a variety of serving opportunities. We will have Easter training on Sunday, April 2 at 5:30pm to equip you to serve on that day. You can sign up by visiting with our staff team or by going to Trinitytx.org/Easter. It's going to be a great day!

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Well, we are in a teaching series we have called "Life Lessons." We are studying the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. Today we are going to study chapter 16 in a message I have entitled, "Seeing As God Sees." I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn there with me.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Underdog Stories

You know, we are all drawn to underdog stories, aren't we. This time of year gives us the ability to see those stories come to life. It is March Madness in college basketball. Any of you pay close attention to that this time of year?

There have already been some big upsets in this year's bracket. How about number 16 seed, Fairleigh Dickinson, beating number 1 seeded Purdue?! And Princeton beating Arizona AND Missouri. Could they be the Cinderella story this year? We shall see.

But we love a good Cinderella story, don't we? The unlikely team winding up at the top. The least likely person getting picked. There is just something heart warming to us about those kinds of stories.

What we have in 1 Samuel 16 is just that. This chapter contains the unfolding of God's plan as it centers on the most unlikely of candidates, David. And so we will see God's strategy, David's selection, and then his service. That will be our outline this morning and then we will look at a couple Life Lessons learned from this passage.

BACKGROUND:

By way of recap, Israel makes a demand for a king. Not in God's timing so God gives them a king, Saul. Unfortunately, Saul turned out to be after personal gain more than God's Kingdom. God rejects Saul's kingship and the search for his replacement will begin. The unlikely David will be that replacement.

Now, something about this chapter that I think is important for us to know before studying it. This chapter is not so much about Saul, or Samuel, or even David. It is more about God. It will communicate to us the fact that The Lord's wisdom is far superior to human wisdom.

MESSAGE:

So, with that background, let's examine of 1 Samuel 16 by first looking at...

1) The Strategy

Following God's rejection of Saul as king of Israel, God communicated His strategy for identifying Saul's replacement. Let's read together beginning in verse 1 of 1 Samuel 16.

1The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?" I think this is very interesting. At the close of chapter 15, Samuel confronts Saul and holds him accountable for his actions. You would think that Samuel would be done with Saul. But he isn't. He's grieving. I think Samuel's heart is broken. He hates the whole situation.

Let's keep going. *Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, **for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.***" This is God's strategy for finding the next king. So, Samuel, get your supplies ready, I'm sending you on a mission. Jesse, by the way, is the grandson of Ruth and Boaz.ⁱⁱ And notice this time, God has for Himself a king. Saul was the people's choice; the next king will be God's choice.

Verse 2. *²And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me."* We can understand Samuel's fear, right? If Saul found out Samuel was going to anoint another king, he would certainly kill Samuel. So, there's a hurdle to carrying out God's strategy. There always is resistance to God's plan, a hurdle to overcome, isn't there? Keep reading. *And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'³ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you."* So, God gave Samuel a task that would help mask the real reason for the trip. God was not asking Samuel to lie like Abraham did, but rather gave him a task to perform that would quell any question Saul had.

Verse 4. *⁴Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him **trembling** and said, "Do you come peaceably?"* Why would the elders of the city be fearful? Well, possibly a couple of reasons.ⁱⁱⁱ Usually, the sacrifice of a heifer was to atone for a murder. Maybe they were wondering if something like that had taken place. But I think it is because of what happened at the end of chapter 15. God had specifically asked Saul to wipe out the Amalekites and he didn't. As a result, Samuel took matters into his own hands. Word of that had probably gotten out.

Verse 5. *⁵And he [being Samuel] said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. **Consecrate** yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.* Consecrate is an action of preparation. To consecrate themselves they had to be considered ceremonially clean. That involved taking a bath, putting on clean clothes, and avoid certain things.^{iv} So, Samuel asked the people to prepare for what God was going to do.

This was the strategy behind identifying the next king of Israel. Secondly, we see...

2) The Selection

Once Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the selection is to be made. Any bachelor or bachelorette fans in the room? You guys know what I'm talking about. The TV show? Where a person selects from a field of people who they want to marry. It's okay to admit you like that show. Anyone? Anyway, I kind of picture that show as I read this passage. Jesse's sons are all brought out to Samuel and he's going to identify the one. Let's pick up the story in verse 6.

*⁶When they came, **he looked on Eliab** [E-lie-ab] and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." Eliab must have looked like a king. Verse 7. ⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his **appearance** or on the **height** of his stature, because I have rejected him. **For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.**"* This is beginning to sound like Saul part two. Remember that Saul was head and shoulders above everyone else and he was more handsome than everyone else. You would think that Samuel had learned his lesson.

As a result, God says, Samuel the way humans look at things is completely different than the way I look at things. God was not looking on the outward appearance, but rather He was examining the heart. If you trace Eliab's story through the remainder of 1 Samuel, he turns out to be arrogant, critical and untrusting of God at key places.^v He may look the part, but he isn't right in his heart.

This process repeats multiple times. In fact, they go through all of Jesse's sons that were at the ceremony and none of them were who The Lord had chosen. Samuel had a problem here. God told him that the next king was Jesse's son. But God didn't choose any of them at this point. So, either Samuel misheard God or God told him wrong. But Samuel trusted God's Word. As a result he asks Jesse, verse 11, *¹¹Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"*

Let's keep reading. *And he [Jesse] said, "There remains yet the **youngest**, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here."¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was **ruddy** and **had beautiful eyes** and was **handsome**. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." A couple things that I want to point out about this description of David. First, he is the "youngest." The word used there in the original language means the smallest.^{vi} Then we learn that David is "ruddy." The term means red-tinted hair or a bronze complexion.^{vii} David also*

had “beautiful eyes,” and was handsome. Now to us, these seem like great attributes. However, when all these descriptors are put together, it describes David as a runt with boyish looks.^{viii} In other words, far from looking kingly.

In fact, David was so small and so far out of consideration that his own father didn't even invite him to the party. Furthermore, we learn that he was out keeping the sheep. This job was reserved for servants, not future kings. By all outward appearances, David's seven brothers seemed to be better king material.^{ix} But David was who God had selected.

You know, this kind of scenario is often repeated in the bible. In Genesis, God chooses the humble offering of poor Abel, not the rich offering of Cain. God blessed the young Jacob over the manly Esau. God used stammering Moses over the slick-talking Aaron. And in 1 Samuel, God chose to use barren Hannah over the fertile Penninah.^x God often chooses unlikely people to do His work.

So, what was it that distinguished David in God's eyes? I think we have to go back to verse 7. *“the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the **heart**.”* It's the heart that God uses.

Verse 13. *“**13Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.*** In these days, Samuel would have anointed David by pouring the entire horn fill with olive oil on his head. It was very symbolic. The oil representing the presence of God would work its way into the hair and pores symbolizing the divine presence of God entering into the one being anointed. And following that process, we read that The Spirit of The Lord rushed upon David and was with him from that day on.

So, we've examined the strategy and the selection of David. Now, let's look at...

3) David's Service

It was not yet David's time to sit on the throne immediately after his anointing. As we are going to see he serves in Saul's court for a period of time.

Now, verses 14 through 23 is actually a skipping forward in the storyline. As we will see in the remainder of our study through the book of 1 Samuel, after

David's anointing a significant amount of time passes. It is uncertain the exact amount of time, but we know following Samuel's anointing, David returned to being a shepherd. But God was working and caused David's path to cross king Saul's path. Let's look at what happens.

Verse 14. *“**14Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him.*** The word translated in my bible “harmful” is sometimes translated, “evil.”^{xi} Now this seems very confusing to us, doesn't it? That doesn't sound like God, right? God is not evil, nor does He do evil. So, what's going on here?

When you read this verse, think a distressing spirit. While God is not the one tormenting him, God did allow this spirit to distress Saul. But again, God is sovereign, and He is working His plan. Look what happens.

Verse 15. *“**15And Saul's servants said to him, “Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. 16Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.” 17So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.” 18One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him.” 19Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.”*** Do you see what God is doing, now?

Verse 20. *“**20And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. 21And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. 22And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.” 23And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.*** God was at work to position David where he needed to be to accomplish God's plan. A perfect example of the sovereignty of God.

LIFE LESSONS:

So much to learn here. I want to mention two things, quickly.

1) Trust God's Sovereign Plan.

Put yourself in David's sandals for just a moment. Here is a guy that has been anointed king yet he goes back to his mediocre life as a shepherd. And perhaps he stayed there for years before the call came to play the lyre for Saul. If I'm David, I'm thinking, "Lord. Did I miss something here? Has there been a mistake? Are you still there?"

But there was no mistake and God was working behind the scenes. But I also think that David being placed in that position was intentional. **God uses the wilderness to prepare his leaders.**^{xii} The same is true for you and me. God uses the seeming wilderness in our lives to prepare us for what He has for us.

Think about how God used this in David's life.^{xiii} It was while he was tending sheep that he honed his skill with the slingshot. He would use that to fend off predators. And we will see next week how that skill came in handy in his dealings with Goliath.

It is also in the wilderness that he was able to practice the lyre. When you read that in the Bible think guitar. That time was needed so that he could come into Saul's service. David would also become a famous songwriter.

It was in the wilderness that David penned some of his most powerful Psalms that minister to us today in our times of need.

It was while tending sheep that David developed courage. To protect the flock, he had to do battle with a lion and a bear.

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Robert D. Bergen, "The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7," B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996; Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, "Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel," Holman: Nashville, 2016; Bill T. Arnold, "The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel," Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2003; Ray Fowler, Various works, published by Ray Fowler Ministries, accessed online: <https://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/1-samuel>; David Guzik, "Enduring Word Commentary," various articles, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-samuel-16/>; J.D. Greear, "The Blank Spaces," sermon preached at Summit Church on August 29, 2022, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/the-blank-spaces>; Skip Heitzig, "Expound: 1 Samuel 16 – 17:31," message taught at Calvary Church, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/314/sermon/4588>.

ⁱⁱ David Guzik, "Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Samuel 16 – God Chooses David," accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-samuel-16/>.

It was also in this time that David learned humility. Cleaning sheep even after being anointed king will teach you that. But that quality would serve him all the days of his life.

It was in the wilderness that David learned to care for people, how to take care of a flock, and learned to trust God's plan even when it didn't make sense.

David's years keeping sheep were not wasted time, they were training time. David became a great man and a great king over Israel. One of the reasons for that is because he never lost his shepherd's heart. God was taking what was a wilderness season in David's life to shape him into the man Israel needed. The same is true for you. Perhaps you feel like you are in the wilderness of life right now. Maybe you're in a dead-end job. Maybe your wilderness is struggle in your marriage. Maybe you are asking God and wondering what He has for you? Maybe your wilderness is some sort of suffering you are juggling. Or maybe your wilderness is different. But know this, whatever wilderness you are in, God is using it to prepare you for He has for you.

Don't waste your pasture. Don't waste your suffering. Be faithful where God has you know that He is working something in you. Trust God's sovereign plan.

2) Character is of Most Importance.

CONCLUSION:

ENDNOTES:

ⁱⁱⁱ These views were pointed out Robert D. Bergen, page 178.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v J.D. Greear.

^{vi} Strong's Concordance, 6996.

^{vii} Bergen, p. 179.

^{viii} Thomas and Greear, p. 122.

^{ix} Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*, 1 Samuel 16.

^x J.D. Greear

^{xi} Strong's Concordance, 7451.

^{xii} Quip taken from J.D. Greear.

^{xiii} Examples pointed out by Chuck Swindoll.