

SERMON I Samuel 16:1-13
I DON'T KNOW MUCH

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." And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But 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."

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.

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 his physical 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." 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."

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." 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!" 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.

When I was traveling by plane last week, a member picked me up at the airport and asked, "Do we turn right or left?" I answered confidently, "Right." In a very short time we both figured out, it should have been left. "Hmm. I guess I don't know anything." That's exactly how it works with mankind and God. That's exactly how it worked in our text. In spite of everything we know, we can't see the big picture and really don't know much at all.

The prophet Samuel had been through a trying time. God had commanded him to anoint Saul as king of Israel. (ANNOINT: To pour a special blend of fragrant oils on someone to set them apart for God's work—priests, prophets, and kings.) Samuel anointed Saul, and Samuel worked with Saul to keep him on the Lord's path. However, he saw Saul drift from the Lord. Saul was interested in himself. Samuel saw Saul's reign over God's people go to ruin. God finally commanded Samuel to tell Saul that the Lord had rejected him as king. It was stressful and difficult for the prophet. That was the situation at the opening of our text. *Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?"*

Samuel was unhappy with the way things had gone. I'm quite sure he was disappointed with Saul. Likely he felt that all his work with Saul was a big waste. Maybe he was even dissatisfied that God had made Saul king in the first place and allowed things go to pieces as they did. He "mourned" for Saul, was languid, walked-about with his head and face downcast. Do you ever feel that way? Discouraged, sad, defeated, with head and shoulders sagging, because things didn't turn out the way you had hoped, or planned, or thought they should. Like Samuel, it's easy to fall into the self-pity bag and mope along in life, depressed. But all is not lost. God knows exactly what is going on. He knows how you got where you are and why. He knows what is your fault and what is not. His goal remains much bigger than just your physical happiness and length of days. He is interested in you personally and in your relationship with Him. He is not ignoring you, nor has He forgotten you. He is filled with a heart of love for you. All the sins that disqualify you from His love are removed far from you, in His Son. Transgressions, iniquities, unrighteousness-es, sins, are dropped from your record--for Jesus' sake. Jesus balanced the scales for you when He was punished on the cross in your place. Jesus brought forgiveness and life, for you, when He rose from the grave. God is weaving together all the events in this world and in your life, so as to bring you and others into His arms through Jesus. Don't "mourn." Trust Him.

God said to Samuel, *I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.* God was saying to Samuel, "All is not lost. I have plans for you, work to do. Anoint a new king, far different from Saul. This is what I want." When you mourn your situation in life, open your eyes to see how God is leading you through new doors, to new situations, each of which will lead you and others closer to the love of God in Christ. Like Samuel, we don't know much of anything--compared to God's wise, loving, powerful perspective. You and I can only see small little glimpses.

Samuel objected, “*How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.*” Saul was still on the throne and was not a fan of Samuel’s anymore. Samuel thought God’s plan didn’t seem like a good plan. But once again, what did Samuel know? God was sending Samuel to Jesse of Bethlehem, not to run an anti-Saul campaign, but for spiritual purposes, to prepare the next man for the kingship of God’s people after Saul, who would exclude himself by suicide, was gone. Samuel went “in peace” as he told the leaders of Bethlehem. He went in the peace of God, to sacrifice to the Lord and point the people to the God of their Rescue. When discouragement comes your way, see the new doors. Get back up and serve the Lord. He has wonderfully wiped away all failures and sins from your record through the Redeemer. If there is medical help from doctors and clinics, make use of it. But by all means look to the clean, righteous record God gives you in Christ. Look to the eternal life after death awaiting you in the living Jesus. Go forward in peace, not bitterness or mourning. Go forward. Serve Him and His kingdom with joy and confidence in whatever place, old or new, God puts you in this life, whether outwardly pleasant or not.

As our text goes on, Samuel must have begun to feel that he was finally getting things figured out. But what did Samuel know? He went to Bethlehem to anoint a new king. He was there with Jesse to anoint one of Jesse’s sons as Saul’s successor. *So it was, when they [Jesse’s sons] came, that he looked at Eliab [the oldest] and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him!”* Samuel thought “This has to be the one! Looks good to me.” But how much did Samuel know? *The LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance [at the eyes], but the LORD looks at the heart.”* Man’s basis for judging things as good/bad, desirable/undesirable, right/wrong is not trustworthy. We can only make outward judgments. What God says is important. What does God’s Word say? If it’s not something that the Word covers, get input from respected Christian friends. If it’s something like “Do I purchase X, or purchase Y?” examine your motives, pray for wisdom, see where the Lord is leading you. To make hasty, self-promoting decisions in life is counterproductive. How much do you really know?

Seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel. None were chosen. The eighth and youngest, named David, wasn’t even considered old enough to be home for the matter. He was out tending sheep in the field. Jesse called him in—maybe “barn clothes” and all. The text says *He was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!”* God picked David! “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.” (Isaiah 55:8-9) The brothers probably said, “He picked David?!” Similarly, would you have picked over-confident Peter as a disciple of Jesus, or tax-collector Matthew as a disciple of Jesus? Would you have picked Mary from Nothing-ville Nazareth, engaged to a common carpenter, to be the mother of the Savior? God looks at the heart. The simple childlike faith of David was the quality needed in the King of God’s people. With confidence and trust in His Lord, David would also attack Goliath using only a sling shot as his weapon. God gave David success. God has likewise brought you into His Holy Christian Church and into His Kingdom without any outward qualifications. In childlike faith, trust Him. Go forward.

Something else Samuel likely did not know, was that this anointed King David would be the forefather of the real Anointed King—Jesus. Jesus would be born from David’s kingly line. Mary, his mother, was a descendant of King David. Likewise Joseph his adoptive father was a descendant of David. Jesus would be “anointed.” It was not a physical anointing, but “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.” (Acts 10:38). At Jesus’ baptism at age 30, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. The Holy Spirit would encourage and counsel Him to carry out His work of salvation for all. Jesus would serve as our Priest, sacrificing Himself before God. Jesus would serve as our prophet, declaring the Good News of God’s forgiveness and salvation to us. Jesus would serve as our King, keeping us safe now and forever.

One more thing: Do you know which name, which title, given to Jesus actually means “The Anointed One”? It’s “Christ.” Jesus is our “Christ,” our Anointed One. God’s Son became the anointed King David’s even greater Son—our anointed prophet, priest, and king—our Savior. In a little different sense, you too have been anointed! At your baptism you were anointed, you were “christened,” in the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). God is with you too in a very special way. You are His adopted child.

So then, how much do you need to know, about this life’s journey? Really nothing. Your Triune God leads the way. You have been carefully carried and guided in the Father’s arms of love. You have been lovingly purchased and redeemed from sin by Jesus’ the Good Shepherd who gave His life for you and rose again. You have been warmly and wisely counseled by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God in your heart pointing you to the Savior. Do not mourn, do not fret, do not think you have to lead the way. God knows everything. And Jesus, great David’s greater son, is your KING!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---