

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 4TH-5TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

HOW LONG WILL YOU MOURN? (1 SAMUEL 16:1-5)

After Saul's failure to obey God, Samuel had returned home in mourning to his home in Ramah (1 Samuel 15:35).

- If you've ever been deeply disappointed and hurt by someone you trusted, you know what it's like to mourn like this.
- Even though God's judgment had been pronounced on him, Saul was still in office and unfit to lead the nation.

Samuel is grieving for Israel, but he probably also feels like a failure as a prophet and a spiritual mentor for the new king.

- The Lord says to Samuel, How long are you going to mourn for Saul? It's time to move on and anoint the new king. (vs. 1).
- Moving on from grief, disappointment, and loss is a scary proposition—mourning and grief are unpleasant, but to some of us they're at least familiar.

There's a time to mourn (Ecclesiastes 3:4), but there's also a time to move on and act (Joshua 7:10).

- God won't reveal to you a new thing or new season if you're unwilling to leave the old.
- There are times when God has a fresh commissioning for a new task or mission for us, but it requires us to stop wallowing in grief or even self-pity. Your pain cannot define you—who you are in Christ defines you!

The Lord commissions Samuel to go to Jesse of Bethlehem because one of his sons will be the new king of Israel (vs. 1).

- Samuel is afraid of anointing a new king—the current king, Saul, is quite passionate about his own agenda, honor, and renown.
- If Saul hears that Samuel is anointing a new king, he'll kill Samuel (vs. 2), so the Lord provides Samuel with a bit of an alibi (vs. 3).

Samuel is to go to Bethlehem to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and invite Jesse (vs. 3).

- Then the Lord will show Samuel which son of Jesse will be the new king.
- As Samuel arrives at Bethlehem, the elders of the city are terrified by his presence and ask, "Do you come in peace?" (vs. 4).
- Perhaps they're afraid that Samuel's presence indicates God's judgment.

Samuel calmed the elders' fears by assuring them he came in peace and telling them to consecrate themselves (ritual cleanness—bathing, clean clothes, avoiding contact with anything dead or unclean, etc.) and come to the sacrifice along with Jesse and his sons (vs. 5).

- The stage is set for God to reveal His sovereign choice for the new king.
- God's ways are not our ways.

THE LORD SEES THE HEART (1 SAMUEL 16:6-13)

Jesse's first son, Eliab, looked to Samuel like a great choice for king—but neither he, Abinidab, Shammah, nor any of Jesse's seven sons were the Lord's chosen (vs. 6, 8-10).

- Samuel is impressed by the external appearance of these young men, but God made it very clear to him that God sees and values what humans cannot see.
- God sees and values the heart (vs. 7).

In one sense, this attribute of God's value system in His Kingdom is great news and a relief to us.

- Can any of us measure up to the world's criteria of what makes someone "valuable"?
- Humanity focuses so heavily on our outward appearance—we strive to have the perfect body, the most stunning fashion sense, a successful career, a beautiful spouse and children, and a perfect social media presence.

As human beings, we focus so heavily on "appearance" and "stature," yet at times, we can all feel this tremendous sense of insecurity and inadequacy in not being able to measure up.

- God doesn't value those things the same way human beings tend to.
- God values and is concerned with our heart—the true state of our inner character and our soul.
- Who we really are is who we are on the inside.

In another sense, this is a bit troublesome—who among us has the right kind of heart before God?

- We so often spend time thinking about our outward appearance, but do we think about the quality of our hearts and inner character?
- God doesn't require perfection from us, but He does require our hearts to be fully committed to Him so He can transform us (Matthew 22:37).

Outwardly, Jesse's seven sons seem qualified, but God weighs each of their hearts and, for some reason, finds them lacking (vs. 8-11).

- After all seven sons were not chosen by God, Samuel asked a strange question: "Jesse, do you have any other sons?"
- The fact that the youngest, David, wasn't even invited to this event speaks to the fact that no one thought of him as "king material".

David is a shepherd: this was a menial job that didn't require a skill set, so it was usually a job reserved for slaves or social rejects.

- David is the youngest (10-15 years old) and probably the smallest ("youngest" might also be a pejorative which means "tiniest").
- David's physical description in verse 12 indicates he's boyish and cute—he doesn't look like a mighty warrior king like his brothers.

By all accounts, David is outwardly unimpressive and an unlikely choice to be king. But God saw his heart, and something in the heart of David pleased the Lord.

- David's heart was one of faith and commitment to loving, fearing, and following the Lord.
- God told Samuel that David was His choice to be king, so Samuel took the horn of oil and poured it out over David to anoint him as the king of Israel (vs. 13).

As David is anointed, the Spirit of the Lord powerfully falls upon him.

- David does extraordinary things in his life—but at this point, he's a very ordinary young man.
- The only thing that makes this ordinary young man capable of doing extraordinary, noteworthy things is the presence of the Spirit of God in his life.
- God's Spirit in David is the hero, not David.

MUSIC THERAPY (1 SAMUEL 16:14-23)

As the Holy Spirit came upon David, the Holy Spirit left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the Lord began to torment him (vs. 14).

- The Lord "sent" this evil spirit in the sense that God permitted or allowed it to torment Saul because of Saul's sin and rebellion.
- When we remove ourselves from the hand of God's protection through sin, it opens the door to the activity and presence of evil.

Saul's servants were able to see that his situation was spiritual in nature, and they began to seek a solution (vs. 15-17).

- The servants' solution was to find a musician who knew how to play the lyre (a stringed instrument).
- When the evil spirit showed up and began to torment Saul, the musician could play, and Saul would be helped.

Music is powerful—music has the ability to touch people emotionally and even spiritually, and it can communicate to our inner being without words.

- Music can be used for great evil (Daniel 3:5), or it can be used for great good (2 Chronicles 5:13).
- God created music, and with it, we can worship Him and communicate love, peace, and beauty for God's glory and to be a blessing to others.

The musician nominated to help Saul is none other than David, the boy who would be king (vs. 18).

- David is described as a skillful musician—he knew how to play the lyre (hours spent alone in a pasture will help with that).
- David has also grown into a valiant warrior—days spent chasing off lions and bears threatening his sheep had made him brave (17:34-35).

David was handsome and eloquent, but more important than anything else, "the Lord [was] with him."

- David had spent a lot of time with the Lord worshipping and praying, and now he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- There must have been something about David's music that was powerful and spirit-filled!
- David enters the court of Saul and quickly wins Saul's favor (vs. 19-21).

David became Saul's chief assistant in battle ("armor-bearer") and would play his lyre for Saul anytime the evil spirit would come to torment him (vs. 21-23).

- David knew God had anointed him to be king someday, but for now, he simply served the Lord however and wherever he could.
- God was at work through it all! David's heart was one of trust and commitment to God's plan and timing.

HUMANS SEE WHAT IS VISIBLE...

- Our broken human condition focuses on external, physical features rather than spiritual realities.
- The first temptation of humanity centered around valuing physical beauty over spiritual goodness (Genesis 3:6).
- When Jesus the Messiah came onto the scene, He was rejected because he wasn't physically beautiful or impressive (Isaiah 53:2).
- Because of our fallen condition, we often fail to use the lens of faith given to us by God's Word to see the spiritual realities beneath the surface of the physical.
- We chase after physical solutions for spiritual problems, thinking those things will satisfy and fix us as spiritual beings—but we come up short every single time.

...BUT THE LORD SEES THE HEART.

- Our greatest problem, no matter the particular manifestation of it, is spiritual in nature.
 - Our problems in life usually have something to do with God not ruling and reigning in our hearts as King and us failing to trust in Him fully.
 - God's rule and reign in our hearts will result in obedience to Him in our lives, which will lead to our peace, joy, and hope.
 - God values and is concerned with our heart—the true state of our inner character and our soul.
 - God wants us to have a heart of faith and commitment to loving, fearing, and following Him above everything else in life.
 - God can give you a new heart when you put faith in Christ (Ezekiel 36:26). He can change and cleanse your heart if you've strayed from Him.
1. We must stop judging other human beings by appearances—we can make very inaccurate assumptions about others in our humanity.
 2. We must stop living for the world's value systems. Trying to gain significance through performance and our image leads to exhaustion, burn-out, frustration, insecurity, and duplicity.
 3. We must believe the gospel—Jesus died our death on the cross to save humanity from our greatest problem (sin and separation from God) and to give us a new heart.
 4. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change us and give us a heart that surrenders to the rule and reign of Jesus as King.