

brentwood baptist

HUMAN: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE REAL

A REAL THREAT

1 SAMUEL 16:1-23

AUGUST 13, 2023

MAIN POINT

God knows our hearts and He calls humble, unexpected people into service.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Why do we tend to look at external characteristics when we evaluate people? How might this not be the most effective way to evaluate a person?

When is the last time someone you were not impressed with at first ended up making a good impression on you at a later time? What lesson did you learn?

First impressions are easy to gain and difficult to lose. First impressions almost prevented David from becoming king of Israel.

God ordered the prophet Samuel to go to David's hometown of Bethlehem, approach the home of Jesse, and anoint the new king of Israel from among Jesse's many sons. How would the prophet recognize the new king? God would show him the man He had chosen. But it would not keep Samuel from trying to guess which one of Jesse's sons was going to be king. Samuel probably guessed based on the same factors we would use today—the person's height, strength, and beauty—in essence, his outward appearance. But Samuel was wrong, and he was pleasantly surprised at God's choice for the new king.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ 1 SAMUEL 16:1-5.

David was called because of God's sovereign choice. The new king had been chosen from a working-class family in a small town called Bethlehem. The new king was just a young man, a shepherd, and not someone who had worked his way up to the position—he was simply chosen by God. At this time, David had no clue that his life was about to change so dramatically—he was simply carrying out his responsibilities, faithfully serving his family.

What is your initial reaction to these verses?

Do you believe that God has at some point sovereignly chosen you to serve Him in some way, or do you feel more like He has passed over you? Explain.

READ I SAMUEL 16:6-13.

Why do you think all of the sons of Jesse were called to stand before Samuel except for David? What does this tell us about Jesse's thought process?

According to verse 7, what is the new truth Samuel learned about how God chooses people to serve Him?

If you were one of David's seven brothers and not chosen to be king, what kinds of emotions might you have felt when you were passed over? Does this echo any other Old Testament story?

In what ways does our society advance the idea that "pretty people" should be the leaders?

Samuel learned a valuable lesson on this day. He was sure that he knew which one of Jesse's sons God had chosen to be king simply based on the person's appearance and position in the family. How wrong he was! God let the prophet Samuel know that character was more important than position and beauty. Rather than for his looks, David was noticed for his excellent character.

READ I SAMUEL 16:14-18.

David's reputation positioned him for greater responsibilities even though he did not seek the spotlight.

If someone asked a co-worker or a friend of yours about your reputation, what would he or she say about you?

According to the passage, what was David known for?

What are the implications of the servant's report in verse 18?

READ I SAMUEL 16:19-23.

How did David's role as a shepherd prepare him for future responsibilities in Saul's court? What lessons might have he learned "chasing sheep" that he later used as a servant of his king?

If you were the father, Jesse, what emotions might you have felt when you said goodbye to your youngest son, knowing he was going to serve Israel's king?

Why do you believe God chooses humble, seemingly insignificant people like David to do important things in His kingdom?

How did God use David's age, occupation, and position in his family to prepare him to be a successful servant in King Saul's court?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

With which character in the story do you most closely identify? Based on your answer, what do you need to say to God right now?

How have you mistakenly judged someone based on external factors? Is there anyone to whom you should approach and apologize for discriminating against him or her?

Looking back, how has God prepared you to serve Him over the course of your life?

How might God be calling you to serve the people in your church or Bible study group through the use of your time, talents, gifts, and experiences?

PRAYER

Ask the Lord to show you how He wants to use each of you in service to Himself and others. Thank Him for looking past the surface of things and seeing the real person underneath. Praise Him for not only selecting you to serve, but also for the way in which He sovereignly selected you to be a part of His "forever family."

COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 16:1-23

16:1 How much time had passed since the end of chapter 15 is unknown. At any rate, God wanted to move ahead with His plan. The command Fill your horn with oil meant God had someone in mind for Samuel to anoint as king. Jesse appears here for the first time in the book. His connection with Bethlehem is spelled out in the book of Ruth (Ru 4:17,22).

16:2 Samuel had told Saul that God had rejected his kingship and had chosen another to lead Israel. Consequently, Samuel's travels would be of great interest to Saul. Samuel feared Saul would consider it treason if Samuel anointed another man as king. A young cow might be sacrificed in a region where an unsolved murder had occurred (Dt 21:1-9). It is also possible that bringing a sacrifice to the Lord merely provided a pretext for Samuel to hide the primary purpose of his journey.

16:3 The presence of Jesse was crucial since one of his sons was to succeed Saul.

16:4 The trembling of the elders of the town may indicate they feared Saul's wrath if they gave support to Samuel.

16:5 Consecrate means to set oneself apart to God. It involved entering into ritual cleanness. No set “consecration checklist” appears in Scripture, though bathing, putting on clean garments, avoiding contact with a dead body, and suspension of sexual relations are mentioned in various consecration contexts. He consecrated Jesse and his sons probably means Samuel oversaw their consecration at their home.

16:6 Jesse’s son Eliab later served in Saul’s army (17:13,28); he apparently looked like kingly material.

16:7 Saul also had appearance and stature, but he had proved unworthy.

16:8-9 Jesse’s sons Abinadab and Shammah also served in Saul’s army (17:13).

16:11 The task of tending the sheep often fell to the youngest. In Bedouin cultures, such work was often the task of young girls (Gen 29:9), but David’s sister Zeruah (1Ch 2:16) is not mentioned in the narrative.

16:12 The Hebrew word behind healthy is related to the word for “red” and may describe either David’s reddish-toned hair or skin. Beautiful eyes and a... handsome appearance might help a king’s credibility, but ultimately God looks at the heart.

16:13 Despite God’s choice of David through Samuel, apparently at least Eliab doubted David’s heart (17:28). It is also possible that Samuel did not reveal to David’s brothers the mission to which God was calling David. The Spirit of the Lord took control of David just as He had done with Saul earlier (10:6,10; 11:6), empowering David for God’s service. Samuel’s route from Bethlehem to Ramah would have normally taken him directly past or through Gibeah.

16:14 The theological difficulty of the expression evil spirit... from the Lord may be resolved in one of two ways. God may have intended the evil spirit as redemptive—designed to turn Saul to repentance. Or God may have intended the evil spirit as His instrument of judgment against the rebellious king. God is completely righteous, hates evil, and never does anything unjust, yet He makes use of demons (against their evil intention) to accomplish His good purposes (cp. Job 1:6-12).

16:18 One of the young men of Saul’s court apparently knew David well, because he described several good qualities beyond David’s musical skill. Warrior may be anticipatory (suggesting David seemed to have the qualities that would make a good warrior) since it does not seem that at this stage of life David was accustomed to fighting in battle (17:14-15). The Lord is with him describes David’s spiritual qualifications, which would prove important as the drama unfolded.

16:20 The items donkey... bread... wine, and goat were either Jesse’s gift to Saul or a contribution to David’s sustenance in the royal court. No biblical evidence indicates when Saul initiated a national tax system for providing the palace’s needs, but such taxes are assumed in 17:25.

16:21 David became King Saul's armor-bearer, a position that would keep him closer to Saul, who admired (lit "loved") him greatly.

16:23 Being close to Saul also meant David could pick up his lyre quickly and play if the king felt troubled. Meanwhile, God was continuing to prepare David for the day he would become king.