



A Kingdom Established • Samuel Anoints David • 1 Samuel 16:1-13 • 10/14/2018

Main Point

God wants to make you a person after His own heart, a person with the character of Christ.

Introduction

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

What is the best first impression someone has ever made on you? What is the worst?

Why are we often impressed by other people's surface qualities, like appearances, social status, and power? What traits does a person of strong character possess?

Understanding

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

God led the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first king (see 1 Sam. 8–9). However, in 1 Samuel 15, Samuel told Saul that, because of his disobedience, the kingdom would be torn from him and given to another. The new person God picked to be anointed as king was chosen for his heart, not his appearance or position in life.

| have a volunteer read 1 samuel 16:1-3.

What is Samuel mourning at the start of this passage? Why and when did God reject Saul?

Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14 and 15:10-11 to aid in your discussion.

No one could have had more potential and opportunity than Saul when he became king of Israel. God used Saul's courage to rally Israel and to win victories over the Philistines. Unfortunately, Saul failed to live up to his potential. He directly disobeyed a command God had given him through Samuel and took it on himself to offer sacrifices to seek the Lord's help. Samuel sternly rebuked him, saying that the Lord had selected another leader of His people, "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22; 1 Sam. 13:8-14). God's rejection of Saul as king grieved Samuel.

How was God’s power and purpose demonstrated in these passages? Where do you see God’s power demonstrated in your own life?

According to Scripture, the king was to be chosen by God (see Deut. 17:15) and the sovereign God had rejected Saul and was taking the initiative in selecting the next king. When Samuel realized the Lord’s purpose, he was greatly concerned for his own safety. God promised His servant, “I’ll let you know what you should do.” Instead of dwelling on his fear, Samuel was to focus on obeying God.

Why are trust and obedience such hard things for us to learn? Other than God, what battles for your trust?

This passage is a reminder for us of God’s sovereignty—His power, and authority over everything in our world. In what aspect of your life do you most need that reminder right now?

God expects us to live by faith. Let us keep in mind that He is the sovereign God. We do not direct Him; He directs us. He does not exist to serve us; we are to serve Him. In serving Him, we discover what Jesus described as life “in abundance” (John 10:10). That comes as we fulfill the purposes God had in mind when He created us and saved us (see Eph. 2:10).

| have a volunteer read 1 samuel 16:4-10.

Why did Samuel initially think Eliab was the Lord’s anointed? What’s the irony here (see 10:23-24)?

What does verse 7 suggest about the qualities God counts as most important for His servants? What would you consider qualities of the heart that are necessary for serving God?

Eliab evidently had the physical features of a star actor or athlete, looking every bit the part of a potential king. As Jesse’s oldest son stood before him, Samuel must have compared him with the tall and impressive Saul (1 Sam. 10:23-24). Our culture also evaluates people by their appearance, social status, and other superficial traits. Nevertheless, people do not see what God sees.

Ask group members to read Matthew 5:3-10; Hebrews 11:6; and 12:1. What qualities of godly character are included in these verses? Of those listed, which is the most difficult for you to emulate, and why?

No doubt to Samuel’s amazement, the Lord told him not to consider the young man’s appearance or his stature because the Lord had rejected him. What makes a person useful to God for leadership and service? God places priority on the heart, which refers to the center of our inner being. It is considered to be the seat of the will, emotions, thoughts, conscience, and moral character—that which makes one a person. The key to

our being right with God and man is the condition of our hearts. The Lord focuses on the unseen qualities like faith, purity, loyalty, humility, and obedience.

| have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 16:11-13.

What characteristic would seem to hinder David from being anointed as king (v. 11)?

What did David's faithfulness in watching the sheep say about his character? How did this prepare him for the future (see 1 Sam. 17:34-37; Ps. 23)?

Tending sheep helped prepare David to rule Israel. "Shepherd" would become a symbolic job description for king. God intended for the king to care for people with the same compassion that a shepherd gives to the flock. Furthermore, David's encounters with predators developed skills that later became useful in combat.

What was the real secret of David's power that enabled him to accomplish God's work (v. 13)? What does the Holy Spirit's influence on our hearts look like?

David was not the king the people expected. How was Jesus also an unexpected king? Compare and contrast Jesus with David.

If we work hard enough we might one day achieve the sort of character modeled by David. And in doing that, we could pride ourselves on being someone after God's heart. The perfect character of Christ, though, cannot be achieved, only received. Because Jesus lived a life of perfect character and died as a perfect sacrifice, we can have, in the eyes of God, the exact character of Christ. Then, when God looks on the heart, He doesn't see some half-formed virtues, He sees Jesus.

Application

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

What are some practical ways our church family can encourage one another to move beyond the surface and shallow to pursue the character of Christ?

How can our small group be a model for godly character in our relationships with each other and our service to the church?

Think about the amount of time you spend each day on your outward appearance, the way you're perceived at the office, or your social media persona. How does that amount of time compare to the work you put into applying the gospel to your character? What needs to change?

Pray

Thank God for giving us new hearts through faith in Christ. Pray that we will be people who strive for godly character by pursuing things like faith, purity, loyalty, humility, and obedience.

Commentary

| 1 Samuel 16:1-13

16:1. Samuel had anointed Saul as king. Saul's failure hurt the prophet deeply, but he was not alone. The Lord also had grieved over Saul's conduct. The Lord confronted Samuel about his continuing distress over Saul and instructed Samuel to go to Bethlehem to the home of Jesse. The verb mourn usually refers to a rite that is observed for the dead. Biblical mourning involved human emotion and usually was expressed both audibly and visibly. Possibly Samuel moaned aloud and hung his head in despondency. Certainly he hovered in a state of mental and spiritual depression.

As chapter 15 shows, the Lord had spoken to Samuel about Saul's failure to conform to His will. Here the Lord spoke to Samuel about the prophet's attitude. The time for mourning was past; the time for action had come. The prophet's mission was identified in three specific actions. First, Samuel was to "fill his horn with oil." Then he was to go to the home of "Jesse of Bethlehem." Third, he would anoint one of Jesse's sons to become the next king. God would identify the particular son at the appropriate time.

16:2-3. Samuel's assignment was simple. He was to anoint a new king. He already had announced God's rejection of Saul. However, the prophet's inquiry reflected the inherent danger of the task. Samuel had legitimate concerns about how Saul would interpret his anointing one of Jesse's sons as king. While the prophet might have divine authority, the king had the political will and the armed power to act if he knew about Samuel's taking action to replace him. So the Lord gave Samuel a second task that would mask the primary purpose of his visit to Bethlehem. As a priest, Samuel was authorized to offer sacrifices. This act doubtless was intended to designate Samuel's visit to Bethlehem as religious and not political. What on the surface might appear to be a strategic tactic of rebellion was in reality just the opposite. In ancient Israel the king was a representative of God. His appointment was sacred, not secular. Samuel followed the Lord's directions concerning his visit to Bethlehem. He assured the town's leaders of his peaceful intentions and invited Jesse's family to be special attendees as a sacrifice. In doing so he emphasized the king served at God's prerogative. Not knowing whom he would anoint demanded faith on the part of Samuel. He had to trust that God would speak to him at the appropriate time.

16:4. Perhaps the elders trembled because they interpreted Samuel's appearance as an indication a murder had occurred in the area. According to Deuteronomy 21:1-9, the ritual surrounding an unsolved murder prescribed that a priest break the neck of a young cow. Samuel was a priest, and he came to Bethlehem with a

young cow. Or, perhaps the recent execution of Agag may have been in their minds and the leaders feared they had incurred Samuel's displeasure. He might exhibit similar violent behavior toward them if they had offended him in some manner. Or they may have been aware of the discord between Samuel and Saul. If so, they were terrified that any possible action on Samuel's part to subvert the reigning monarch would bring royal retribution against their community.

16:5-6. "Consecrate" refers to becoming ritually clean. The specific guidelines are uncertain, but they presumably involved bathing, putting on clean garments, abstaining from sexual activity, and avoiding contact with unclean objects (such as a corpse). The consecration of Jesse and his sons demonstrated Samuel's complete obedience. The incident would require that he fully comply with God's revelation and not merely do what he wanted to do. Samuel did not know whom the Lord had selected. Therefore the prophet began to guess at who might be chosen. However, his faulty insight led him to the wrong conclusion. Eliab was Jesse's firstborn son. His appearance compared favorably to Saul's appearance (see 1 Sam. 10:23-24). Samuel incorrectly guessed Eliab's height and appearance qualified him to be king (v. 7).

16:7. As Samuel sized up Jesse's oldest son, he felt confident this was the Lord's choice for king. Before Samuel could pour oil on Eliab's head, however, the Lord ended his silence. The Lord then explained He looks at people's hearts and not just their physical features. God's words were not what Samuel expected. Having been disappointed over Saul and having been corrected concerning Eliab, Samuel then showed where his priority was. He would listen to God's voice, look for God's choice, and advance God's purposes. External appearance does not qualify an individual to govern. The language of the Lord's rebuff linked Eliab to Saul—I have rejected him. Here, God's decision was not based on Eliab's previous behavior. Instead, it reinforced the weakness of human methodology and reminded Samuel of the vast difference between our methods and God's.

God's statement that "the LORD sees the heart" is the crux of this passage. The heart refers to human volition. God is much, much different from humans (see Isa. 55:8-9). His thinking and His ways are unlike those of people. His methods cannot be understood by mortal minds and are vastly superior to those of the human race. People often base decisions on visible perceptions. God's actions are based on information inaccessible to a human being. God knows and understands human volition. The message of the cross of Jesus is an example of God's methodology (see 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5).

16:8-11. A second son was brought before Samuel. This time "Jesse called Abinadab," but God also rejected him. A third son, Shammah, was brought before Samuel. Once more, God did not select him. God rejected seven consecutive sons of Jesse. They were the only sons present on this occasion. A perplexing situation confronted Samuel. God's revelation seemed contradictory. God had instructed him to anoint a son of Jesse as the next king. But then God rejected each son presented to Samuel. Rather than give up in frustration, Samuel sought additional information. He asked Jesse if he had any other male children. Jesse's response suggests he did not think his other son would be selected. The Hebrew word for "youngest" literally is "small

or insignificant one.” The root term denotes “small” in quantity or quality. Hence the word can mean “small in years,” or the youngest. Because of David’s youth he had been excluded from consideration. Because David was a son of Jesse, he fell within the sphere of the Lord’s instructions. Thus Samuel could not proceed until the last son appeared.

16:12. The description of David as “healthy” is literally “reddish.” It means David either had hair with a red tint or a bronze complexion. His appearance later would generate a magnetic effect on women. Yet, these physical attributes did not qualify him to become king. His qualification was in his “heart,” and only God could evaluate that. God had spoken and told Samuel the purpose for bringing the oil. In addition God indicated He had selected the young man who would become king (v. 1). Surely Samuel already understood the implication of filling the horn with oil. Regardless, God’s instructions made the purpose of the oil irrefutable. God kept His promise to reveal to His prophet the person He had selected. Samuel’s action would be the result of obedience, not conjecture.

16:13. The Lord identified Jesse’s youngest son David as the new king, and Samuel obeyed God. Samuel anointed David and witnessed the Holy Spirit take control of him. The anointing took place within the family circle. To what extent was this ceremony kept secret? We do not know, but in time everyone would become aware of this new reality, even Saul. At that time the privacy of the event and the inconspicuous nature of the son being anointed combined to create little understanding of its true importance. The reference to “the Spirit of the LORD” taking control of David indicates that unlike Saul’s, David’s disposition was one of obedience. God was his primary guide in life. The Holy Spirit’s control of David confirmed that Samuel had completed his God-given task. Samuel had moved on from a grievously disappointing situation. He witnessed encouraging spiritual evidence that God had used him in advancing His purpose. Having completed the assignment, Samuel returned to his home in Ramah.

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

1 Samuel 17:8-50