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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

On Sunday nights I am preaching through the Old Testament. I call it, “Big Events of the Old Testament” catching all the notable events. I am actually going to be bringing you five messages about the life of David starting today and then I am going to go ahead through the rest of the historical sections of the Old Testament. When I get to the book of Daniel, which basically coincides with when the nation of Israel was carried off into Babylonian captivity, then I am going to preach through the book of Daniel verse by verse on later this year.

If you remember the historical context of this portion of scripture, the nation of Israel has just passed through the time of the Judges and the transitional character between the Judges and the Kings was the man Samuel, who was both a judge and a prophet. He was the one who ushered them into the time when Israel would have a king. If you remember God didn’t want them to have a king. God said, “I want to be your king!” but they said, “Everybody else has a king, so we want a king.” God said, “Okay, I’ll give you what you asked for.” and he gave them King Saul. As I mentioned last week God has a perfect will, but sometimes when we don’t get right in on God’s perfect will, He has a permissive will where he allows or permits. We’re going to see tonight that not only does God have permissive will *a*) Saul is king but then God turns around and has permissive will; and *b*) because God has another plan altogether. While Saul is still king, he selects another person to be the next king.

1 Samuel 16:1-7. “The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’ But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.’ The Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.’ Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’ Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.’ But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

I. GOD EVALUATES US BY OUR HEARTS

1. Man looks at appearance

Tonight we are going to look at three principles from this chapter. The kind of person God chooses, the kind of person God uses and we see here as he chooses David. Here is principle number one: God evaluates us by our hearts that is, our attitude. That is what it means “to have heart.” It means to have the right attitude toward life and toward God and toward reality. God really looks at what’s on the inside rather than what’s on the outside. The principle is stated right there in verse seven. “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

You know in our world it is so different than that. In other words we are totally opposite from the way God is. Notice this man looks for beauty. Man is interested in somebody who looks good. We talked about one of the reasons Saul was selected. Saul was a big, strapping, strong man who stood head and shoulders above everybody else. When Samuel saw Eliab in verse 5, he said, “Man this is it!” because Eliab looked like some guy you would see on the cover of *Gentlemen’s Quarterly*. He was a fine-looking strong man—Jesse’s eldest son. So, Samuel looked at him and outwardly he met all the requirements, big and strong handsome so, Samuel said, “Hey. This has to be the one! I’m going to anoint you as king!” God said, “No, he’s not the one.” Here’s the principle. “Man looks at appearances but I look at the heart.” Wouldn’t you agree that for us, appearances are pretty important? As I have said before, that’s why women are smart enough to know men like to see nice looking ladies, so that’s why women spend all this time and money putting on makeup and fixing their hair. Ladies, I say, “God bless you for doing that!” There are some churches that say for women to wear makeup is a sin. I’m just the opposite. I think for some of them *not* to wear makeup is a sin! We are a “beauty-consumed” culture. I read recently that there are over 25,000 annual beauty contests in America. That goes from “Little Miss So and So” to “Miss Senior Adult” or “Nursing Home Queen.” We are still consumed about the way people look. When I was in high school, I dated the girl who was named “The Rattlesnake Queen” for Covington County. There was a beauty contest they had a rattlesnake rodeo and she was named, “Rattlesnake Queen.” How would you like that on your résumé, ladies?

Winston Churchill had an ongoing feud with Lady Astor in England and one night they were at a big state event and Winston Churchill had consumed quite a bit of alcohol. He was just acting like he sometimes acted. Lady Astor was so upset about it she said in a huffy voice, “Mr. Churchill. You are despicably drunk.” He looked at her and said in front of everybody else “And you, Lady Astor, are despicably ugly!” he continued “But in the morning I shall be sober!” Now, we make a big deal out of this beauty issue but I want you to know that while some people have beauty and some people don’t in God’s eyes outward appearance has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not God can use you. 1 Corinthians 1:26 says, “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.” Sometimes if people have good outward and physical abilities, it is harder for God to use them. God uses people who don’t necessarily look great.

2. God looks for purity

Number two God looks for purity. He’s a lot more interested in purity than he is in beauty. In fact, God has the ability to look in our hearts. Isn’t it wonderful to look at the ministry of the Lord Jesus? A very outwardly religious man named Nicodemus came to see Jesus. Nicodemus was the kind of guy who fasted, tithed 30 percent of his income and had memorized much of the Torah. He went through all the outward trappings of being a very religious person. This man came to Jesus by night and said, “What must I do to gain eternal life?” Jesus looked right into his heart and said, “Nicodemus, you must be born again.” He looked right into his heart. He said to the woman at the well, “Give me something to drink.” and she said, “I don’t have anything to draw the water with.” He said, “If you knew who I was and what I have, you’d be asking me for water!” She tried to take an end run and change the subject and he said, “Go call your husband!”

She said, “I don’t have a husband.” He said, “That’s right! You’ve had five of them. The one you are living with now is not your husband.” How did he know that? He could look right into her heart. Then he came to the city of Jericho one day and there was a man hated by most of the people there and if you were to nominate somebody for the number one scoundrel of Jericho, it would have been a little man named Zacchaeus. So, he climbed up in a tree and Jesus walked along and looked up and he didn’t look at his appearance, he didn’t look at his bank account, he didn’t look at his past—he looked right into his heart. He said, “Zacchaeus. You’re a man who is hungry for righteousness. Salvation has come to your house today!” Isn’t it great? Isn’t it wonderful that Jesus does not look on the outward appearance? He looks on the heart. God is a lot more interested in purity than he is in beauty. That’s why when Samuel looked at Eliab and said, “That’s the one! He looks right! He looks like he would be the perfect king!” God said, “No, you are looking on the outward appearance. I’m looking on the heart!” That’s principle number one.

II. GOD CHOOSES THOSE WHO SEEM UNQUALIFIED

Principle number two: God chooses those who *seem* unqualified. Jesse had eight sons. Eliab was the eldest.

1 Samuel 16:8-11. “Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this one either.’ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, ‘Nor has the Lord chosen this one.’ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’ So he asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’ ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered, ‘but he is tending the sheep.’”

By the way, that is a word in Hebrew that doesn’t just mean youngest. It’s really a word that means *the least*. We would maybe call it the runt of the litter. That’s what Jesse says about David. Later in the Psalms, David wrote, “Even though my mother and father have forsaken me, the Lord will never forsake me.” It is obvious David was not the favorite of his father. When they were summoned to bring all his sons to the sacrifice, he didn’t even think about asking David. Samuel said, “Send for him. We will not sit down until he arrives.” That’s putting the pressure on Jesse. You’re standing there with the table set to eat supper and the man in charge the special, honored guest says, “We’re not even going to sit down to eat until David gets here.”

1 Samuel 16:12-13. “So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; he is the one.’ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.”

Here’s the principle again: God chooses those who seem unqualified. Saul seemed qualified. He stood head and shoulders above everybody. Eliab and the other brothers seemed qualified, but Jesse said, “These are all the boys I have. Are you sure? Well, yes there is the runt of the litter and he is out doing the most menial job that anybody could do—he’s tending the sheep.” Samuel says, “Go get him!” David was not an ugly boy by any means. The word *ruddy* is a word that

means he probably had fair skin and most commentators say it was probably somebody who had light red hair and very pale, fair skin and the word *ruddy* in Hebrew was also used about a teenager who had not yet even started shaving. The word that is used for David here means he just had "peach fuzz" on his face. He's about the age of a middle school student but it says he had a fine appearance and handsome eyes and when he walked in, God said to Samuel, "This is the one so anoint him!" He had David kneel and he took that horn of olive oil and poured it on David's head and it ran down his hair onto his shoulders and that was symbolic of the Holy Spirit coming upon him. The Bible says in verse 13 "the Holy Spirit came upon him."

1. David had a heart for God

What are the kind of qualities God is looking for? Apparently David had the inner qualities not the outer appearance. Let me give you three, because these are qualities we all ought to strive to have in our lives. Number one: David had a heart for God. The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." Imagine God looking throughout all the six billion people on Earth and he's staring intently trying to find a man, a woman, a teenager; he's trying to find a child even whose heart is not a perfect heart, but a heart perfectly directed toward God—a heart that reaches out and says, "God, I want to live for you. I want to serve you. I want to love you!" Have you ever heard the phrase, "David was a man after God's own heart"? That only appears two times in the Bible.

Turn back a couple of pages to 1 Samuel 13:14. Last week I told you Saul made three mistakes. One was impatience. After the first mistake he made of being impatient and not waiting on Samuel God said to Saul through Samuel in 1 Samuel 13:14, "But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command." Even then God had in his mind and in his heart that he wanted a man after his own heart and Saul was not that person. Saul was a man after the people's heart and David was a man after God's heart. What's more important to you? What other people say and think about you or what God says about you? Do you do what you do and act like you do and perform a certain way because you know it will make people think about you in a certain way? Or are you more interested in pleasing and honoring God than you are in pleasing and honoring any other person? It doesn't matter whom you displease, but if you displease God, it doesn't matter whom you please in this life.

I said that the phrase, "a man after God's own heart" was mentioned twice in the Bible. 1 Samuel 13 is the first reference, the second is in the New Testament Acts 13:22 when Paul is preaching at Antioch and Pisidia. Paul gives a condensed version of the Old Testament and talks about David. "After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'" Wouldn't you like for people to say that about you? When I die, I really hope people say, "You know, he was a good pastor he was a good father he was a good husband." but I really do hope that people will look at me and say, "There was a man who was after God's heart, who wanted to please God." That's what I'm trying to live for. I hope you are trying to live for the same thing too. I hope you have the same desire so one day people will say about you, "There was a person who was after God's heart!"

2. He was dependable

Here's the second quality. He had the quality of dependability. You not only see that right here in the beginning but you also see it throughout his life. For instance, he was dependable enough to be a shepherd for his father's flocks. He was so dependable we are going to see next week that when a bear came to kill some of the sheep, David didn't run and hide: He killed the bear. When a lion came to eat one of the lambs, David didn't run and hide: He stayed and he killed the lion. We are going to see a little bit later that David could be counted on to do a job that had to be very distasteful. Two of the most valuable abilities in the service of the Lord are dependability and availability—and David did.

3. He had integrity

Here's the third quality that is very valuable in God's sight: It is integrity. Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is around to see you do the right thing. Integrity is being honest for the sake of honesty. Later, the Bible is talking about David in Psalm 78:72. The Psalmist says about David. "And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them." Sometimes I travel around at odd hours, whether I may be called to somebody's house or to the hospital in the middle of the night and I am out on the streets driving and I pull up to a stop sign. It may be 2 a.m. and there's nobody coming from the other direction but I still stop, because it is the law. There is nobody there to see it. That's what integrity is, to do the right thing whether there is someone there to see it or not. We're going to see in the life of David that not only was he a man who desired integrity; he was a man who practiced it. We're going to see he had opportunities to kill Saul, but he didn't do it, because Saul was still the anointed of God in David's eyes, so he did what was right even when there was nobody there to see it. Those are pretty good qualities a heart for God, dependability and integrity.

III. GOD PREPARES US BY GIVING US DIFFICULT JOBS

Here's principle number three: God prepares us by giving us difficult jobs. God wanted David to be king but it was many years that elapsed before he became the king. He didn't become the king until Saul died after killing himself in battle. As best as we can determine by the chronology it might have been as long as thirty years before he actually became king after he was anointed. In the meantime he had to deal with Saul.

1 Samuel 16:14. "Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him."

There is one major difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would come upon somebody like Saul but because of disobedience the Holy Spirit departed from him. The good news for us is that because we are Christians the Bible says the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us and he says, "I'll never leave you or forsake you." In the Old Testament it was possible for the Spirit to be taken from somebody. That's why in Psalm 51 after David committed adultery, he said, "God take not your Holy Spirit from me!" Even though sometimes you may feel alienated from God that is a prayer you never need pray. You never have to say, "God, don't take your Holy Spirit from me!" because he cannot do it; he will

not do it if you are indwelt by the Spirit of God. But the Spirit left Saul. He basically became a raging maniac, an evil lunatic. In fact, he became so hard to manage that the only thing that would calm him or settle him down was when he heard music. And guess who got the job?

1 Samuel 16:19-23. "Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, 'Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.' So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul. David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.' Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, [meaning that evil spirit] David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him."

Take some time and read the following chapters. There are 66 chapters in the Old Testament devoted to the life of David. Sometimes Saul became so angry he would take a spear and throw it at David. Sometimes God will put you in difficult jobs that you may not enjoy and people may throw things at you. You may become a target of their anger. But God was preparing David for bigger and better things. I think if David had lost his temper and started retaliating, or if he had refused to sing and play when Saul was a raving lunatic, he never would have been the kind of king God wanted him to be. Some of you right now are having to do something that is very distasteful to you maybe in your family, your job or school.

I promise you it had to be tough on David knowing he was anointed the next king and here was Saul, whom the spirit of God had left. Here was a holy man in the presence of an unholy person, but yet he submitted to him and the Bible says he served him. How difficult that must have been. God was trying to prepare David. David was out in the field taking care of the sheep and wild beasts came. You and I know that by killing those wild beasts he knew that when a giant of a beast stood before him he could do it. But he also had to deal with another beast, a human beast named Saul. Throughout his life David was going to have to deal with difficult people sometimes in his own family. God was preparing him for that.

OUTLINE

I. GOD EVALUATES US BY OUR HEARTS

1. Man looks at appearance
2. God looks for purity

II. GOD CHOOSES THOSE WHO SEEM UNQUALIFIED

David's qualities:

1. He had a heart for God
2. He was dependable
3. He had integrity

III. GOD PREPARES US BY GIVING US DIFFICULT JOBS