

Series: Shepherd, Poet, Fugitive, King - The Life of David  
1 Samuel 16:1-23 – God’s Chosen King / Ryan Patty / 12.03.23

Scripture Reading: Psalm 78:67-72 ESV (All Scripture this week is ESV!)

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 16. Whether you have a paper bible or a bible on a device, it will help you this morning to follow along.

**We make all sorts of choices in life, do we not?** Choices of where to live, of who to marry. Choices of which job to work, what friends to surround ourselves with, even something as simple as this morning and staring at the closet and wondering what we want to wear to church... We make choices all the time in life, some small like our clothes, and some choices are much, much bigger. Now, some people are naturally more go with the flow concerning these choices, they don’t hold things as tightly, we might say. They typically do not have as strong of an opinion. I have learned after 11 years of marriage that if I ask my wife where she wants to go eat, I will probably end up making the choice... Now my wife on the flipside, would say that I am picky about things, I am particular. I know what I like and do not like. I voice what I like, and therefore generally don’t have a problem making choices.

- But I always have a trump card when she says I’m picky, or I’m particular, or dare she say I’m persnickety. I just look at her innocently, without a trace of smugness, and say, “but I chose you, my dear, did I not?”

At the beginning of chapter 8, Israel made a choice. Give us a king like the other nations. Give us someone to lead us into battle, they tell Samuel. And so the Lord provides the king, the one the people would choose. They see Saul, his tall stature, his war-like appearance, and they say, “Yes! He is our king!” He has the look and the appeal, we choose him! God gives the people what they want. And then over the past 5 weeks or so we have seen how that has played out. Saul is foolish, Saul doesn’t listen, and Saul ultimately doesn’t see himself as a king under another King, but as the King who can make his own decisions.

Israel made their choice. But now, in chapter 16, God will make his choice. Last week we saw how God has rejected Saul from being King, and this week we will see God’s selection of a new king. Israel must come to see that rather

than the answer being found in our own choices, in our own solutions, it is the Lord, throughout the Scriptures, who must deliver what we need. He must choose and He must provide. Let us look to chapter 16 this morning to see how He does that.

If you're taking notes in the bulletin provided, I have four points for us to consider from the text, and I hope to provide application throughout. I'll give them to us up front.

1. Hope for the People (BrYan can these pop up one at a time instead of all at once? Por favor)
2. Wisdom from Above
3. A Shepherd King
4. The Irony of God

#### 1. Hope for the People

I want to briefly remind us of a couple of verses from chapter 15. Look with me actually at chapter 15, verses 10-11. 1 Samuel 15:10-11 – 10 The word of the Lord came to Samuel: 11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night.

Now look with me at the end of the chapter, starting in verse 34 and I will read through verse 5 of Chapter 16. 1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:5 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” 2 And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ 3 And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.” 4 Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” 5 And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate

yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

We hit on this last week, but just imagine you yourself are in Samuel’s shoes. You love this chosen King, but he is foolish, he disobeys, and now he will no longer be king. You are wondering, what will happen to the people, God? Who will lead them? Who will be the Deut. 17 King that will show them God’s path? You see the despair at the end of chapter 15 as Saul and Samuel won’t really have anymore of a relationship going forward. There is grief, and despair, and maybe even a bit of hopelessness.

And then the Word of the Lord comes to the prophet of God and gives him a bit of a shove out of his melancholy. “How long will you grieve over Saul? Get up, go to Bethlehem, I have a new king for the people.” Before I discuss the hope here, I want to say briefly that it is okay to grieve over the proper things. It is okay to have sorrow over the right things, to lament over them. Samuel here, out of deep care for the people of God, laments over their forsaken king. There is something right about this. God can bring correction to him, yes, but friends there is something proper about mourning for the sin we see at times among the people of God. Notice there what I said:

- **Samuel is not mourning over his state of affairs.** He’s not experiencing grief like you and I might be over the fact that we don’t have that new car, we only have a 3 bedroom house, or we probably won’t be getting that thing “we just had to have” for Christmas.
- No he is mourning over someone’s spiritual state. Over their spiritual welfare. He’s mourning over what will happen to the people of God. He deeply cares for the people of God. Friends, is that true of us?

Are we grieved when we see those in our fellowship gossiping? Slandering? Saying this quick word about others under the veil of being “worried about them?” **What about the rampant unbelief in churches at large? Of those who seek to mix the culture with Christianity.** Of the surveys that are done in which people truly do not know their doctrine and are on very shaking ground in their beliefs? Do we mourn over that? Do we have sorrow in seeing our brother and sister in sin? Sorrow enough where we are moved to action to say something? Do we have sorrow over the state of our country? Let’s ignore the hundreds of millions here who have no love for Christ for a moment,

but how about the vast multitude of our neighbors here in Idaho Falls who have no true hope because they have no true Gospel. There is something commendable and for us to learn from about Samuel's care and distress here.

And in the midst of this hopelessness, it is the God of hope who speaks his hope-filled words to His despairing prophet, "I have provided for myself a King." God has not forgotten them. He knows that things look bleak with Saul, but He will remain faithful to His people. Like the dawning of a new day after a night of despair, God gives hope to his prophet and ultimately Israel. And what, in part, God is teaching Samuel and Israel is that the true king never loses control of His Kingdom. He is sovereign over it all. He will see them through it.

Friends, I know some of you could use some hope right now. Whether it's persistent sickness, or our tiring bodies, family, relational struggles, or a season of depression that affects your whole life. You need hope. Now I could offer you a pithy statement that could make you try harder but that ultimately won't help. Because the solution for hopelessness is never found in ourselves but in God. Same as it was for Israel, He had to bring about the hope. And my friend, the same is true in your life. We are not promised everything we want, we are not promised the great house, the sleek car, the perfect spouse or children, and may we never put our hope in any of those things. But for those rest in Christ, we are promised Christ. And day by day we learn that He is enough. He is our hope. The Christian can feel despair, yes, but they are never characterized by it. The Christian always has hope. It is as the great hymn says, "My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus blood and righteousness, I dare not trust my sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus's Name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

- You must hold that to be true. You must appropriate that hope by faith.
- Rest in Christ. He is your hope. Look to him in the Word, in prayer, in encouragement from the Saints. Trust and rest in Him alone.

## 2. Wisdom from Above

God will provide hope for his people, yet it will not be through whom they think. God will teach Samuel and us here about what it means to not just see with physical eyes, but to see with spiritual eyes.

6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.” 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.”

You would think that Samuel would learn after Saul, but he is still wanting the one who looks the part of the King. The one who will strike fear in the other nations. Eliab seems to be Samuel’s first choice. “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me!” If Saul as I said some weeks back was the center for the basketball team, here we have the quarterback of the football team. But this is not the man.

In that sermon a few weeks back I remarked how we are so quick to judge on appearance alone. So quick to place the label on someone, so quick to make choices on friendship, on employees, you name it. And this text in verse 7 strikes us in the heart, does it not? For sure we can mock Samuel a little here, but we know we do the exact same thing. If we are impressed by someone, it doesn’t mean God is. And Samuel learns that here. This verse is vital. It’s one of the theme verses in 1 Samuel. It’s in our minds as we experience the tall Saul, and it’s in our minds with David and later on with Absalom. The Lord looks at the heart.

Now we know what’s coming in a moment with David, but I want to briefly say that we cannot conclude that God opposes a fine appearance, or handsomeness or beauty. All of humanity is created in the imago dei and therefore has intrinsic worth and value and beauty. That’s not the point of this verse. In a moment we will see David called handsome. So it’s not that God is saying ugliness is what means he will choose someone. Rather the point is this: external appearance neither qualifies or disqualifies. It simply does not matter in God’s economy. It’s not the basis for selection. God as we saw last week as well, is after the heart. The heart that loves him and desires him. So when

God says man looks on the outward yet the Lord looks at the heart, and then the selection of David is coming up, it does not mean that David has a sinless heart, but that he has a submissive heart (x2). David's sin is still coming. Sleeping with Bathsheeba, having Uriah killed. But he is submissive, he is repentant, he knows He must rely on God. And so we can be tempted to read this as, well Saul is bad, and David is good, that's why God chose David. But that is not the thrust of the Scripture. It's not because David is a great guy, but because God has chosen Him and will take responsibility for the people.

**Illus. Some of you run companies, or manage companies,** or hire those beneath you for specific jobs. Let's imagine that in your company you have a vital role that has to be filled. It's important to what you are doing. And so you post on indeed, you have those who help with hiring get the word out, but this one you want to be involved with yourself. It's that important. And so people from all over apply, they send in their resumes and all that they have done, their education, their experience. And you narrow it down to a short list. You narrow it down to the top candidates. And then you interview them a whole day. One after another. And the reality is, they will all be horrible. They are incompetent. They all would not do what you need. They would all mess it up. Now here are your options.

1. You can just scrap it all, and say I'm not going to do this position. No one is qualified.
2. You can lower your standards. You don't have the right person, you can lower your standards, I don't really care, they can make a mess.
3. The other option is to say, This position is important. I'm going to come alongside them, I'm going to take responsibility. I'm going to train them up.

In a way, that is much of what is happening here. David, as we will see, is just a shepherd boy, probably a teenager or older teenager. He has no idea how to lead a nation. But God has chosen him. And he's going to equip him. The reason for hope is not David, but that God has made a choice. He has taken responsibility.

**So beware the external appearances that seem to motivate us so easily.** In part, as one writer says, what this text is teaching us is that sometimes God must save us from our saviors. We look and think, "yes!" And God saves us from our choice. Friends, pray for our congregation, that we wouldn't view one another fundamentally in worldly ways. God is teaching a wisdom from above. A wisdom that does not rely on human faculties but in the God of the

universe. Our hearts are wicked and deceitful. Romans 1, 2 and 3 make that plain and clear. All have sinful hearts. Yet God will choose. He will redeem. He will save a people to himself.

I'd like to end this point by drawing attention to God's choosing of David. It was surprising. He was the youngest, he was not who the people thought would be chosen, and yet he was chosen by God. Friends, as Ephesians 1, Romans 8, 1 Timothy 1 among others makes clear, so this is true of us. God chose us, not because of any works, not because of anything good, but because of his sovereign choice. May that encourage the weary and give hope to the despaired: God chose you. The reason for hope is that in the wisdom of God, God chose us. The reason for hope is Christ. David points past himself to Christ, which we will see more in the next point.

### 3. The Shepherd King

In God's choice of a king for his people, He will choose one who will do what the King is supposed to: Shepherd God's people.

11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." 12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

What is the youngest son, the one who will lead God's people doing when the prophet comes? He's doing what His father asked him to do. He's tending the sheep. He's watching over His Father's sheep. And now the prophet comes and anoints him, and David will now watch over God's sheep.

Imagine as Jesse is bringing each of his son's before Samuel. Samuel is waiting for confirmation from the Lord and it doesn't come. One son up, one son down. Until he has to ask, is this all of them? To which Jesse replies, well the youngest is still out in the field, but he's keeping the sheep. Samuel says go and get him. God's logic confounds human wisdom. God chose Israel through Abraham. A pagan man. Israel in Egypt, slaves, the weakest of people.

Yet he will make them mighty. And here to lead the people, he chooses the youngest, the seemingly weakest, to do just the same.

And David here is tending the sheep. He is a shepherd, and God's King will need to care for God's people, delight in leading them, protecting them, guiding them. It will be as David himself wrote in Psalm 23, He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness (what the king should be doing!). What was Saul doing when we were introduced to him? He was searching for lost donkeys he could never find. He's not a good shepherd. And here we have David tending the flock as His father expected.

Now look at v. 12 - he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. We discussed this already, but the writer of 1 Samuel is drawing a connection for us. Previously Joseph was described as handsome and well built. And God used him mightily. So the writer here is foreshadowing what is to come with David. Just as Joseph would lead God's people and be an instrument of hope, so David will do the same. And he will point forward to the greater David, His descendent.

And then v. 13 – 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. Two things to note here. This is not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that you and I experience in the new covenant. It points to that, but it is not that. Instead it is what the Puritans would call unction. It's an anointing for service and power to do the Lord's word as He sees fit. And David will need that in the coming role he will have. The Spirit leaves Saul, and anoints David. Only one can have the Spirit of the Lord in the manner of the King, and that is now David.

But second, notice that the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. Everything that David will do as King, all the mighty acts, all victories in battle, all the wise leadership, is to be credited to the Lord. The Lord was with Him, the Lord was taking responsibility, the Chief Shepherd was leading His under-shepherd.

And while the Spirit brings power, it also prepares us for battle. He will fight Goliath, he will have endless trouble with Saul, he will be hunted, betrayed, trapped, and destitute at times. God's Spirit equips us, but for often the things we

don't like to experience. Severe challenges come. One could say that the Spirit comes, and trouble begins. The Lord disciplines those he loves.

Think even of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit comes upon him visibly as a dove, The Father says he delights in him, and then what? Driven into the wilderness to experience temptation and the throws of Satan. As one writer says, "The wilderness is not the sign of the Spirit's absence, but the scene of His presence." (DRD).

And for His followers it is the same. We come to know Christ, we are growing in Christ, and then we are swamped in trouble and attacked. It feels like no relief. **This Shepherd King will feel the same in the coming years. I said before and last week, that David more than anyone points forward to our Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our great shepherd. Like David, Jesus didn't appear up to the task.** His hometown people said in Mark 6 "that he's just one of us, just a normal guy, nothing special." Others in Matt. 11 thought of him as not serious, "he has too much fun they say." Those in John 7 would say he's not from the right place, just a backwater town. But the greatest issue was that there was no way that the Messiah should suffer. And yet, what did the wisdom of God reveal to us? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. God chose David to lead the people, and He gave His own Son to die for the people. God's initiative, God's prerogative, God's decision. He alone does the work.

May we be astounded all the more at the King who reigns today and will one day come back to reign with His people, the Lord Jesus. Look to him, look to the great shepherd of our souls, who leaves the 99 to go after the 1. Look to Christ this morning.

#### 4. The Irony of God

Much of the Old Testament has irony (a state of affairs that is deliberately opposite of what one expects), and it is a joy to see how God uses it in the lives of His people. From the Garden, to Pharoah, to even God's giving over of Israel to their idols, to the irony we saw in the book of Judges, God uses irony to awaken his people. And here, he uses it to re-enforce his choice of King. I'll start reading in verse 14 through the end of the chapter.

14 Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. 15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. 16 Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well." 17 So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me." 18 One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him." 19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." 20 And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. 21 And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. 22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." 23 And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.

In verses 1-13, God chooses David. And in verses 14-23, Saul chooses David. We will get to that irony in a moment, but I want to explain a few things.

Verse 14 - now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. God is sovereign, he is in control of all things. And here he removes His Spirit from Saul – which is tragic, we shouldn't rush past these words. The only figure in the OT to be described as having God's Spirit removed from them in this manner. Saul's even aware of this himself as God's word tells us in chapter 18 verse 12. God rejects Saul, and anoints David. And then to further his purposes, God sends a harmful, more literally an evil (ra) spirit.

- Now some take this today as a way of saying Saul was afflicted in his mental health. He had a mental disorder here and that's what the text is trying to say. But I don't think that is it. I don't want to go beyond Scripture, but I don't want to undermine it either. God is sovereign over all, he has his heavenly council. And this evil spirit I

understand to be more associated with a demon, with a fallen angel that followed Satan. It is as Martin Luther said, even the devil is God's devil. And so he sends this Spirit to accomplish His purposes, which are in part to bring David into Saul's awareness. So Saul is afflicted, not possessed. Tormented in a way, mentally, spiritually, physically maybe, we don't know. And so he needs help and his advisors offer up someone.

Starting in v. 18 – 18 One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him."

Notice this statement. Skillful in playing, a man of valor, of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence. David is still young, but maybe there is a little time that passes for him to mature and for his reputation to grow. And so they send for him, and he comes and plays. And I think how we are to understand this is that David, who was literarily and musically gifted, a genius really, is through worship here providing healing to Saul. He is providing deliverance to the current King.

- And so I want to be careful here. Contrary to what some say or believe, God does not just send demons upon people as consequences for their sin. Spiritual warfare is real, and those indwelt by the Spirit of God are in a battle. Ephesians 6 is clear concerning that. But we must not hyper-spiritualize or under-spiritualize. We must stay where Scripture stays. This was a specific instance that God brought about to accomplish his purposes.

And although Saul finds relief here, he will come to hate God's servant. Will come to despise him. And is that not the reality for the Christian, for the one confronting the world in their sin. Jesus told his followers if they hated me, they will hate you too. We are salt on the earth, preserving it, keeping it from decaying worse than it already is. But Let us not think that it is easy to be a Christian and to be respectable in the world's eyes. From the business you run, to the neighbors you interact with, at some point they will find that your Christian beliefs are against what they stand for.

Will you capitulate and bow down?

And lastly, what I'm titling the point off of, do you see the irony here?

God chose David, and now Saul chooses David. The anointed king is now in the presence of the King he will replace. Saul is looking for some reprieve, but it is the Lord who will bring about what he fears the most: the removal

of His kingship. And friends, this irony points us to the greatest irony of the Gospel. That through death, we have life. Through Christ's suffering, we have victory. That though the powers of Satan and sin thought they had defeated the Messiah, He in fact was victorious through His resurrection. It is as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:8 – [that] None of the rulers of this age understood this [understood this irony, understood all that the cross was accomplishing], for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

For the one who is not a Christian here this morning, our message sounds crazy. It is truly ironic. You in and of yourself are not good enough. **Maybe you know that, maybe you have an awareness of sin. But what do you do about it? What can you do about it?** Well here is the irony of the Christian Gospel. Nothing. There is not a work you can do to save yourself, to make yourself righteous, to deserve heaven. And you recognize that, and what you do instead, as God's Word tells us, is that you look to Christ. You bring nothing to him, He gives you everything. He calls you this morning to have faith. And maybe it's a weak faith. Maybe you have doubts and struggles. We all do to varying degrees. But praise God that saving faith is not contingent upon the amount of faith but on the object of our faith. Look to Christ this morning.

To the saints, never take the Gospel for granted. Remind yourself of all you have in Christ. Be characterized by your hope, glory in the wisdom of God, and continue to look to Jesus Christ, the shepherd of your soul.